

Significance, Current Situation and Countermeasures of Integrating Labor Education and Professional Education in Universities

Nan Gao Yunfeng Shang

(Zhejiang Yuexiu University, Shaoxing, Zhejiang, 312000)

Abstract: In the new era, integrating labor education and professional education in universities (hereinafter referred to as "labor—professional" integrated education) is of great significance. For the society, it helps to cultivate newcomers of the times to take up the great responsibility of rejuvenation; for universities, it helps them to transform and upgrade to application—oriented universities; for college students, it helps them to grow and become successful. At present, "labor—professional" integrated education is concentrated in the professional practice courses and second classroom practice education in universities. In the integration, there are still some weak links, such as the weakened labor education, insufficient value guidance, lack of regular integration and insufficient teachers. To promote "labor—professional" integrated education in universities, we shall follow the principles of equality and interlocking, mutual benefit and promotion, and carry out effective integration by strengthening labor value education, constructing "labor—professional" integrated education mechanism evaluation index system, cultivating the "integration" teachers and taking other measures, to manifest the value of "labor—professional" integrated education in the education of universities.

Keywords: labor education; professional education; integration; universities

Author: Gao Nan, female, is the Director of Student Affairs Office and the Assistant Researcher of Zhejiang Yuexiu University (postal code: 312000).

Shang Yunfeng, male, is the Vice President and Associate Professor of Zhejiang Yuexiu University (postal code: 312000).

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On March 26, 2020, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening

Labor Education in Universities, Elementary and Secondary Schools in the New Era, emphasizing that labor education shall be incorporated into the whole process of talent cultivation, through all

learning stages, and integrated with moral education, intellectual education, physical education and aesthetic education. The Opinions also pointed out the specific contents of labor education in universities. That is, universities shall pay attention to innovation and entrepreneurship, combine disciplines with professions, and actively carry out practice training, professional services, etc., attach great importance to the application of new knowledge and technology to solve practical problems creatively, allow students to accumulate professional experience, improve their abilities to find jobs and start businesses. The Opinions pointed out the educational path of integrating labor education and professional education in universities. Labor education in universities in the new era refers to the education process of systematically educating college students on labor ideology and morality, labor science and technology, and labor practice and creativity to improve their labor literacy in all aspects^[1]. Professional education can be summarized as the talent training mode designed to train college students with professional knowledge, professional skills and professional qualities needed for a certain industry in the future, including professional course arrangement, practical training and internship, etc. In this paper, we will discuss the integration of labor education and professional education from four aspects, including the reasons, current situation, the problems, and how to promote the integrated education, and propose countermeasures.

1. Reasons to carry out “labor—professional” integrated education

1.1 Labor—professional” integrated education in universities is an important carrier to cultivate newcomers of the times to take up the great responsibility of rejuvenation.

In the new era, students in universities are given the historical mission of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and the integration of labor education and professional education is an important means to cultivate the "newcomers of the times"

who are ideal, responsible, knowledgeable, competent and innovative. The integration of labor values and professional education can help cultivate the "newcomers of the times" in two aspects including establishing the spirit of "dedicated model workers" and the spirit of "great country craftsman"^[2]. In the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, it is pointed out that "the knowledge—based, skilled and innovative workforce shall be established, the spirit of model workers and craftsmen shall be promoted, and the “labor is the most glorious” social work style and professional dedication shall be created". Professional dedication, as one of the essentials of the core socialist values, is a sense of identity, positive evaluation and willingness to work for a long time in the position one is engaged in, and the ability to work hard and take responsibility. Craftsmanship spirit is the noble dedication to pursue excellence and work innovation, and is the refinement and sublimation of dedication. The value guidance of labor education lies in guiding students to establish a correct view of labor, to revere labor, respect the feelings of working people, serve the country and devote themselves to society^[3]. As the old saying, the clearer you know and understand, the more solid your actions and practices will be. The establishment of professional dedication is inseparable from labor education, which is based on the development of labor values. Moreover, the process of “labor—professional” integrated education can also help guide students to form a serious, honest and pragmatic learning attitude, develop the habit of focusing on learning and studying repeatedly, and practice the craftsmanship spirit in learning.

1.2 “Labor—professional” integrated education is a breakthrough for the transformation and upgrading of universities in the new era.

It is also the key point of transformation of application—oriented universities and an important way to cultivate application—oriented talents with knowledge and abilities to practice. In 2015, the

Ministry of Education, the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance jointly issued the Guiding Opinions on Guiding Some Local Ordinary Undergraduate Universities to Transform into Application—Oriented Universities, clearly put forward the development direction of transforming local ordinary undergraduate universities into application—oriented undergraduate universities. The transformation path of application—oriented universities is to take "integration of industry and education, school—enterprise cooperation" as the breakthrough, establish a talent training process led by improving practical ability, pay more attention to students' internship and practical training, and pay more attention to innovation and entrepreneurship education. In other words, all the works of application—oriented universities including teaching, education, research and social services shall be focused on effective application. To develop the road of transformation of application—oriented universities, the key is to cultivate application—oriented talents in a way of "learn to meet practical needs". In the new era, labor education in universities is given the new features of "deepening the integration of industry and education, cultivating scientific spirit and improving creative labor ability". And the integration of "learning" of professional education and "use" of labor education is exactly the same as the goal of "learn to meet practical needs" of talent cultivation in application—oriented universities [4].

1.3 The "labor—professional" integrated education is the driving force for the growth and success of college students in the new era.

To carry out "labor—professional" integrated education, the content of labor education and professional education influence each other and serve as the focus of each other, which helps students to integrate, and is a realistic need for students to grow and become successful. In the integrated education, with the professional education as the carrier, labor education improves the depth and breadth of penetration in the process of education. At the

same time, it builds a practical bridge for professional education, guides students to learn to apply and create, and achieve harmonious physical and mental development [5]. "Labor—professional" integrated education drives the growth and success of college students from three aspects. Firstly, it is conducive to driving students to grow in stages scientifically. Professional education runs through the four years of college. It is a systematic and mature curriculum system, from basic theory courses in the fresh year to various professional courses and experimental training courses in the sophomore and junior years, and then to paper design during internship in the senior year. The integration of labor education and professional education follows the law of physical and mental development and professional cognitive process of college students, and is more capable of stimulating their endogenous driving force of loving labor, hard work and creative work in different stages of students' growth. Secondly, it is conducive to daily infiltration into the growth of students. Professional education is the main teaching content of higher education, which is almost pervasive in students' daily study life and penetrates into their four years of growth. The integration of labor education and professional education cannot be completed through a few classes or lectures, or several thematic activities. It relies on the platform of professional education to promote the implementation of "labor—professional" integrated education to students' life, learning and growth at all times and everywhere, and to educate them in all aspects and processes. Thirdly, it is conducive to the application, and the "learning by doing" model can help to cultivate innovative "newcomers of the age". To become strong and prosperous, a country needs to reserve and use a large number of outstanding talents, and the cultivation of talents depends on good schools and education. General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly mentioned that universities in the new era shall cultivate innovative talents and carry out creative labor education. The integration

of labor education and professional education provides resources for innovation and entrepreneurship education in universities. The education process of innovation and entrepreneurship can be roughly summarized as "Cognition—practice—re—cognition—re—practice". The cognition in this process mainly comes from professional education and innovation and entrepreneurship education; while practice refers to the application and operation based on the understood content, which mainly comes from labor education. Through "labor—professional" integrated education, students learn and practice continuously and explore repeatedly, and can grow into a new person of the times with innovative spirit and ability^[6].

2. The current situation of "labor—professional" integrated education in domestic universities

Although the integration of labor education and professional education in universities is a new concept in the higher education, there are already practices of integrated education in the actual education. At present, the "labor—professional" integrated education is concentrated in the professional practice courses and second classroom practice education in universities, which is mainly carried out in three aspects.

2.1 With professional practice courses as the main line, carry out a single series of practice teaching activities in professional courses

The professional practice courses in universities are classified into professional practice, practical training, internship and experiment, which are directly included in the curriculum design. Let us take hotel management major of Zhejiang Yuexiu University as an example. An on—campus practical training center of this major has been set up, and sophomores have a full day of on—campus practical training courses every week, can simulate hotel operations in the practical training hotel, and manage the operation of the practical training hotel for a day on their own as the general manager, restaurant waiter, chef, room attendant, etc. In their

junior year, students are recruited to real hotels around China for professional internships for one semester. Through practical training internships in simulated and real hotels, students can work with the staff, use their hands and brains, directly face the service objects and delve into the hotel operation system.

2.2 Carry out educational guidance based on all kinds of innovation and entrepreneurship projects and discipline competitions

Under the background of "innovation and entrepreneurship", China actively promotes various professional practice competitions and scientific and technological innovation projects in universities, such as "Challenge Cup" college students' innovation and entrepreneurship competition, various discipline competitions, professional skills competitions and college students scientific and technological innovation projects. From preparation, declaration filling, selection, training to participation, there are both physical and intellectual work. Students can receive professional guidance from team teachers, and work hard in preparation and participation. These activities not only promote their professional learning, but also strengthen their practical ability and improve their professional labor literacy comprehensively, and also cultivate their labor values of integrity, innovation, persistence and struggle in the new era.

2.3 Carry out "labor—professional" integrated education practical activities with cultural activities as the second classroom

Practical activities are classified into on—campus activities and off—campus activities. On campus, the practical activities are mainly experiential thematic activities to strengthen professional cognition. For example, in the hotel management major, professional practical activities such as service etiquette demonstration activities, catering design activities and job exchange experience activities are carried out. In the off—campus activities, the main activities highlighting the "labor—professional" integrated education are socialized professional

activities, such as social research and professional volunteer service. In terms of professional volunteer work, college students have increasingly become the main force of professional volunteers. For example, in the volunteer service activities for college students in various large-scale meetings and international competitions, English majors have not only received the professional training of translation work in the early stage, but also received the physical training and willpower training during the process of serving as translation volunteers. Students majoring in hotel management have also been greatly improved in meeting reception.

3. Problems of "labor—professional" integrated education in universities

3.1 The labor education is weakened and ignored in the concept of "labor—professional" integrated education

As far as educators' understanding of "labor—professional" integrated education is concerned, most of them think that labor education shall be integrated into professional education, and few people suggest that they shall be integrated into each other, or even integrate professional education into labor education. This kind of viewpoint subjectively establishes the dominant position of professional education and considers that labor education is dependent on professional education. In fact, in higher education, labor education and professional education are two equal educational contents, especially when labor education in universities is neglected and labor education of college students is missing, labor education shall be integrated into professional education equally, or even in a large proportion.

3.2 Insufficient guidance of labor values in the content of "labor—professional" integrated education

At this stage, the most important content of "labor—professional" integrated education in universities is professional practical education, which is mainly reflected in practical courses such as skills

education, practical training and experiments, design and creation, etc., but there is less guidance of labor values in professional education. Through practice and operation, students can realize the labor value of hard work, perseverance and down-to-earth work, but the deeper patriotism and responsibility are rarely covered in professional courses.

3.3 Lack of regular integration in the process of "labor—professional" integrated education

By analyzing the process of "profession—labor" integrated education in universities, we find that the process of integration is not continuous. Labor education and professional education are sometimes combined and sometimes separated. More precisely, they are integrated in professional practical courses and rarely integrated in non-practical courses; they are integrated in one lecture and then not integrated after the lecture. It is obvious that such integration is non-daily and not a real integration, and it is difficult to penetrate into the daily education process.

3.4 Insufficient teachers in the "labor—professional" integrated education

According to the survey, students generally think that the labor knowledge of the teachers of professional courses cannot meet their needs, or barely meet their needs, and the teaching effect of labor knowledge is poor. Basically, the teachers of professional courses have not received systematic training in labor education, and when it comes to the labor education in professional courses, they mostly complete their teaching tasks by repeating what the book says, causing that the content is too theoretical, or the mode is too rigid, the coverage is too narrow, or the content is not developed in depth. At the same time, labor courses are mostly listed as general optional courses by ideological and political teachers, and the content of professional education is seldom mentioned by such teachers in their school teaching. It can be seen that the teachers in universities cannot undertake the tasks of labor education and professional education simulta-

neously, and it is difficult to meet the requirements of integrated education.

4. How to further promote "labor — professional" integrated education in universities

4.1 Establish the principle of "labor — professional" integrated education with equality and interlocking, mutual benefit and promotion

There are two key aspects to grasp the principle of integrated education. Firstly, strengthen the labor education in the content of education. In particular, the content of integrated education shall pay more attention to the proportion of labor education and raise the status of labor education, so as to avoid the situation that labor education and professional education may compete for the class hours and labor education is weakened and marginalized by professional education in the process of integrated education. According to the different stages of education, universities shall design integrated education with a focus on different years, from setting up ambitious goals to cultivating professionalism to enhance students' professional application ability and create professional workers. In the cognitive stage of professional education, the labor values shall be integrated for guidance; in the stage of professional theory learning, emphasis shall be placed on developing practical operational ability to cultivate students to be good at observation and reflection; in the process of labor practice education, professional cognitive education shall be taught to fundamentally cultivate students' professional emotion and consolidate professional theory foundation. Secondly, we emphasize the depth of integration in the education process. The "labor — professional" integrated education emphasizes "learning by doing", which requires labor education and professional education to be embedded with each other and integrated in both directions. The integration of labor education and professional education shall not be superficial, but should be deeply embedded in both directions, with the establishment of progressive curriculum objectives, consistent teaching contents, responsive education methods, composite teaching materials, and integrated teaching staff, so as to achieve integration not only in classroom education,

but also in thematic activities and subject competitions through multiple measures^[7].

4.2 Strengthen labor value education to consolidate the ideological foundation of "labor — professional" integrated education

"We should promote the spirit of labor among students, educate and guide them to respect and love labor, and understand the truth that labor is the most glorious, the most noble, the greatest and the most beautiful. Only in this way can they work hard, honestly and creatively", said by General Secretary Xi Jinping at the National Education Conference. It can be seen that guiding students to establish correct labor values is the ideological foundation for cultivating "labor — professional" composite talents. In the goal setting of "labor — professional" integrated education, we should abandon the narrow understanding that "labor — professional" integrated education is equivalent to professional practical education, and base on the shaping of labor values, consolidate the leading role of labor values such as dedication, honesty, responsibility and cooperation. In the establishment of educational objectives, the first task is to cultivate excellent labor values of new-age college students and establish the labor spirit of struggle, dedication and innovation, and then set up the "labor — professional" integrated teaching objectives of the next stage in a stepwise and all-round way in accordance with the law of education, so as to cultivate "labor — professional" integration literacy of new-age college students such as professional practice ability and professional innovation ability.

4.3 Innovative "labor — professional" integrated education mechanism and normalization of integrated education

Building an innovative integration mechanism is the breakthrough to promote the process management and implement the normalized integrated education. To build a "labor — professional" integrated education mechanism, it is fundamental to solve many problems, such as the integration process, the stages to go through, and the methods to pro-

mote integration, the measures to carry out integration effectively, and the objectives of integration. To answer these questions, we can work on two aspects. First, establishing a set of systematic process management integration mechanism. For example, in the development of "labor — professional" integrated education, the hotel management major of Zhejiang Yuexiu University, with the set of four—year, systematic, and stepwise integrated education model as the main line, organizes leaders, teaching and research departments, student workers, teacher development departments and others to participate in the integrated education. For the fresh year, the university invites outstanding managers in the industry as mentors to conduct regular lectures and organizes students to learn in partner hotels, focusing on the cultivation of labor values of professional cognitive education. For the sophomore year, the university focuses on the integration of professional knowledge and on—campus practical training. By organizing students to attend classes, carry out simulation work and operate independently in on—campus practical training hotels, the university consolidates the foundation of professional theoretical knowledge and provides one — on — one guidance and improves students' practical skills. For the junior year, the university emphasizes the integration of professional education and off — campus practical training. Based on professional education, it organizes students to carry out off—campus practical training in hotels, which are guided by mentors one by one. For the senior year, emphasis is placed on internship guidance and innovation and entrepreneurship guidance. Secondly, we need to create a place for integrated education in the whole process. The establishment of "labor — professional" integrated education base enables explicit classroom education and practical activities and second classroom to be carried out in one place, effectively promoting the integration and normalization of integrated education^[8]. Zhejiang Yuexiu University has established the on—campus

training center for hotel management majors, which is equipped with classrooms, laboratories, hotels, coffee bars, guest rooms, catering departments, and other places where teaching and practice are combined, and students can have one academic year of systematic and integrated professional training in this center. In the training center, the "labor — professional" integrated education is no longer a scattered, point—like lecture or an experimental lesson, but a systematic and regular education mechanism from the point to the line and then to the plane with practice at all times and classrooms everywhere, where everyone can participate. When students enter the training center, they can immediately carry out practice and learning, realizing the cycle process from theory to practice, and then theory to practice.

4.4 Establish the evaluation index system of "labor — professional" integrated education and gather the effect of integrated education

The evaluation indexes of integrated education are not based on the evaluation of labor education or professional education alone, but on the evaluation of the degree of integration and the effect of integration, which has an extremely important guiding role in the implementation of "labor — professional" integrated education^[9]. In the process of establishing evaluation indicators, it is necessary to sort out the evaluation indexes of labor education and professional education. The evaluation indexes of integrated education must be based on a full understanding of the evaluation indexes of mono—education, and only by analyzing the evaluation indexes of mono—education one by one can we obtain the comprehensive integrated education effect evaluation. Secondly, we need to clarify the requirements for the "labor — professional" integrated education. In particular, it is necessary to clarify which education requirements can be achieved by professional education or labor education, and which education effects must rely on integrated education. Finally, design the index system of in—depth integration. According to the education ob-

jectives of integrated education, universities shall organically combine the indexes of labor education and professional education and establish integration standards. The index combination of "labor—professional" integrated education should also be a process of integration, and reflect the requirements of "integration", so as to avoid the simple superposition of the two types of indexes, which leads to the lack of depth of integration.

4.5 Enhance teachers' ability of integrated education and build a new pattern of integration and integrated teachers

The integrated education mode of labor education and professional education determines that universities should integrate the teachers of professional education with the teachers of labor education and carry out the integration construction of teachers. In the integration construction of teachers, we should highlight three aspects. First, we should focus on research and studies and training with the main goal of improving the quality of "labor—professional" integration. We should conduct teacher training before the integrated education to guide teachers to identify with integrated education, integrate education, and specialize in integrated education. Secondly, we should focus on deepening the cooperation between schools and enterprises in teacher construction, and encourage and organize professional teachers and teachers of labor courses to carry out service, production and management practice at the front line of enterprises. Teachers of hotel management in Zhejiang Yuexiu University have the opportunity to carry out work exchange for one month every year in the cooperative hotels, mainly engaged in the operation and management of hotels. Professional teachers and administrators can participate in the front—line hotel work, which can help them clarify the actual labor quality requirements of the industry and the way to improve the professional labor ability, reflect on their teaching, and carry out better self—reconstruction to transform to integrated teachers. Thirdly, the

university should make an effort to introduce industry elites and model workers as part—time teachers from the whole society. In this way, universities can establish socially—oriented teacher resources for "labor—professional" integrated education and regularly conduct lectures on "labor—professional" integration themes, such as the craftsmanship spirit, patriotism, practical innovation, etc., so as to raise the level of teachers with pioneering excellence and realize the all—round and high—level training of students' "labor—professional" integration quality.

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