

# The Path of Transformation and Development of University Continuing Education in the New Era from the Perspective of Lifelong Education



Han Zheng<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Nanjing Vocational University of Industry Technology, China

**Abstract:** With the rapid development of science and technology and the continuous change in the social economy, people's demand for knowledge and skills is also increasing. The concept of lifelong education has come into being. To adapt to this change, college continuing education needs to be transformed and developed to meet the new requirements of society for higher education. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the development path of college continuing education in the new era, analyze the challenges and opportunities it faces and put forward corresponding countermeasure suggestions.

**Keywords:** lifelong education; continuing education in colleges and universities; transformation and development

## Introduction:

Continuing education in colleges and universities has become an important way to meet the demand of society for talents and personal self-development, and it is of great significance in the new era, which can, on the one hand, help people keep learning and progressing to achieve self-development and life value enhancement; on the other hand, it can also provide more high-quality talents for society and promote the prosperity and progress of society. With the accelerated development of digitalization and intelligence, continuing education in colleges and universities is also expanding its forms and adopting more flexible and diversified teaching modes and contents to provide more choices and convenience for the majority of learners.

## 1. Proposal and Development of Lifelong Education Concept

With the rapid development of society, economy, and science and technology, human beings gradually

realize that the speed of knowledge renewal is accelerated and individuals need to learn continuously throughout their lives to adapt to the changes of society. Lifelong education emphasizes the continuous learning and updating of knowledge and skills throughout an individual's life, from birth to death, to adapt to the changing social environment and personal development needs. The development and promotion of the concept of lifelong education have prompted governments and education departments in various countries to pay attention to the improvement and innovation of education policies, resulting in the formation of a multi-level, multi-disciplinary, and multiform education system including basic education, vocational education, higher education and adult education (Wang, 2022). In the field of education, people have begun to pay attention to the subject status of learners, emphasize personalized and differentiated educational needs, and advocate independent, active, and effective learning. At the same time, educators have gradually changed from being mere knowledge imparters to multiple roles such as guides, facilitators, and

**Corresponding Author:** Han Zheng

Nanjing Vocational University of Industry Technology, China

Email: [370886411@qq.com](mailto:370886411@qq.com)

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evaluators. Based on the rapid development of information technology, especially the application of the Internet, big data, artificial intelligence, and other technologies, the concept of lifelong education has been more widely disseminated and practiced. New education modes such as network education, distance education, and online learning have come into being, breaking the time and space limitations of traditional education and providing more convenient and richer ways for lifelong learning.

## **2. Development background of college continuing education in the new era**

### **2.1 New requirements of higher education for Social and economic development**

As an important base for talent training, higher education needs to cultivate talents with an innovative spirit, international vision, and cross-cultural communication ability to meet the development trend of globalization. Colleges and universities need to pay attention to the frontier dynamics of industrial development, adjust the curriculum and professional direction, and cultivate applied and composite talents that meet the market demand. At the same time, they also need to strengthen cooperation with enterprises and industries, promote the integrated development of industry-university research, and provide intellectual support for social and economic development. In addition, colleges and universities need to make use of modern information technology, innovate education and teaching methods, improve education and teaching quality, cultivate students' lifelong learning ability based on their individual needs, and enable them to adapt to the needs of knowledge updating and skill upgrading. Higher education needs to focus on cultivating students' sense of social responsibility, based on cultivating talents with all-round development of moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic abilities, and contribute to building a harmonious society and achieving sustainable development (Chen & Wu, 2022).

### **2.2 The Need for industrial upgrading and talent structure change**

In the context of current rapid social and economic development, industrial upgrading and talent structure change have become urgent problems for all countries. Industrial upgrading means the transformation from traditional labor-intensive industries to knowledge-intensive and technology-intensive industries, relying on high-quality talents with innovative spirit and practical ability. At the same time, the emergence of new industries, such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, new energy, etc., is changing the demand for talent. In today's society, all industries need talents with interdisciplinary knowledge and cross-disciplinary skills, who can communicate and cooperate effectively between different fields and promote innovation and development. To meet this demand, universities need to break the barriers of disciplines, promote the integration and development of interdisciplinary disciplines, and cultivate composite talents with broad knowledge vision, flexible thinking, and innovation ability (Cao, 2022). With the increasing speed of knowledge updating, colleges and universities should cultivate students with the ability and consciousness of lifelong learning, and be able to update and improve themselves in the ever-changing social environment.

## **3. The transformation and development path of college continuing education under the perspective of lifelong education**

### **3.1 Establish the concept and guiding ideology of lifelong education**

The concept of lifelong education is a new concept of education born in the background of the knowledge economy, which emphasizes the need for individuals to continuously learn and update their knowledge and skills throughout their life cycle to adapt to the changes of social development and the needs of personal growth. The guiding ideology of lifelong education is to promote the all-round development of human beings, build a harmonious society and achieve sustainable development. In the process of establishing the concept and guiding ideology of lifelong education, the whole society

should be advocated to establish the concept of lifelong learning and improve people's learning awareness and independent learning ability so that everyone can remain competitive and innovative in the ever-changing social environment (Xia, 2022). The education sector should advocate promoting educational equity and quality education to ensure that everyone has equal access to education and to cultivate talents with all-around development of moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic qualities.

### **3.2 Improve the system and curriculum of continuing education**

Colleges and universities need to adjust and optimize the curriculum closely with the frontier dynamics of industrial development and market demand for talents, to cultivate applied and complex talents with innovative spirit, practical ability, and international vision. At the same time, focus on interdisciplinary integration and crossover, so that the curriculum content is more relevant, practical, and forward-looking to meet the needs of talents in different industries and fields. In terms of continuing education curricula, more attention needs to be paid to practicality and applicability, combining theoretical knowledge with practical application. For example, case teaching, course design, and practical operation can be used to improve the practical operation ability and problem-solving ability of students, and a combination of online and offline teaching modes should be used so that students can flexibly choose learning methods, such as online courses, distance education, and face-to-face courses, to meet the needs of different students (Liang, 2022). Integration in terms of teaching resources, using existing resources, such as high-quality teachers and laboratory equipment, provides learners with richer and more comprehensive learning resources. In terms of teaching content, courses on vocational skills, industry knowledge, and management skills can be set up to meet the different needs of trainees. During the learning process, the interaction and communication with the trainees should be strengthened to stimulate their learning interest and motivation through discussion, Q&A, and practice,

so that they can participate in learning more actively and improve the learning effect.

At the same time, we should focus on vocational training and practical ability enhancement, and provide trainees with course content and teaching methods that are closer to actual career needs. Teaching methods such as case analysis, simulation training, and field trips are used to expose trainees to real vocational problems in the classroom and develop the ability to solve practical problems. At the same time, industry experts and enterprise representatives are invited to give lectures and share experiences, provide the latest industry information and practical experience, and provide trainees with all-around vocational training and ability enhancement.

### **3.3 Strengthen the construction and training of faculty**

Colleges and universities should select professionals with high academic levels and rich experience in education and teaching so that they can provide high-quality education and teaching services for students, introduce experts, scholars, and technicians with rich practical experience, and enrich the structure and level of the teaching staff. Targeted training programs are developed for different disciplines, fields, and educational stages to improve teachers' professionalism, educational teaching ability, and innovation consciousness, and the training should cover various aspects such as updating subject knowledge, reforming educational teaching methods, and applying information technology to ensure that teachers can adapt to the educational teaching requirements of the new era (Lu, 2022). In addition, teachers should be encouraged to actively participate in academic research and educational practice activities, and through scientific research projects, academic exchanges, and cooperative research, they should be encouraged to continuously improve their academic level and innovation ability, to provide intellectual support for educational teaching reform and development. Colleges and universities should formulate a scientific and reasonable evaluation system and

evaluate teachers' performance in many aspects, such as teaching effect, academic achievement, and social service, to stimulate teachers' enthusiasm and innovative spirit in education and teaching, and at the same time, they should establish a competitive salary system and give corresponding rewards and incentives to teachers according to their performance level, so that teachers can give full play to their talents and creativity in teaching and scientific research. In order to promote the continuous improvement of the quality of education and teaching in universities.

### **3.4 Deepen the collaborative innovation and service to society by industry-university-research**

Through various forms such as establishing industry-university-research alliances, and jointly building research centers and technological innovation platforms, we promote resource sharing and complementary advantages between universities and enterprises and industries, promote the transformation of scientific and technological achievements into actual productivity, and enhance the competitiveness of the country and the region. Universities should actively participate in national and regional major science and technology projects, as well as key areas of socio-economic development and strategic emerging industries to transform scientific research achievements into real productivity and provide scientific and technological support to solve major problems in social development (Sun, 2022). For example, Tsinghua University and Beijing Automotive Group cooperate to develop new energy vehicle technology, and the research team of Tsinghua University has accumulated a lot of technical experience in new energy vehicle batteries and motor control through years of research. The new energy vehicles jointly developed by Beijing Automotive Group and Tsinghua University adopt advanced technologies developed by Tsinghua University's research team, such as battery materials, motor control, energy saving, consumption reduction technologies, etc. Meanwhile, using the products and sales channels of Beijing Automotive Group, these technologies are

transformed into practical application products, which promote the development of the new energy vehicle industry and contribute to economic development. The successful implementation of this project not only enhanced Tsinghua University's technical strength and cooperation between industry, academia, and research in the field of new energy vehicles, and also promoted the development of China's new energy vehicle industry. In the process of education and teaching, it pays full attention to the actual needs of enterprises and industries, cultivates application-oriented and compound talents with an innovative spirit, practical ability, and international vision, and delivers high-quality talents for social and economic development. At the same time, it promotes universities to take social responsibility and actively participate in public welfare and social services. Through carrying out public welfare activities such as scientific and technological poverty alleviation, education support, and cultural dissemination, the scientific and technological achievements and intellectual resources of universities can better serve society and help build a harmonious society. For example, Peking University has set up the "Peking University Education Support Center for Poverty-stricken Counties" in several poor counties in southwest China, helping local children to get better educational resources and improve their learning level by carrying out various educational activities, donating school supplies and providing scholarships for students.

### **3.5 Innovative Education and teaching methods and Means**

In teaching, the concept of student-centered education should be highlighted, and attention should be paid to students' individual needs and development potential. In the teaching process, teachers should pay attention to students' interests, strengths, and actual needs, teach according to their abilities, stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning and innovation, and cultivate talents with critical thinking and independent thinking ability. Apply multimedia, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and other technological tools to the education and

teaching process to improve teaching effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, project-based, problem-based, research-based, and other practice-oriented education and teaching models are implemented. Students are encouraged to find problems, analyze them, and solve them in practical problems to improve their practical operation ability and innovation consciousness (Wu, 2022). School-enterprise cooperation between universities and enterprises is very important to provide students with more opportunities for internship practice, to understand the real workplace environment and work demands, to motivate students to apply what they have learned to actual work, and to cultivate applied talents with practical ability. Through school-enterprise cooperation, enterprises can provide colleges and universities with practical teaching places and resources, provide teaching internship positions and talent demand, participate in course design and practical teaching, provide research and practical projects, etc., so as to promote the improvement of teaching quality and in-depth development of teaching reform in colleges and universities. Meanwhile, universities can use the platform of university-enterprise cooperation to carry out scientific research cooperation and technology transfer, transform scientific research achievements into productivity, and promote scientific and technological innovation and industrial development. University-enterprise cooperation can promote a multi-win situation for universities, enterprises, and society, improve the education and teaching level of universities, cultivate more excellent talents for society, and provide strong support for economic and social development.

#### 4. Conclusion

To sum up, the transformation and development of college continuing education in the new era is a complex and urgent subject. Colleges and universities need to establish the concept of lifelong education, conform to the new requirements of social and economic development, and closely combine the needs of industrial upgrading and talent structure

change to cope with competition and challenges. To this end, colleges and universities should establish the correct guiding ideology, improve the system and curriculum of continuing education, strengthen the construction and training of teachers, deepen the collaborative innovation of industry-university-research and service to society, and innovate the education and teaching methods and means. Only in this way can college continuing education play a greater role in the new era and lay a solid foundation for cultivating talents with innovative spirit and practical ability.

#### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to this work.

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