

# Research on the Path of Five-Year Higher Vocational Practical Education in the New Era: A Case Study of Wujin Branch of Jiangsu Union of Vocational Colleges



Jingrui Gao<sup>\*,1</sup> & Meirong Zhu<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Changzhou Vocational College of Technology, China

**Abstract:** In the context of the new era, the five-year higher vocational education is facing the needs of social and economic development, the reform and innovation of the education system, and the needs of students' personal development, but at the same time, it also encounters the dilemmas such as the lack of educational resources, the incomplete cooperation between schools and enterprises, and the disconnection between students' practical ability and the social needs. In this paper, taking the Wujin Branch of Jiangsu Union as an example, we discuss the path of five-year higher vocational practical education, including strengthening school-enterprise cooperation, improving the curriculum system, and strengthening the construction of the teaching staff. Through the implementation of specific measures, it aims to improve the quality of practical teaching in higher vocational education and cultivate high-quality technical and skilled talents to meet the needs of society.

**Keywords:** five-year system; higher vocational; practical education; paths

## Introduction

With the rapid development of China's economy and industrial upgrading, the demand for highly skilled personnel is increasing, and the importance of vocational education is becoming more and more prominent. As an important way to cultivate high-quality technical and skilled talents, how to realize high-quality development in the context of the new era of five-year higher vocational education has become a hot spot of current educational research. As a representative of five-year higher vocational education, the exploration and practice of practical education at the Wujin Branch of Jiangsu Union, is of great significance. The school adheres to the school motto of "Virtue, Precision, Integration of Skills in the Way", has formed the strategy of "Integration" cultural governance, and adheres to the cultivation concepts of "Academic Qualification+ Skills", "Moral Education + Vocational Literacy". According to this concept, the school established "improve quality, enhance the connotation, to create

a high-quality upgraded version of the" medium- and long-term development goals, and is actively striving to create a "Rooted in Jiangsu, leading the country, the world level," the province's secondary vocational pilot school. Therefore, combined with the actual situation of the Wujin branch of Jiangsu Union, putting forward targeted paths and solutions to promote the innovative development of higher vocational education can provide a reference.

## 1. Analysis of the Necessity of Five-year Higher Vocational Practical Education in the Context of the New Era

### 1.1 Demand for social and economic development

The social and economic development of the new era is experiencing rapid industrial upgrading and technological progress, and this change is increasing the demand for highly skilled personnel. With the rapid development of science and technology and the acceleration of industrialization, traditional industries are undergoing in-depth technological transformation and upgrading, and new industries are also emerging. Against this background,

**Corresponding Author:** Jingrui Gao  
Changzhou Vocational College of Technology, China  
Email: 425898732@qq.com

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the demand of enterprises for high-quality talents with advanced technology and professional skills is becoming more and more urgent. Five-year higher vocational education can better meet this demand through its unique cultivation mode and longer learning cycle. In the process of five-year higher vocational education, students can not only learn theoretical knowledge systematically but also master advanced professional skills through a large number of practical courses and the construction of practical training bases. This long-time systematic training gives students not only a solid theoretical foundation but also strong practical operation ability and innovation ability when they graduate, which can meet the industry's demand for highly skilled personnel (Huang, 2024). In addition, with the rapid development of the economy, the structural changes in the labor market have become more and more significant. The traditional low-skilled labor positions are gradually decreasing, while the demand for high-skilled and high-quality talents is rising. When recruiting, enterprises pay more attention to the applicants' practical operation ability and problem-solving ability, rather than just the mastery of theoretical knowledge. Five-year higher vocational education has unique advantages in this regard. Through rich practical opportunities and in-depth professional knowledge education, students can fully understand the industry dynamics and career needs during school, and accumulate valuable practical experience. This enables them to quickly adapt to the requirements of the workplace after graduation and have stronger competitiveness in the job market.

### **1.2 Reform and innovation of the education system**

In the context of the new era, the reform and innovation of the education system have become an important direction to improve the quality of education, and the new era has put forward higher requirements for the quality of education, with special emphasis on the practicality and applicability of education. Five-year higher vocational education provides students with a longer period of systematic learning by extending the number of years of study, which can not only comprehensively cover the basic theoretical knowledge, but also increase the practical courses and the construction of practical training bases, and provide students with more opportunities for practical operation (Zhang, 2023a). This teaching mode can significantly improve the quality of

education so that students can operate practically and the spirit of innovation while mastering theoretical knowledge, to cultivate high-quality talents in line with the needs of modern industry. Through such training, students are not only able to quickly adapt to the requirements of the workplace when they graduate but also can show strong innovative ability in practical work and promote the development of their industry. The integration of vocational education and general education has become an important trend in the reform of the education system. Traditionally, vocational education and general education have been regarded as two distinct educational paths, but in the context of the new era, this line is gradually blurred. The five-year higher vocational education enhances the comprehensive quality of students and fosters their all-round development through the introduction of more general education courses, such as humanistic literacy, social sciences, and natural sciences. Meanwhile, vocational education still maintains its core strengths and focuses on the cultivation of vocational skills. Such a curriculum not only enables students to improve their professional skills but also equips them with a broad knowledge background and strong comprehensive ability so that they can better adapt to the changing social and professional environment.

### **1.3 Needs of students' personal development**

In the context of the new era, five-year higher vocational education pays special attention to the needs of students' personal development, covering both the cultivation of vocational literacy and the comprehensive development of personal ability. Five-year higher vocational education focuses on the cultivation of students' vocational literacy, which is an important part of modern vocational education. Vocational literacy not only includes professional ethics and a sense of professional responsibility but also involves teamwork spirit, professional etiquette, and other aspects. Through systematic practical education, students can understand vocational requirements in actual operation, form good vocational habits, and possess a high standard of vocational ethics and a sense of responsibility. Such a cultivation process helps students gain a foothold in their future careers, establish correct professional views and values, and ensure that they always maintain professional attitudes and behaviors in a complex and changing work environment. At the

same time, five-year higher vocational education also pays attention to the overall development of students' abilities. Practical education is not only to cultivate students' professional skills but also to enhance their comprehensive abilities, including communication skills, problem-solving skills, and innovation (Zhang, 2023b). Through rich and varied practical activities, students can practice their communication skills in real work scenarios, learn to cooperate effectively with team members, and be able to apply what they have learned to respond flexibly when facing practical problems. This accumulation of practical experience enables students not only to cope with the challenges of daily work but also to show creativity and problem-solving ability when encountering complex problems.

## **2. Difficulties Faced by Five-year Higher Vocational Practical Education in the Context of the New Era**

### **2.1 Scarcity and uneven distribution of educational resources**

In the context of the new era, one of the main dilemmas faced by five-year higher vocational practical educators is the lack of educational resources and uneven distribution. Many higher vocational colleges and universities have significant deficiencies in practical teaching resources. For example, problems such as outdated or insufficient experimental equipment, inadequate facilities in training bases, and limited opportunities for off-campus internships have greatly restricted students' ability to obtain adequate opportunities for practical operations. The lack of practical teaching resources directly affects the cultivation and enhancement of students' vocational skills, making it difficult for them to quickly adapt to the actual needs of the workplace after graduation. At the same time, the teachers of higher vocational colleges and universities are also facing a weak dilemma. Although some teachers have rich theoretical knowledge, there is still a relative lack of "Dual-teacher" (teachers with both rich practical experience and theoretical teaching ability). Many teachers lack practical work experience, and it is difficult to effectively combine theoretical knowledge with practical operation, which not only affects the quality of practical teaching but also restricts the cultivation of students' practical operation ability.

### **2.2 Incomplete school-enterprise cooperation Mechanism**

In the context of the new era, another major dilemma faced by five-year higher vocational practical education is the unsound mechanism of school-enterprise cooperation. Although school-enterprise cooperation has been widely recognized in higher vocational education, much of the cooperation in actual operation is only a formality and lacks depth and substantive content. Enterprises are not highly motivated to participate in teaching, resulting in cooperation programs that often lack a long-term and systematic nature and cannot effectively support students' practical learning. Such shallow cooperation not only fails to fully utilize the resources and expertise of enterprises but also makes it difficult to provide students with truly valuable practice opportunities (Wang, 2023). The low participation of enterprises is an important reason for the unsoundness of school-enterprise cooperation. Some enterprises have insufficient knowledge of school-enterprise cooperation and believe that participation in cooperation will increase the cost and risk of enterprises, thus they have little willingness to participate. Enterprises tend to focus on short-term interests in cooperation and lack concern for education quality and long-term development. Due to the lack of in-depth participation in education, it is difficult for enterprises to provide systematic and long-term cooperation programs, which directly affects the effect of cooperation and makes it impossible for students to get sufficient guidance and support in practical operation.

### **2.3 Disconnection between students' practical ability and social demand**

In the context of the new era, the third major dilemma faced by five-year higher vocational practical education is the disconnection between students' practical ability and social demand, and the problem of irrational curriculum is prominent, and many higher vocational colleges and universities pay too much attention to the theoretical teaching in the curriculum and neglect the importance of practical teaching. The content of the curriculum often has a certain disconnect with the actual occupational needs, resulting in a mismatch between what students learn and the actual job requirements. Although students receive systematic theoretical education during their school years, due to the lack of sufficient practical training, it is difficult for them to give full play to

their strengths in the job market, and they are unable to quickly adapt to the actual requirements of the workplace. This irrationality of the curriculum directly affects the overall development of students' vocational ability (Wu & Cao, 2023). The unsatisfactory effect of internship is also an important reason for the disconnection between students' practical ability and social demand. During the off-campus internship, students usually can only engage in some simple and low-skilled work, and it is difficult for them to participate in the actual operation of their professional fields. This kind of internship arrangement can't give full play to the professional knowledge students have learned and can't effectively improve their practical hands-on ability. Due to the lack of professional practice opportunities, students often feel at a loss when facing complex work tasks after graduation, and it is difficult to transform theoretical knowledge into practical operational skills. The unsatisfactory effect of internship not only limits the students' professional ability but also affects their in-depth understanding and practical application of the specialized knowledge they have learned.

### **3. The Path of Five-year Higher Vocational Practical Education in the Context of the New Era**

#### **3.1 Strengthen school-enterprise cooperation and build the mechanism of integration of production and education**

In the context of the new era, strengthening school-enterprise cooperation and constructing the mechanism of integration of production and education requires deepening the mode of school-enterprise cooperation, promoting the in-depth cooperation between schools and enterprises, and organically combining the practical operational needs of enterprises with the educational resources of schools using building practical training bases and developing curricula through school-enterprise cooperation, to improve the effect of practical teaching and the students' practical operational ability (Xue, 2023). This close cooperation mechanism can effectively expose students to real-life vocational environments and work challenges in the learning process, thus better preparing them for the challenges of their careers. Promoting dual-system education is an important path to building the mechanism of industry-education integration. Drawing on the successful dual system

education model in Germany and other countries, students' theoretical and practical abilities are synchronized through the provision of practical positions by enterprises, students' learning in the actual working environment, and the teaching of theoretical knowledge by schools. This model not only enables students to obtain real work experience and practical skills during school but also effectively shortens the adaptation period after graduation and improves their employment competitiveness and career development space. The establishment of cooperative projects and internship programs is an important measure to build the mechanism of industry-education integration. Higher vocational colleges and enterprises can jointly set up all kinds of cooperative projects and internship programs, and regularly select and send students to enterprises for internship. In the process of internship, enterprise mentors and school mentors jointly guide the students to ensure that they can apply what they have learned in real work and obtain systematic vocational skills training. Wujin Branch of Jiangsu Union of Technology cooperates with 186 enterprises and five industrial parks in the Changwu area, actively implements the pilot reform of the "New Modern Apprenticeship System", and has cooperated with famous Chinese and foreign enterprises such as Xingyu Auto Lighting and Siemens to run schools, and has set up 18 talent cultivation bases, 28 order classes, 28 off-campus classes, and 28 off-campus classes. It has established 18 talent cultivation bases, 28 "Order classes" and 67 off-campus training bases, and set up Changzhou Mingdu Automobile Vocational Education Group and Wujin Vocational Education Group. This kind of cooperation program not only provides students with valuable practice opportunities, but also strengthens the interaction and cooperation between schools and enterprises, promotes the sharing and optimization of educational resources, and further improves the quality of education and the overall quality of students (Li & Feng, 2019).

#### **3.2 Improve the curriculum system and enhance the quality of education**

In the context of the new era, perfecting the curriculum system and improving the quality of education is an important path for the five-year higher vocational practice of educating people, and optimizing the curriculum is one of the key measures. According to the market demand and industry

development trend, higher vocational colleges and universities should adjust and optimize the curriculum, increase the proportion of practical courses, and ensure that students can get sufficient practical training during school. At the same time, the introduction of emerging technologies and cutting-edge knowledge of the industry enhance the practicality and foresight of the curriculum, so that students can keep pace with technological development and be fully prepared for their future careers. Constructing a modularization curriculum system is an effective way to improve the quality of education. Adopting a modularization curriculum system organically combines theoretical courses with practical courses, and conducts teaching in stages and modules. This approach can ensure that students are exposed to practical content at different stages of study, and gradually improve their practical ability and ability to cope with complex problems. Through the modularization teaching design, schools can make teaching arrangements more flexibly according to the learning progress and ability characteristics of students and enhance the teaching effect and the quality of learning outcomes. Strengthening the construction of practical training bases is an important guarantee for improving the quality of education. Higher vocational colleges and universities should invest resources in building modern on- and off-campus practical training bases equipped with advanced equipment and facilities to simulate the real working environment. Through the on-campus practical training bases, students can carry out simulation training to improve their practical operation ability and skill level. At the same time, it actively seeks the support and cooperation of enterprises to jointly build off-campus practical training bases to provide students with more diversified and realistic practical experiences. The construction of such practical training bases can not only effectively make up for the limitations of classroom teaching, but also promote in-depth cooperation between schools and enterprises, and enhance the ability of schools to cultivate students' practical abilities and market competitiveness (Hu, 2016).

### **3.3 Strengthen the construction of teachers and improve teachers' practical ability**

In the context of the new era, strengthening the construction of teachers and improving teachers' practical ability is the key path to five-year higher

vocational education, and the introduction of "Dual-teacher" is one of the key initiatives. Higher vocational colleges and universities should strengthen the construction of "Dual-teacher" teachers and introduce industry experts and technical experts with rich practical experience to teach in schools. These teachers not only have a strong theoretical foundation, but also can bring practical work experience into the classroom to provide students with close to the actual teaching guidance and practical training, and through the way of enterprise attachment, skills training, etc., they can also improve the practical ability of the existing teachers and the teaching level, to make them have a stronger ability to guide the practice. Carrying out teacher training and exchange is an effective way to improve the practical ability of the teaching force. Higher vocational colleges and universities should regularly organize teachers to participate in industry training, skill competitions, and academic exchange activities, through which the professional level and practical ability of teachers can be improved. At the same time, teachers are encouraged to maintain close contact with enterprises, keep abreast of the latest industry dynamics and technological development, and integrate the latest practical experience and cases into teaching practice, to enhance the practicality and relevance of teaching (Gao et al., 2012). Constructing a teacher practice platform is another important measure to enhance the practice ability of the faculty. Higher vocational colleges and universities can establish teachers' practice platforms and encourage teachers to go to enterprises for practical exercises and exchanges. By participating in enterprise practice, teachers can gain an in-depth understanding of the actual operation and needs of the industry and enhance their practical operation ability and teaching experience. This kind of practical experience not only enables teachers to better combine theoretical knowledge with practical operation, but also enhances their teaching quality and teaching effect, and provides more comprehensive and in-depth guidance and support for students' career development.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the context of the new era, the dilemma faced by five-year higher vocational practical education needs to be overcome through multi-party collaboration and sustained efforts. By

strengthening school-enterprise cooperation and building the mechanism of industry-teaching fusion, the practical ability and employment competitiveness of students can be effectively enhanced; by improving the curriculum system and increasing the proportion of practical teaching, the students can be provided with more practical training during their school years to enhance their comprehensive quality; by Strengthening the construction of teaching staff and training "Dual-teacher" can improve the quality of teaching and promote the close integration of education and actual demand. The exploration and practice of the Wujin Branch of Jiangsu Union provide useful experience and inspiration for five-year higher vocational practice and education, and in the future, it is necessary to further deepen the reform and innovation and to promote the high-quality development of higher vocational education to provide strong talents for the development of social and economic development. Provide strong talent support for social and economic development.

#### Conflict of Interest

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

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