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Pathways and Strategies for Integrating Labor Education into Nautical English Curriculum in Higher Vocational Colleges

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Abstract: ***With the global shipping industry transitioning towards intelligent and green development, and the continuous increase in demands for the comprehensive quality of seafarers, the drawbacks of the traditional Nautical English teaching in higher vocational colleges, which "emphasizes language skills over professional attributes," are becoming increasingly apparent. Based on the dual backgrounds of "Curriculum Ideology and Politics" and "Industry-Education Integration," this paper deeply explores the necessity and feasibility of organically integrating the core connotations of labor education into Nautical English teaching. The research constructs a theoretical model of three-dimensional integration of "value shaping, knowledge imparting, and skill cultivation," and systematically proposes specific implementation paths and strategies from four dimensions: curriculum objective reconstruction, teaching content reorganization, teaching model innovation, and evaluation system reform. Combining personal teaching practice, the author uses a typical teaching unit as an example to demonstrate how to infiltrate the labor spirit into the Nautical English classroom, aiming to provide a referential plan for cultivating new-era maritime talents with both proficient English communication skills and excellent labor literacy and firm professional faith.***

Keywords: Labor Education, Nautical English, Implementation Path, Industry-Education Integration, Curriculum Ideology and Politics.

1. Introduction

Under the background of the new era, China is steadily advancing from a large shipping country to a powerful shipping nation. The realization of this grand goal is inseparable from a high-quality, compound-type maritime talent team. Higher vocational colleges, as the cradle of maritime talent cultivation, have a teaching quality directly related to the future of the shipping industry. Nautical English, as the common language of the international shipping industry, is a core tool for seafarers to conduct external communication, ensure navigation safety, and fulfill international conventions; its teaching importance is self-evident. However, it cannot be ignored that the current Nautical English teaching in many higher vocational colleges still exhibits a relatively obvious "exam-oriented" tendency. This model, to some extent, weakens the intrinsic connection between the curriculum and real onboard working scenarios and complex labor practices, potentially resulting in students possessing certain test-taking abilities but lacking in professional identity, teamwork spirit, safety responsibility awareness, and the ability to solve practical problems. This phenomenon can be summarized as the disconnection between "language" and "labor."

It is precisely against this background that the "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening Labor Education in Schools of All Levels and Types in the New Era" issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council points out a new direction for the reform of specialized courses in higher vocational education. Labor education does not simply involve students engaging in manual labor; its core lies in promoting the spirit of labor, the craftsman spirit, and the model worker spirit, and cultivating students' correct labor values and good labor qualities. For the shipping industry, which is highly practical and risky, these spiritual qualities are highly consistent with the maritime culture of "crossing the river in the same boat, loving one's post and dedicating oneself to work, safety first." Therefore, integrating labor education into the Nautical English curriculum is by no means a rigid "grafting," but rather a profound "chemical reaction," an inevitable requirement for improving the quality of talent cultivation. This paper aims to respond to this practical need, attempt to construct a feasible integration model, and focus on the core question of "how to effectively integrate," launching an in-depth discussion on implementation paths and strategies.

2. Theoretical Foundation: The Internal Logical Connection between Labor Education and the Nautical English Curriculum

2.1 The High Unity between the Core Connotation of Labor Education and Maritime Professional Spirit

Labor education aims to shape students' emotion of respecting and loving labor, and cultivate their character of working hard, honestly, and creatively. Specifically, the diligence and dedication advocated by the labor spirit are highly consistent with seafarers' adherence to their posts and silent dedication during long voyages; the excellence and pursuit of perfection emphasized by the craftsman spirit are precisely reflected in every operational detail of excellent seafarers, such as equipment maintenance, route planning, and cargo lashing; the innovation leadership and courage to take responsibility demonstrated by the model worker spirit are also essential qualities for the maritime field to cope with intelligent challenges and ensure maritime safety. It can be seen that the core of labor education naturally aligns with the maritime professional spirit, providing a value foundation for integration.

2.2 The Essence of the Nautical English Curriculum: An Applied Discipline Oriented towards Real Labor Scenarios

Nautical English is not a purely linguistic or literary course; its essence is a work language serving a specific professional field (English for Occupational Purposes). Each of its teaching modules corresponds to specific labor scenarios onboard: from the deck department's line handling, anchoring/mooring operations, cargo loading/unloading commands, to the engine department's equipment operation, maintenance and repair, and to ship-wide emergency drills, medical assistance, and Port State Control (PSC) inspections. These scenarios are all organized, standardized, and risky labor practices. Therefore, Nautical English teaching has been inextricably linked to labor practice since its inception, which provides the content carrier for integration.

2.3 Construction of the "Value-Knowledge-Skill" Three-Dimensional Integration Model

Based on the above analysis, the author proposes the following integration model:

Value Dimension (The Soul of Labor Education): This is the top-level design of integration. Consciously guide students during the teaching process to understand the value and dignity of maritime labor, establish the responsibility awareness that "safety is above all," cultivate the contract spirit of adhering to international rules (such as the Maritime Labour Convention, MLC), and the patriotic sentiment of safeguarding national shipping rights and interests.

Knowledge Dimension (The Foundation of Intellectual Education): This is the carrier of integration. Closely combine language knowledge (professional vocabulary, sentence structures) with maritime labor knowledge (operating procedures, safety regulations, convention clauses), enabling students to clearly understand the specific labor content served by the language.

Skill Dimension (The Essence of Practice): This is the foothold of integration. Through simulation training, project tasks, etc., transform English listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation skills into practical abilities to execute tasks, communicate and collaborate, and solve problems in simulated or real labor scenarios.

These three dimensions support and promote each other, jointly constituting a complete education system.

3. Core Construction: Implementation Paths for Integrating Labor Education into the Nautical English Curriculum

3.1 Path One: Reconstruction and Layering of Curriculum Objectives

First, systematically reconstruct the curriculum objectives to reflect the requirements of three-dimensional integration. The overall goal needs to cultivate senior seafarers who can skillfully use English for professional communication, deeply understand and respect maritime labor, and possess good professional attributes and safety awareness. Specific layered objectives include: 1) Value Objective: require students to be able to explain the significant importance of maritime labor, identify with the value of the seafaring profession, and demonstrate rigorous and responsible work attitudes; 2) Knowledge Objective: require students to master professional English expressions in key labor scenarios and understand the operating procedures and safety standards behind them; 3) Skill Objective: require students to be able to use English effectively for team communication, task reporting, and handling emergencies in simulated work scenarios.

3.2 Path Two: Systematic Reorganization and Project-Based Design of Teaching Content

Conduct secondary development of existing textbook content, deeply excavating elements of labor education.

Case Embedding: For example, when teaching the "Ship Maintenance" unit, besides learning vocabulary such as "paint work" and "chipping hammer," a real work guide or accident case can be introduced, emphasizing the serious consequences that may arise from non-standard maintenance operations, thereby infiltrating the concepts of "craftsman spirit" and "safety first."

Developing Supplementary Materials: Compile loose-leaf supplementary teaching materials, including authentic English documents such as "Port State Control Inspection Reports," equipment maintenance record sheets, and cargo stowage plans, allowing students to contact original "labor documents."

Designing Comprehensive Teaching Projects: For example, design a two-week "Dangerous Goods Loading" project. Students need to work in groups to complete: consulting relevant clauses of the "International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code" (reading/translation), formulating a loading/unloading plan (writing), holding a pre-work safety meeting (speaking), and simulating on-site command and emergency response (listening/speaking). The entire project process simulates real labor procedures, comprehensively exercising various abilities.

3.3 Path Three: Innovation and Practice of Teaching Models

Change the traditional teacher-centered lecture model and adopt the following methods:

Situational Simulation Teaching Method: Make full use of navigation simulators to create high-pressure situations such as "Emergency Response to Main Engine Failure" and "Navigation under Severe Weather Conditions," requiring students to complete a series of operations in English under time constraints, including information reporting, decision-making consultation, and order issuance, experiencing the psychological pressure and collaboration needs in real labor.

Role-Playing and Task-Driven Method: In the "Berthing/Unberthing" unit, students play roles such as captain, pilot, tugboat captain, and line handler, completing the entire operational process through oral communication via VHF radio. The success or failure of the task directly depends on the accuracy of communication and the smoothness of collaboration.

Case-Based Teaching Method: Analyze real maritime cases, such as collision accidents caused by communication misunderstandings, guiding students to discuss the inevitable connection between language accuracy, adherence to work procedures, and navigation safety, thereby reinforcing labor discipline awareness from the opposite side.

3.4 Path Four: Diversification Reform of the Assessment and Evaluation System

Establish a matching diversified evaluation system where the "baton" points towards comprehensive attributes. Increase the weight of process assessment, incorporating students' performance in project learning, simulation operations, and class discussions (such as initiative, collaboration, standardization) into the overall evaluation, potentially raising the proportion to 50% or higher. Introduce multiple evaluation subjects, implementing a combination of teacher evaluation, group peer evaluation, and student self-evaluation. Group peer evaluation can effectively reflect students' team contribution. Enrich assessment forms, besides the final written exam, add practical assessment components, such as simulated scenario oral tests, project reports (e.g., writing an English voyage plan), practical works (e.g., recording an English explanatory video of a standard operating procedure), etc.

4. Key Support: Specific Strategies to Ensure Integration Implementation

4.1 Teacher Team Enhancement Strategy

Teachers are the key to successful integration. Vigorously promote the construction of a "dual-qualified" teacher team. Encourage English teachers to regularly undertake shipboard practice or conduct enterprise research, personally experience maritime labor, and accumulate first-hand cases. Simultaneously, organize specialized training on labor education concepts and teaching methods to enhance teachers' curriculum design and implementation capabilities.

4.2 Practical Teaching Condition Optimization Strategy

Strengthen the construction of on-campus training conditions, making the Nautical English simulation training room as close as possible to the real ship environment. Actively cooperate with well-known shipping enterprises (such as COSCO SHIPPING Group, China Merchants Group, etc.) to build off-campus internship bases, allowing students to hone their English application skills in real labor scenarios during post internships, achieving the ultimate sublimation of "applying what they learn."

4.3 School-Enterprise Collaborative Education Strategy

Regularly invite enterprise experts, experienced captains/chief engineers into the classroom to conduct lectures or workshops, sharing labor stories and lessons learned from their careers. Directly introduce the enterprise's safety culture and management standards into course teaching and evaluation, enabling a seamless connection between talent cultivation specifications and industry needs.

5. Practical Case: Taking the "English Communication for Ship Arrival/Departure" Unit as an Example

The original unit objective was to master standard communication phrases. The new objective after integrating labor education is to understand that arrival/departure is a collective labor task requiring high collaboration and standards, and to cultivate rigorous, efficient communication habits and a high sense of responsibility.

The teaching implementation process is as follows: 1) Pre-class (Value Guidance and Knowledge Preview): Require students to watch clips related to ship arrival/departure in the documentary "Maritime Legends" or read an English report about the work of pilots, initially experience the complexity and collaboration of the work, and preview VHF standard communication phrases. 2) In-class (Skill Training and Value Infiltration): The teacher briefly explains key phrases and communication procedures (knowledge consolidation). Students conduct role-playing (captain, pilot, tugboat, dock, etc.) on the full-mission simulator, completing the entire process of English communication drills from pilot boarding to safe berthing. After the drill, the teacher guides a debriefing: "What risks might ambiguity in a certain instruction bring?" "How to ensure seamless information transfer in teamwork?" Thereby sublimating language skill training into the cultivation of safety responsibility awareness. 3) Post-class (Ability Extension and Reflection): Students, in groups, write an English "Post-Operation Evaluation Report" for this exercise, covering a summary of the operational process, analysis of communication effectiveness, identification of potential risks, and improvement suggestions, simulating the requirements of the onboard Safety Management System. 4) Assessment Method: Simulation operation performance (40%, focusing on communication accuracy and teamwork) + Evaluation report (30%, focusing on reflection depth and written expression) + Group contribution peer evaluation (30%).

6. Conclusion and Outlook

Integrating labor education into the Nautical English curriculum in higher vocational colleges is an inevitable choice to conform to the development of the times and improve the quality of talent cultivation. The "Value-Knowledge-Skill" three-dimensional model proposed in this paper and the derived four implementation paths and supporting strategies have been preliminarily verified through teaching practice to be feasible and effective. It helps to bridge the gap between language learning and professional practice, enabling students to form excellent labor literacy and professional spirit subtly while mastering professional English.

Of course, this integration process still faces challenges, such as high requirements for teachers' interdisciplinary abilities, and the time-consuming and labor-intensive systematic development of teaching resources. In the future, with the development of smart shipping, the connotation of integrating labor education into Nautical English will continue to enrich, for example, needing to focus on English application and

ethical norms in new labor scenarios such as intelligent ship operation and drone inspection. This requires educators to continuously explore and deepen teaching reforms.

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