

Empowering Counselor Team Construction in Higher Vocational Colleges with Educator Spirit: Logical Approaches, Value Implications, and Practical Paths

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Abstract: *Educator spirit contains unique Chinese educational heritage and cultural genes. Promoting and practicing educator spirit is of great significance to building a high-quality counselor team in higher vocational colleges. From the perspective of policy logic, educator spirit is synergistic with the mission of high-quality development of higher vocational education; from practical logic, educator spirit is precisely compatible with the professional literacy of higher vocational counselors; from development logic, there is a two-way coupling between educational and cultural inheritance and teachers' professional spirit. Empowering with educator spirit can foster the educational sentiment, refine professional literacy, consolidate ideological foundation and improve education effectiveness of counselors in higher vocational colleges. Based on this, it is proposed to improve the quality and efficiency of counselor team construction in higher vocational colleges by gathering common vision, improving mental models, driving self-transcendence and promoting team learning through educator spirit.*

Keywords: Educator spirit, Higher vocational colleges, Counselors, Team construction.

1. Introduction

In 2018, the Opinions on Comprehensively Deepening the Reform of Teachers' Professional Quality Development in the New Era issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council closely linked "revitalizing the country" and "strengthening teachers", and proposed to train and foster "tens of thousands of educator-type teachers" [1]. In 2023, on the occasion of the 39th Teachers' Day, General Secretary Xi Jinping sent a letter to outstanding teachers across the country, putting forward and systematically explaining the educator spirit of "ideal and belief of serving the country with great sincerity, moral sentiment of setting an example for others, educational wisdom of enlightening minds and teaching students in accordance with their aptitude, diligent and pragmatic attitude of pursuing truth and innovation, benevolent heart of loving teaching and students and being willing to contribute, and pursuit of spreading culture with the world in mind", and called on "teachers across the country to vigorously promote the educator spirit by taking educators as examples" [2]. In August 2024, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the Opinions on Promoting Educator Spirit and Strengthening the Development of High-Quality and Professional Teachers in the New Era, pointing out that "strengthening the development of teachers' professional quality should be taken as the most important basic work to build a powerful country in education, and strengthen the guidance of educator spirit" [3]. Counselors in higher vocational colleges are an important part of the teaching team. As the main undertakers of ideological and political education and management of students in higher vocational colleges, the level of their team construction is directly related to the quality of talent training and the all-round development of students in higher vocational colleges. Therefore, this paper intends to discuss the appropriateness of educator spirit empowering the construction of counselor team in higher vocational colleges,

and put forward practical paths of empowerment on the basis of analyzing its logical approach and value implication, so as to promote the professional, professional and expert development of counselors in higher vocational colleges [4] and provide reference for building a high-quality counselor team in higher vocational colleges.

2. Logical Approach of Educator Spirit Empowering the Construction of Counselor Team in Higher Vocational Colleges

As the spiritual core of teacher team construction in the new era, the empowerment of educator spirit on the construction of counselor team in higher vocational colleges is not an accidental practical exploration, but an inevitable coupling of the deep logic of high-quality development of higher vocational education and teacher team construction. From policy orientation, practical needs to development laws, the three logics support each other and progress step by step, jointly forming the theoretical framework of this proposition.

2.1 Policy Logic: Mission Synergy between Educator Spirit and High-Quality Development of Higher Vocational Education

The core of policy logic is to grasp the internal unity of national strategy and educational development, and reveal the synergy between educator spirit and the mission of higher vocational education in policy orientation. Since the educator spirit was systematically explained, as the spiritual support of the strategy of "strengthening education must first strengthen teachers", it has been integrated into the core policy system of teacher team construction and become an important ideological engine to promote high-quality development of education. As an important part of building a powerful country in education, the policy positioning of higher vocational education has always been closely linked to the

core mission of “cultivating high-quality technical and skilled talents, serving industrial upgrading and regional development”, which is highly consistent with the value orientation of the educator spirit contained in “ideal and belief of serving the country with great sincerity” and “pursuit of spreading culture with the world in mind”. From a policy perspective, the “Implementation of Educator Spirit Casting Soul and Strengthening Teachers Action” proposed in the Outline of the Plan for Building a Powerful Country in Education (2024-2035) [5], as well as the policy requirements of “strengthening the orientation of type education and promoting in-depth integration of industry and education” in the field of higher vocational education, all point to the common goal of “cultivating new people of the times who undertake the great task of national rejuvenation”. Educator spirit provides spiritual guidance for the high-quality development of higher vocational education and clarifies the value coordinate for the construction of counselor team in higher vocational colleges; while the mission demand of higher vocational education provides a specific field for the practical transformation of educator spirit, so that the spiritual connotation can be transformed into talent training effectiveness through the educational practice of counselors. This mission synergy is essentially an institutional confirmation of the logical chain of “spiritual guidance — practical implementation—mission achievement” by national education policies, ensuring that educator spirit empowerment and higher vocational education development resonate at the same frequency at the policy level.

2.2 Practical Logic: Precise Adaptation between Educator Spirit and Professional Literacy of Higher Vocational Counselors

The key of practical logic is to respond to the core question of “how spirit transforms into literacy” and highlight the internal compatibility between educator spirit and professional literacy of higher vocational counselors. As the backbone of ideological and political education and guidance for students’ growth and success, the core dimensions of professional literacy of higher vocational counselors—political leading ability, practical education ability and professional literacy cultivation ability—correspond one by one to the six connotations of educator spirit. From the perspective of literacy composition, the “ideal and belief of serving the country with great sincerity” and “moral sentiment of setting an example for others” in educator spirit are the core prerequisites for higher vocational counselors to consolidate their political foundation and guide students to establish the ambition of “serving the country with skills”, which are directly related to counselors’ political judgment, political understanding and political execution; “educational wisdom of enlightening minds and teaching students in accordance with their aptitude” and “diligent and pragmatic attitude of pursuing truth and innovation” adapt to the educational characteristics of “practice-oriented, integration of industry and education” in higher vocational education, requiring counselors to have educational abilities suitable for scenarios such as skill training and school-enterprise collaboration, so as to realize the organic unity of ideological guidance and practical guidance; “benevolent heart of loving teaching and students and being willing to contribute” and “pursuit of spreading culture with the world in mind” point to counselors’

responsibilities of cultivating students’ professional literacy and craftsman spirit, which need to combine caring for students’ growth with guiding career development and strengthening students’ sense of identity and mission towards their profession. This adaptation is not a superficial element correspondence, but a deep coupling based on the practical characteristics of higher vocational education, making educator spirit a “spiritual gene” to improve counselors’ professional literacy.

2.3 Development Logic: Two-Way Coupling between Educational and Cultural Inheritance and Teachers’ Professional Spirit

The core of development logic lies in, on the one hand, the long-term and growth nature of educator spirit forming a development base, and on the other hand, revealing the dynamic interaction relationship of “cultural inheritance — spiritual cultivation” behind educator spirit empowerment. Educator spirit is not an isolated spiritual symbol. It is rooted in the profound soil of China’s excellent educational tradition and Marxist educational thought, carrying the cultural gene of “fostering morality and cultivating people” and the spiritual core of “educating people for the Party and talents for the country”, and is an important carrier of educational and cultural inheritance. The professional spirit of counselors in higher vocational colleges, as a concrete embodiment of teachers’ professional spirit in the field of type education, needs to absorb the historical nutrients of educational culture and integrate the unique connotation of “craftsman spirit and serving industry” in higher vocational education to form a two-way coupling development trend. On the one hand, educational culture nourishes counselors’ professional spirit through educator spirit. The “teaching students in accordance with their aptitude” and “providing education for all without discrimination” in China’s excellent educational tradition, together with the theory of “all-round development of human beings” in Marxist educational thought, have become the cultural foundation of counselors’ professional spirit through the modern transformation of educator spirit, guiding them to adhere to the original aspiration of education; on the other hand, counselors’ professional spirit enriches the connotation of educational culture through practical innovation. In the process of serving the integration of industry and education and cultivating skilled talents, counselors in higher vocational colleges integrate characteristics such as “practical innovation” and “industrial service” into professional spirit, enabling educator spirit to gain a new contemporary expression in the field of vocational education and promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of educational culture. This two-way coupling not only ensures the continuity of educational and cultural inheritance, but also injects endogenous power into the development of teachers’ professional spirit, forming a long-term development mechanism for educator spirit empowerment.

3. Value Implication of Educator Spirit Empowering the Construction of Counselor Team in Higher Vocational Colleges

As the spiritual core and practical guide for teacher team construction in the new era, the empowerment of educator

spirit on the construction of counselor team in higher vocational colleges is essentially a deep integration of spiritual connotation and vocational education needs, forming a value closed loop in four dimensions: sentiment cultivation, literacy improvement, ideological casting soul and ecological construction. This empowerment process not only responds to the internal requirements of high-quality development of higher vocational education for ideological and political work teams, but also conforms to the core expectation of the “strengthening teachers” strategy in the field of vocational education in the construction of a powerful country in education, demonstrating the dialectical unity of spiritual guidance and practical needs.

3.1 Cultivating Educational Sentiment, Activating Professional Identity and Endogenous Motivation

Educational sentiment is the emotional foundation for counselors to perform their educational duties in higher vocational colleges [4], and also a spiritual support for them to resist job burnout and adhere to educational posts. Educator spirit provides precise value nourishment for the cultivation of this sentiment. From the perspective of compatibility between spiritual connotation and sentiment cultivation, the “benevolent heart of loving teaching and students and being willing to contribute” advocated by educator spirit directly points to the core emotional demands of counselors in higher vocational colleges in the process of cultivating skilled talents — they need to eliminate the cognitive bias of “secondary education” that may exist in the field of vocational education with love for education, and undertake the diverse needs of higher vocational students in skill learning, career planning, psychological adjustment and other aspects with selfless dedication. From the perspective of value generation mechanism, educator spirit condenses the “ideal and belief of serving the country with great sincerity”, upgrading counselors’ professional identity from a single role cognition of “transactional manager” to a mission cognition of “guide for serving the country with skills”, making individual career choices resonate deeply with the strategic needs of national skilled society construction and industrial upgrading; its “pursuit of spreading culture with the world in mind” breaks through the limitations of counselors’ individual career development, injects transcendent spiritual pattern, and promotes the transformation of professional identity from “means of making a living” to “lifelong career”. This upgrading of identity and expansion of pattern ultimately activate counselors’ endogenous motivation for independent learning and active education, constructing a positive cycle of “sentiment cultivation — deepening professional identity — stimulating endogenous motivation”, laying a solid emotional and spiritual foundation for their long-term rooting in the field of higher vocational education [6].

3.2 Refining Professional Literacy, Promoting Professional Development and Professional Depth

The professional literacy of counselors in higher vocational colleges needs to combine the professionalism of ideological and political education with the practicality of vocational education. The organic integration of the two is the key to adapting to the educational needs of higher vocational colleges, and educator spirit precisely provides direction

guidance and ability standards for the construction and refinement of this literacy system [7]. From the perspective of content dimension of literacy improvement, the “diligent and pragmatic attitude of pursuing truth and innovation” emphasized by educator spirit requires counselors to break through the knowledge boundary of traditional ideological and political work and take the initiative to connect with the practical characteristics of integration of industry and education and school-enterprise cooperation in higher vocational education—they should not only systematically master the basic laws and methods of ideological and political education, but also take the initiative to update knowledge content suitable for industrial development, technological innovation and skill training, so as to realize the literacy integration of “ideological and political professional ability + vocational education cognition”; its “educational wisdom of enlightening minds and teaching students in accordance with their aptitude” aims at the characteristics of diversified sources of higher vocational students, different growth backgrounds and differentiated career development needs, promoting counselors to shift from “unified preaching” to “precision education”, optimize educational methods and adjust educational strategies on the basis of in-depth grasp of students’ skill learning laws and ideological dynamics. From the perspective of path logic of literacy improvement, this empowerment is not scattered ability supplement, but takes educator spirit as the traction to construct an advanced path of literacy of “theoretical learning — practical reflection — innovation optimization”, promoting counselors’ professional literacy to develop in depth from “simplified” to “systematic” and from “experience-based” to “professional”. This process not only provides a clear ability advancement direction for counselors’ professional growth, but also enables them to better adapt to the educational requirements of higher vocational education connecting with industry and serving practice, becoming a compound educational force with both ideological and political professional ability and vocational education vision.

3.3 Consolidating Ideological Foundation, Implementing the Fundamental Task of Fostering Morality and Cultivating People

Fostering morality and cultivating people is the fundamental task of education. As front-line executors of ideological and political work, counselors in higher vocational colleges, the stability of their ideological foundation directly determines the correctness of educational direction and the profundity of educational effectiveness. Educator spirit provides a core value anchor for consolidating this foundation [6]. From the perspective of core dimension of ideological guidance, educator spirit takes “ideal and belief of serving the country with great sincerity” as the core, guiding counselors to stand firm in political stance under the impact of complex social trends and diverse values—they should not only deeply grasp the fundamental direction of “educating people for the Party and talents for the country”, run socialist core values through the whole process of students’ ideological guidance, but also combine with the educational orientation of “serving the country with skills” in higher vocational education, transform national industrial development needs and skilled society construction goals into students’ ideals, beliefs and career pursuits. From the perspective of practical transformation of

ideological foundation, the “moral sentiment of setting an example for others” advocated by educator spirit promotes counselors to realize the unity of “words” and “deeds”: on the one hand, convey correct ideas to students through value guidance; on the other hand, set a benchmark for students with their own moral cultivation and behavioral norms, transforming ideological guidance from “abstract preaching” to “concrete demonstration”. This empowerment is essentially transforming the ideological connotation of educator spirit into counselors’ political judgment, political understanding and political execution, making fostering morality and cultivating people no longer an abstract policy requirement, but concretely transformed into the shaping of ideals and beliefs, cultivation of professional ethics and social responsibility of higher vocational students through counselors’ ideological casting soul and value guidance, ensuring that higher vocational education steadily advances along the socialist direction of running schools.

3.4 Improving Education Effectiveness, Constructing a Higher Vocational Characteristic Education Ecology

The education ecology of higher vocational colleges needs to highlight the distinctive characteristics of “practice-oriented, skill-based, integration of industry and education”. The key to empowerment of educator spirit is to promote the deep adaptation of counselors’ educational practice to this characteristic, so as to solve the problem of “two skins” between ideological and political education and professional training and improve education effectiveness. From the perspective of adaptability of educational practice, the “educational wisdom of enlightening minds and teaching students in accordance with their aptitude” contained in educator spirit guides counselors to take the initiative to integrate ideological and political education into higher vocational characteristic educational scenarios such as skill training and school-enterprise cooperation—integrate the cultivation of craftsman spirit into training guidance, and strengthen students’ professional identity and social responsibility in enterprise practice, so that ideological and political education and professional training form a synergistic effect; its “benevolent heart of loving teaching and students and being willing to contribute” promotes counselors to pay attention to students’ ideological confusion in skill learning and anxiety in career development, inject humanistic care through heart-to-heart talks, psychological counseling, employment assistance and other ways, and construct a teacher-student relationship of “equal emphasis on strict management and love, guidance and company”. From the perspective of construction dimension of education ecology, educator spirit integrates the “pursuit of spreading culture with the world in mind” with the practical characteristics of vocational education, promoting counselors to not only inherit the “teacher tradition” in China’s excellent educational culture in the educational process, but also integrate “craftsman spirit” and “innovation spirit” in the field of vocational education, so as to construct a three-in-one higher vocational characteristic education ecology of “ideological and political guidance—skill training—spiritual cultivation” [8]. This ecology not only clarifies the functional positioning of each educational element, but also realizes the organic linkage between elements, providing systematic ecological support for cultivating high-quality skilled talents with firm

ideals and beliefs, exquisite professional skills and noble professional spirit, demonstrating the deep value of educator spirit empowerment for improving the quality of higher vocational education.

4. Practical Path of Educator Spirit Empowering the Construction of Counselor Team in Higher Vocational Colleges

The practical transformation of educator spirit is essentially integrating its core meanings such as ideals, beliefs, moral sentiments and educational wisdom into the whole process of counselor team construction in higher vocational colleges, constructing a closed-loop system of “spiritual guidance — practical innovation—mechanism guarantee” through the dimensions of consensus gathering, concept innovation, ability refinement, collaborative progress and system guarantee, so as to realize the high-quality development of counselor team construction in higher vocational colleges. This path not only echoes the characteristics of vocational education, but also highlights the fundamental direction of “educating people for the Party and talents for the country”, enabling the counselor team to maintain the spiritual character of educators and possess practical wisdom of vocational education under the background of deepening integration of industry and education.

4.1 Gathering Common Vision with Educator Spirit: Cultivating the Sentiment of Rejuvenating Education and Strengthening the Country, and Building Educational Ideals Together

The construction of common vision is the spiritual cornerstone of team construction [9]. The “ideal and belief of serving the country with great sincerity” in educator spirit provides the value core for this vision. As the main front for cultivating technical and skilled talents, the common vision of counselor team in higher vocational colleges must anchor the era coordinate of “serving the construction of a powerful manufacturing country and a powerful quality country”, connecting individual work with the mission of vocational education supporting industrial upgrading and promoting employment and entrepreneurship. In practice, consensus can be gathered through three paths: first, carry out special seminars on “Educator Spirit and Vocational Education Mission”, organize counselors to deeply study Huang Yanpei’s vocational education thought of “making the unemployed employed and the employed happy”, combine with the growth cases of “great country craftsmen”, deepen the understanding of the connotation of “serving the country with skills”, so that counselors can deeply understand the key impact of vocational education on students’ individual destiny and national industrial development, thus stimulating their sense of mission to engage in educational work. Second, establish a “school-enterprise-locality” collaborative education community, organize counselors to participate in local industrial planning research and enterprise production practice, clarify their positioning in the “integration of industry and education education chain” in understanding the demand for technical and skilled talents in regional economic development, and then clarify the direction of focusing on cultivating students in daily education. Third, implement the “Red Gene Inheritance” project, visit revolutionary old area

vocational colleges and dig deeds of vocational education predecessors, transform the sentiment of “rejuvenating education and strengthening the country” into specific educational actions, explore stories of older generation vocational educators running vocational education under difficult conditions and training urgently needed talents for the country. These deeds become vivid materials for counselors to inspire students in daily education, prompting students to establish correct professional values. The gathering of this common vision is not an abstract slogan, but reflected in the collective identity of the counselor group on “what type of talents to cultivate”—that is, new era vocational talents with both exquisite skills, patriotism and professional ethics, thus forming a joint force of “same direction and synchronous action” in daily work.

4.2 Improving Mental Models with Educator Spirit: Innovating Educational Concepts, Adapting to the Growth Characteristics of Higher Vocational Students

The “educational wisdom of enlightening minds and teaching students in accordance with their aptitude” advocated by educator spirit requires counselors to break through the traditional “management-oriented” mental model [11] and establish a “development-oriented” educational concept adapted to the growth characteristics of higher vocational students. Higher vocational student groups have characteristics such as “strong practice orientation, diversified growth paths and differentiated professional cognition”. Their growth needs include not only knowledge acquisition and skill improvement, but also professional identity, psychological adjustment, social adaptation and other dimensions, which put forward targeted requirements for counselors’ concepts and methods. The key to concept innovation is to go beyond the single educational thinking. It is necessary to establish the concept of “all-round development”, break through the cognitive bias of “valuing skills over literacy”, deeply integrate ideological and political education, professional literacy cultivation with students’ training life and career planning. Through daily scenarios such as dormitory culture construction and internship process tracking, naturally infiltrate quality cultivation such as teamwork and professional ethics, so that students can realize the simultaneous development of personality and professional literacy while skill training. At the same time, it is necessary to practice the concept of “differentiated development”, avoid “one-size-fits-all” management, construct an adaptation mechanism of “professional needs — growth confusion — support plan” according to the characteristics of students of different majors and grades, design differentiated educational content and methods according to students’ professional attributes and growth stages, ensuring that each student gets appropriate development support. The improvement of this mental model is essentially promoting the transformation of counselors from “managers” to “growth companions”, realizing the dialectical unity of “educating people” and “cultivating talents” on the basis of understanding students’ differences and respecting growth laws, promoting the transition of counseling and professional development from “experience-based” to “professional”.

4.3 Driving Self-Transcendence with Educator Spirit: Anchoring Professional Growth Goals, Refining

Educational Skills

The “diligent and pragmatic attitude of pursuing truth and innovation” as the practical driving force of educator spirit is reflected in the continuous self-transcendence and professional growth in counselor team construction [9]. The professional ability of counselors in higher vocational colleges needs to combine both “ideological and political education skills” and “vocational education characteristics” to form a “cross-border integration” literacy structure, so as to effectively cope with complex educational scenarios under the background of integration of industry and education, which constitutes the core requirement of teachers’ professional development. Counselors’ self-transcendence needs to rely on multi-dimensional collaborative promotion: in the dimension of ideological and political education ability, it is necessary to systematically study knowledge systems such as Marxist theory and youth psychology, improve the accuracy of ideological guidance, especially for the career confusion of higher vocational students, develop systematic value guidance courses to help them establish correct value coordinates in career choices. The forging of career guidance ability is also indispensable. It is necessary to take the initiative to absorb knowledge elements such as professional qualification standards, obtain relevant career guidance qualification certification, and accumulate industry cognition in enterprise practice, so as to provide students with full-chain guidance of “major selection—skill improvement—employment and entrepreneurship”, breaking the cognitive barrier of “educators do not understand industry”. To ensure the sustainability of this process, a “counselor professional growth ladder” can be constructed, setting phased goals of “basic ability up to standard”, “breakthrough in characteristic fields” and “educational model innovation” from “novice” to “backbone” and then to “expert” [10], and promote counselors to realize spiral growth of “experience — reflection — improvement” in practice through mechanisms such as “promoting training through competition” and “promoting teaching through research”, and continuously deepen the professional development of counselors.

4.4 Promoting Team Learning with Educator Spirit: Building a Collaborative Growth Platform, Sharing Educational Experience and Wisdom

Educator spirit is not an isolated existence of individuals, but a collective wisdom inherited and sublimated in group interaction. Team learning of counselor team in higher vocational colleges needs to take “benevolent heart of loving teaching and students and being willing to contribute” as a link, construct a growth community of “learning from each other and co-prospering”, and solve the dilemma of “fighting alone”, which is of great significance to promote teachers’ professional development.

Effective team learning requires the support of diversified platforms. The “thematic” discussion mechanism constitutes an important carrier to gather collective wisdom. Focusing on core issues such as “behavior management of higher vocational students” and “ideological and political integration in the integration of industry and education”, regularly carry out “counselor workshops”, transform individual experience into universal educational ideas through the process of “case

sharing—problem consultation—scheme co-creation”. Cross-school exchanges can break geographical limitations, establish a “counselor development alliance” with similar higher vocational colleges, share high-quality resources such as “skill competition education” and “school-enterprise cooperation ideological and political cases” through “mutual attachment” and “joint training”, so that counselors can broaden their educational horizons in comparison and reference. The deep value of team learning lies in breaking “professional barriers” and “inter-school barriers”, enabling counselors to not only maintain personal characteristics but also form educational joint force in the collision of collective wisdom, ultimately benefiting students’ growth and promoting the professional development of counselors to a higher level.

5. Conclusion

As an important part of the teaching team, counselors in higher vocational colleges are an important bridge connecting vocational education and skilled talent training. They should take educator spirit as the value guide and action guide for performing their duties and growing, firm ideals and beliefs, temper vocational education literacy, cultivate educational wisdom, uphold pragmatic attitude, always keep benevolent heart, establish pursuit of spreading culture, and continue to make efforts in career planning guidance, skill competition escort, school-enterprise collaborative education, etc., to effectively build a backbone force for professional education and worthy of important tasks, and consolidate the educational foundation for improving the quality of talent training and high-quality development of vocational education in higher vocational colleges.

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