

The Academic Professionalization of China's CTE Faculties

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Abstract—Through the method of historical review, the article shows China's CTE faculties' qualification and their present conditions. Then analyzing the training and education of CTE instructors in China, the article also give the details of China's CTE Instructor's Working Activities. The aim is to make more people understand the situation of China CTE instructors and their personal development roads.

Index Terms—CTE, instructor, vocational school.

I. CHINA'S CTE FACULTIES' QUALIFICATION AND THEIR PRESENT CONDITIONS

At present, the Chinese government, considering the different levels of economic development and different education popularization in different area, is practicing a three-leveled career and technical education system: elementary, secondary, and post-secondary vocational education. Among them, the secondary vocational education is the main part.

The junior vocational high schools, which enroll primary school graduates, are the elementary vocational education performers. Its aims are to cultivate junior-level skilled workers. Nowadays, elementary vocational schools only exist in the undeveloped countryside area. Secondary vocational education mainly refers to the senior high school level of vocational education. Its aim is to cultivate middle-level skilled workers with relative multiple competencies. The length of schooling is for 3-4 years. Secondary vocational education includes vocational senior high schools, secondary specialized schools, and skilled worker schools. Postsecondary vocational education enrolls graduates from general senior high schools and secondary vocational schools. The length of schooling is generally for 2-3 years. The current vocational and technical colleges and vocational universities which belong to this category.

These days, the full-time instructors in China's public vocational schools are on par with government employees. As mentioned in Article 3 of The instructors Law, "instructors are the professionals who undertake the duties of textbook teaching and moral education, training and educating their students to be the builders and successors in socialist causes and enhancing national qualities." So, the instructors are defined as teaching professionals. And, the instructors Law provides that "the state safeguards instructors' legal rights, improves their working and life conditions and advances their social position." The CTE instructors, as an important part of the whole teaching group,

"are the professionals who are specially educated and trained and are capable of teaching vocational knowledge skills and moral behaviors in order to develop the students' ethics, vocational skills and moral health"[1].

In China, types of instructors differ according to the vocational school's function. Generally, there are two main types of instructors in vocational schools. There are general knowledge course instructors and specialized course instructors. The latter are usually divided into specialized theory course instructors and practice-instructing instructors.

Employing technicians and engineers from enterprises as part-time instructors has become a practice of many vocational schools, in which they can cooperate with enterprises. The development of employing part-time instructors in vocational schools not only strengthens the practical characteristics in vocational schools, but poses a challenge to the CTE instructors' professionalization, which had no way of developing as long as the opinion that CTE instructors should only pay attention to textbook knowledge teaching existed and while there was no necessity to build a full-time teaching body teaching practical courses in vocational schools. In China's CET field the opinion exists that the vocational schools only need full-time instructors, who teach general knowledge courses, and that the specialized-course instructors can be employed according to temporary requirements.

II. THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF CTE INSTRUCTORS IN CHINA

Since the founding of the PRC in 1949, the instructor education system was formed, following the former Soviet Union model, and a three-tiered instructor's education system was established. Now, the following institutions are responsible for educating and training instructors:

- Secondary instructors' schools: Aiming at educating and training primary school instructors. The entrance requirements are the applicants have received at least 9-years of education experience and passed the required examination, which includes a language test, general knowledge test, and an interview about the applicant's personality. The duration varies from 3 to 4 years.
- Junior instructors' colleges: Aiming at the educating and training of general school instructors, including secondary vocational school instructors. The entrance requirements are the applicants have received at least a 12-year education experience and passed the required examination, which includes a general knowledge test and an interview about the applicant's personality. The duration varies from 2 to 3 years.

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- Higher instructors' colleges and universities: Aiming at the educating and training of the high school which includes, including vocational school which includes.
- Post-graduate education at instructors' college or universities: Aiming at educating and training teaching and researching faculty.

In 1998, there were 236 higher instructors colleges or universities including CTE instructors' colleges, 897 secondary instructors' schools, and about 2,000 instructors education and training institutions.

Compared with general instructor education, CTE instructors' education is faced with weak development, which is mainly apparent in the inadequate number of special CTE instructor education institutions and their educating and training capacities. In 1998, there were less than 30,000 full-time students in all of China's CTE instructors' colleges. The annual number of the graduates, including the ones who did not major in instructors education, could only meet half of the need for new instructors in CTE institutions [2]. As mentioned above, not all CTE graduates go to work in vocational schools. This causes vocational schools to seek more sources to meet their demands for new instructors. General colleges and universities, in fact, have become a major source for CTE instructors. The following describes ways for the training of CTE instructors in China at present.

Full-time school education is conducted at higher education colleges, with the target of educating specialized theory course instructors. Specially set up CTE instructors colleges play the role as CTE instructors educating institutions as well as of those for academic research. Also, CTE instructors' colleges (departments) or CTE instructors' specialties are set up at comprehensive universities or technical colleges.

Further education and training is required for the training of experienced instructors from the field. Such training provides off-the-job and on-the-job training for practical instruction instructors, or double-qualified instructors who are experts both in theory and in hands-on skills.

Because of the fact that there is no CTE instructors' specialty in the category of higher education specialties issued by the China's MoE, China's vocational and technical education instructors' colleges have set up the relevant specialties according to their own understanding of the CTE and their teaching capabilities.

In recent years, China's CTE instructors' colleges have made great efforts to found a special system for the education and training of CTE instructors. The establishment of the relevant research institutions and organizations, Higher CTE instructor Education Commission of Chinese Vocational Education, for instance, and the national key base for CTE instructors' education and training has brought this work on track and has laid an important foundation for the development of "vocationally specialized" programs and the final realization of CTE instructors' professionalization.

In practice, China's CTE instructors' colleges have started reforming their present specialties according to the principles of application ability, vocationalization, and practical ability in order to set up high-quality and greater competitive specialties, but such a reform is only in its

initial stage, as the following describes:

- The reform is limited to the adjusting, selection, and recombination of the teaching contents within the corresponding engineering and technical specialties. Many colleges have come to realize the problem, but it has not led to developing a teaching theory which has to do with the work process or the theory of educating and training in this process (Benner, 1977; Rauner, 2000).
- In the reform, in accordance with "applicability", a proposition has been put forward that a CTE instructors' qualification should include knowledge of the work process, but in reality, the traditional subject matter- or discipline-based paradigm is determining in textbook compilation. Specialized-course teaching still centers on theoretical knowledge, and knowledge related to the real work situation is rare. And too much attention is paid to the abstract ability in the work process, and hardly any to the organization and technique of the work process. So there is little feasibility in the effective realization of "applicability" of the teaching contents.
- In teaching reform, many colleges, in the name of reinforcing practice, claim that their students obtain occupation qualifications. In this way, practical teaching is simplified as the learning of practical skills, but lacks experience in analysis, research and teaching of the knowledge of work the process. And all of these reflect the basic conditions in the traditional CTE system (Dehnbostel, 2000).

III. CHINA'S CTE INSTRUCTOR'S WORKING ACTIVITIES

In 1998, the Central Institute of Vocational and Technical Education (CIVTE) carried out an investigation on CTE instructors' actual professional activities in secondary vocational education. The investigation focused on the CTE instructors' standard and its development, which is one of the research programs at the APEC Education Forum sponsored by CIVTE. The following is the findings of the investigation:

- The main professional activities of CTE instructors are planning and performing teaching, over 70% of the instructors undertake demonstrating and instructing operations (Liu et al., 2000). It can be concluded that, due to the percentage of China's practice-instructing CTE instructors being far below 70%, almost all the CTE instructors participate in the practical teaching activities. So that means there is no definite dividing line between specialized course theory instructors and practical instructors.
- More and more CTE instructors have undertaken duties not regulated in their professions. For example, 46.8% of instructors participate in labor market investigation within one year and more than half take some part in some of the duty of analysis. That means labor market investigation and analysis has become one of their main duties.

The investigation of CTE instructors' engagement in school management shows that nearly half of them have rarely or hardly participate in teaching management. This has something to do with the greater number of school

management staff. According to the Chinese government's requirement, the number will be decreased gradually and more instructors will be engaged in school management with the condition that they accomplish their routine teaching. Instructors' functions thus transfer from mere teaching to development, management, and inquiry:

- Political, ethical, and social education and instruction are some of the main tasks for vocational education instructors. Owing to the fact that the instructors do not acquaint themselves with the occupation and labor market, they seldom participate in occupation instruction and inquiry.
- The number of instructors who help gather further education and employment information for their students within a month is only 28.1%, while the number of the instructors who undertake the political, ethical, and social education and instruction reaches 80%. Fewer instructors are able to analyze the information and instruct the teaching.
- In public relations, the instructors pay more attention to the relationship with colleagues and students' parents than to the public activities with enterprises or local communities. Less than half of them participate in activities of promoting cooperation between their schools and enterprises, local communities and social organizations. Meanwhile, the opportunities of taking part in on investigations and seminars are rarely offered to them. Nearly 44.3% of the instructors do not have the opportunity to do their own investigation or to go out for further training. So, the shortcomings of the instructors training system are major limitations to the development of vocational education.

A CTE instructors should be qualified in the following aspects:

- Substantial basic theory and specialized knowledge in his specialty, especially knowledge which has a direct connection with occupational practice; ability to properly analyze and evaluate occupational activities and work processes; capability to undertake new curriculum development.
- Practical occupational capability in his specialty and having practical occupational experiences.
- Essential theory in vocational education and being able to analyze, evaluate, design, and perform the teaching-learning process.
- Capability to participate in school management and public relations.
- Ability to educate and instruct the students in all the requirements and instruct them in their occupation choices and development.
- Capability to develop a career.

IV. SUMMARY AND PROSPECTS

In review of the last 10 years of development in China's CTE instructors body, we can draw an optimistic conclusion that the CTE teaching body is playing a more and more important role in China's CTE program and more attention is paid to its influence on China's entire educational development. China's Ministry of Education issued a document in 2000, which emphasized that to build a high-quality teaching body is to guarantee the development of vocational teaching education and speed-up the process of quality education. Furthermore, the practice of the "instructors Law" and "The Regulations of instructors' Duties" provide the better social and legal environment for CTE instructors' professionalization.

On the other hand, the process of CTE instructor professionalization is restricted by various factors. The different functions of these factors may promote or restrict the final realization of professionalization. The present direction of the building of the CTE instructing body demands the combination of full-time and part-time CTE instructors to form a reasonable structure in the teaching body for the complete promotion of the quality education (MoE, 2000). It requires that CTE schools employ a certain proportional number of part-time instructors, which is a challenge to the CTE instructor professionalization. Problems still remain unsolved with respect to the practicability and the reality of building the double-qualified instructing body. Furthermore, the limited teaching and academic level of the CTE instructor education institutions has become an obstacle to the development of specialties, such as the curriculum system, training program, and teaching contents. All these are restrictive factors in the development of China's CTE instructors' professionalization.

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