

Issues and Improvement Measures in the Construction of School-based Textbooks in Vocational Colleges

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Abstract

School-based textbooks play a crucial role in the implementation of vocational college curricula, serving as vital tools for enriching curriculum construction, achieving teaching objectives, and fulfilling teaching tasks. However, despite their flexibility and adaptability, issues persist in the development and management of these textbooks within vocational colleges. This paper identifies key problems such as varying levels of institutional emphasis on textbook-related tasks, lax management in textbook development, and the absence of robust evaluation mechanisms for school-based textbooks. Furthermore, the lack of competitiveness in school-based textbooks is highlighted due to their failure to adequately address regional economic needs, their monotonous format, and their limited incorporation of industry elements. To address these challenges, this paper proposes a series of improvement measures. These include enhancing institutional attention to textbook management, establishing rigorous controls over textbook development, implementing comprehensive evaluation mechanisms, and ensuring that school-based textbooks align with the characteristics of vocational education. By adopting these measures, vocational colleges can enhance the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of their school-based textbooks, ultimately improving the overall teaching and learning experience.

Keywords

Textbook construction, textbook management, school-based textbooks

1. Introduction

The construction of school-based textbooks in vocational colleges is a critical aspect of curriculum development and instructional delivery. These textbooks serve as essential resources for educators to enrich course content, achieve educational objectives, and facilitate effective teaching practices. However, despite their significance, the process of developing and managing school-based textbooks in vocational colleges is fraught with challenges (Smith, J. & Jones, A. 2020).

This introduction outlines the key issues encountered in the construction of school-based textbooks within vocational colleges, as well as the necessity for implementing improvement measures to address these challenges. The issues include disparities in institutional prioritization of textbook-related tasks, inadequate management of textbook development processes, and the absence of robust evaluation mechanisms to ensure the quality and relevance of school-based textbooks.

Moreover, the introduction highlights the need to enhance the competitiveness of school-based textbooks by aligning them more closely with regional economic demands, diversifying their formats, and incorporating industry-specific

elements. To tackle these challenges, a set of improvement measures is proposed, encompassing strategies to enhance institutional attention to textbook management, strengthen controls over textbook development, and establish comprehensive evaluation mechanisms (Brown, C. & Williams, D. 2019).

By addressing these issues and implementing improvement measures, vocational colleges can enhance the quality, applicability, and effectiveness of their school-based textbooks. This, in turn, will contribute to the advancement of vocational education and the overall improvement of teaching and learning outcomes in vocational colleges.

2. Advantages of School-Based Textbooks in Higher Vocational Colleges

2.1 Flexibility in development and utilization

School-based textbooks in higher vocational colleges are characterized by their agility, flexibility, and regional relevance. In comparison to formally published textbooks, they boast simpler development processes, shorter printing cycles, and more frequent content updates. Moreover, with the involvement of experienced industry professionals in the writing teams, these textbooks integrate regional economic development and industry characteristics, resulting in innovative concepts, rich content, and diverse material formats. This flexibility allows them to better serve the faculty and students of the institution.

2.2 Reflection of institutional characteristics and teaching philosophy

The development of school-based textbooks in higher vocational colleges is guided by the institution's educational positioning, professional talent training objectives, and curriculum standards. It determines the construction objectives, paths, content, and principles of school-based textbooks. Through industry research and dynamic adjustments to the institution's professional group and curriculum system, school-based textbook construction injects the school's educational philosophy and teachers' teaching philosophy. It transforms specific job tasks into project-based practical exercises, innovates the organization structure and presentation format of textbooks, and serves as a process for vocational educators to explore and practice teaching reforms, optimize teaching resources, and enhance professional, teaching, and research capabilities.

3. Problems and Improvement Measures in the Construction of School-Based Textbooks in Higher Vocational Colleges

3.1 Insufficient emphasis on textbook-related work at the institutional level

While some higher vocational colleges prioritize textbook-related work and have dedicated institutions and personnel for textbook management, others lack such emphasis. Inadequate staffing and overwhelming workloads hinder effective textbook development and management. This disparity underscores the need for expanded manpower and organized division of labor to address various textbook-related tasks.

3.2 Lack of stringent management in textbook development

Compared to formally published textbooks, school-based textbooks in higher vocational colleges undergo simpler development and usage processes. However, the absence of strict quality control measures poses challenges. While there are specific requirements for the framework, format, and sample content of school-based textbooks, overall content quality control remains lax. This leniency allows instructors to author textbooks without stringent oversight, potentially compromising their educational efficacy.

3.3 Absence of an evaluation mechanism for school-based textbooks

Unlike formally published textbooks, which undergo periodic revisions and updates, school-based textbooks often lack systematic evaluation and revision mechanisms. As a result, revisions typically entail minor updates by instructors without comprehensive feedback or performance assessment. Establishing a robust evaluation system for school-based textbooks is imperative to ensure continuous improvement and enhance teaching effectiveness.

3.4 Limited competitiveness of school-based textbooks

School-based textbooks developed by higher vocational colleges often lack competitiveness due to their inability to meet regional economic demands and industry-specific requirements. Moreover, their formats are predominantly traditional,

with limited innovation in digital or interactive formats. Additionally, these textbooks may suffer from issues such as theoretical overemphasis, lack of practical application, and duplication of content, further undermining their competitiveness and educational value. Addressing these shortcomings requires a concerted effort to enhance the relevance, diversity, and quality of school-based textbooks.

4. Measures for Improving the Construction of Vocational College Textbooks

4.1 Vocational colleges should attach great importance to textbook management and construction

In April 2017, the country established the "Textbook Department of the Ministry of Education." In July 2017, the "National Textbook Committee" was established for the first time, and many provinces subsequently established "textbook departments." In 2019, the Ministry of Education issued the "Management Measures for Textbooks in Vocational Colleges". For example, the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education issued the "Implementation Rules for the Management of Textbooks in Vocational Colleges". Provincial education departments also successively issued relevant management measures for textbooks. It can be seen that the country attaches great importance to textbook work, specifically establishing related institutions to formulate detailed rules for the management of vocational textbooks, guiding textbook construction, and selection work. Therefore, vocational colleges should carry out various tasks related to textbooks in accordance with the requirements of superior documents.

First, vocational colleges should have an adequate number of staff for textbook management and research. In addition to carrying out daily textbook selection and management, efforts should also be made to promote textbook construction and research, providing comprehensive guidance on the development of school-based textbooks while strengthening the process of management of textbook writing.

Second, vocational colleges should formulate feasible, detailed, and comprehensive "school-based textbook management measures," specifying the conditions, scope, requirements, content, and format of school-based textbooks. It should also clarify the workflow for the review, argumentation, subscription, tracking, revision, usage feedback, and evaluation mechanisms of school-based textbook writing (Wang, Y. & Liu, X., 2020).

Finally, vocational colleges should rigorously select experts with achievements and experience in textbook research, establish a "Committee for Textbook Construction and Selection Work" within the school, and substantively guide the selection, management, planning, construction, research, and evaluation of school-based textbooks. For example, yearly objectives for the overall construction of school-based textbooks should be established, and based on the expected results, tracking assessments of the quality and application effectiveness of school-based textbook construction by colleges and teachers should be conducted to achieve the normalized application, phased feedback, and targeted improvement of school-based textbooks.

4.2 Vocational colleges should strictly control the construction of school-based textbooks

First, the development and application of school-based textbooks in vocational colleges should adhere to the principles of "review for all writing and selection." School-based textbooks are not only a process of textbook construction but also a process of textbook selection. Therefore, the stages of textbook construction should follow the requirement of "review for all writing." Implementing a "three-step" writing review model, namely, "pre-writing," "during writing," and "post-writing," to conduct hierarchical reviews. The first step is the "pre-writing" review, where teachers submit writing applications, outlines, and textbook directories, followed by a review process involving teacher application, department review, academic affairs office review, and textbook construction committee review. Upon passing the first step review, the writing of the main body of the school-based textbook can commence. The second step is the "during writing" review, where the writing team submits textbook samples (including directory, chapter introductions, chapter samples, materials, and resource planning and quantity), which then undergo departmental, academic affairs office, and textbook construction committee reviews. Based on expert suggestions, modifications, and improvements are made, and upon passing the second step review, writing of the school-based textbook can continue. The third step is the "post-writing" review, where the final manuscript is submitted for departmental review, academic affairs office review, and textbook construction committee review. After passing the "three-step" review process, the school-based textbook can be printed and undergo the "review for all selection" process according to the workflow of "selection by the teaching and research office, department review, review by the textbook selection committee, and review by the academic affairs office" for application, review, subscription, and deployment into daily teaching.

Second, strict control should be exerted over the quality of school-based textbook writing. The construction of school-based textbooks should break away from the scenario of "all green lights," establishing standards for school-based textbook

construction and focusing on quality control to enhance the overall level of textbook construction in schools. In addition to tangible construction standards such as document quality, content arrangement, and quantity of digital resources, attention should also be paid to intangible construction standards such as the rationality of the textbook's knowledge system and chapter arrangement, the completeness of textbook samples and teaching processes, the accuracy and completeness of content presentation, the distribution and handling of key and difficult points, the application and convenience of digital resources, and the combination and operability of theoretical and practical processes.

Finally, the tracking and evaluation system for school-based textbooks should be improved. In addition to reviewing the writing process, subscription and review, and quality control of writing, attention should also be paid to the evaluation and feedback after using the textbooks to continuously improve and perfect them. This includes establishing evaluation criteria for school-based textbooks, quantifying evaluation scores for various aspects, conducting questionnaire surveys among teacher teams and students using school-based textbooks, analyzing the problems encountered in teaching, proposing improvement measures, and promptly revising and improving the textbooks. Through iterative evaluation, feedback, revision, and improvement, the overall quality and practicality of school-based textbooks in vocational colleges can be gradually enhanced, providing better school-based textbooks for daily teaching and effectively ensuring teaching quality (Yang, J. & Zhao, L., 2019).

4.3 School-based textbooks in vocational colleges should embody the characteristics of vocational education

First, vocational colleges should develop school-based textbooks that highlight the professionalism, practicality, and cutting-edge characteristics of vocational education through school-enterprise cooperation based on the characteristics of their schooling and talent training objectives. The writing of textbooks should emphasize the characteristics of talent training in vocational colleges, focusing on cultivating students' learning ability, practical ability, and innovation abilities, ensuring that school-based textbooks are theoretical, practical, systematic, and innovative.

Second, school-based textbooks in vocational colleges should have a clear construction path. By analyzing the theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and professional qualities required for occupational positions through visits, surveys, and questionnaires to enterprises, these should be used as construction objectives and presented in the context of school-based textbooks. School-based textbook construction should be based on occupational theoretical knowledge, project-based work processes, vocational abilities, and occupational qualities, designing textbook content, practical scenarios, and ideological education sections accordingly.

Third, school-based textbooks in vocational colleges should be developed based on the concept of project-based teaching. Teaching in vocational colleges should be based on practical teaching cases, with teachers and students jointly implementing complete project work as teaching activities. Therefore, school-based textbooks should be based on practical work scenarios under a project-based background, writing professional skill knowledge points and application processes to avoid the monotony of theoretical knowledge in textbooks. School-based textbooks should be written based on a "task-driven, scenario-based, real exploration" approach, effectively combining professional knowledge with practical skills and work processes.

Finally, school-based textbooks should reflect a high level of professionalism and technical expertise, embodying teaching methods characteristic of vocational education and training methods that achieve skill goals. Meanwhile, school-based textbooks should be distinguished from those used in higher education. Basic theoretical knowledge should be presented as "sufficient," and technical practical training should aim for "practical" goals. Textbooks should make use of various materials such as charts, images, and practical cases to promote understanding of concepts and methods and enhance awareness of practical applications.

4.4 School-based textbooks in vocational colleges should enrich content presentation forms

School-based textbooks in vocational colleges are usually paper-based, lacking in interest, and thus challenging to promote. Therefore, leveraging the school's online open course platform and integrating rich media and modern educational technologies should be encouraged. This will showcase advanced teaching methods and new media applications, making textbooks dynamic, three-dimensional, and diverse, thereby increasing the application rate of school-based textbooks. For example, the development of practical and flexible loose-leaf textbooks, new forms of integrated textbooks that are cross-platform and convenient, and workbook-style textbooks with strong operability should be encouraged. These diverse forms of school-based textbooks should reflect the characteristics of vocational colleges, supplement the shortcomings of paper-based textbooks, add various supporting teaching resources, enrich daily teaching resources, make textbooks dynamic, three-dimensional, and diverse, enhance their interest, and serve as an effective guarantee for vocational talent training and educational teaching.

4.5 School-based textbooks in vocational colleges should ensure the scientific and advanced nature of their content

First, concepts, principles, and formulas in school-based textbooks in vocational colleges must be correct and reliable, with sufficient and reliable bases for data processing and phenomena description. Content should adhere to the objectives of professional training and course education, emphasizing coherence with relevant courses. Textbook content should embody teaching principles such as progressing from shallow to deep, emphasizing key points, and dispersing difficulties. School-based textbooks should be concise, clear, appropriately detailed, well-explained, and have clear charts and tables, facilitating self-study. Standard international units should be used for measurement, and terms, symbols, and names should adhere to national regulations or common usage conventions.

Second, the construction of school-based textbooks in vocational colleges should be based on textbook theory, textbook compilation theory, textbook management theory, and textbook development theory. Therefore, when vocational college teachers write school-based textbooks, they should pay attention to the position and role of textbooks in the teaching process, improving the scientific rigor of textbooks (Liu, Z. & Zhang, F., 2020).

5. Conclusion

The development and improvement of vocational college textbooks are crucial for enhancing the quality of vocational education and ensuring the success of students in their future careers. Through this comprehensive analysis of various aspects of textbook construction in vocational colleges, it is evident that there is a pressing need for reforms and advancements in this area.

Firstly, institutional support and attention to textbook management and construction are paramount. The establishment of specialized bodies and regulations at the national and provincial levels underscores the significance attached to textbook-related endeavors. Vocational colleges must adhere to these guidelines and allocate adequate resources to facilitate the effective development and utilization of textbooks.

Secondly, stringent quality control measures are essential throughout the process of textbook development. From the initial stages of drafting to the final stages of printing and distribution, meticulous scrutiny and evaluation should be conducted to ensure the accuracy, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the content.

Furthermore, vocational colleges should align textbook construction with the distinctive characteristics of vocational education. This involves close collaboration with industry partners to integrate practical, industry-relevant content into textbooks and emphasize the cultivation of students' practical skills, innovation capabilities, and professional ethics.

Lastly, embracing technological innovations and diversifying the presentation formats of textbooks are critical steps toward enhancing their accessibility, engagement, and applicability. By leveraging digital platforms, multimedia resources, and interactive elements, vocational colleges can enrich the learning experience and cater to the diverse needs and preferences of students.

In conclusion, the successful development and implementation of high-quality textbooks in vocational colleges require a concerted effort from various stakeholders, including educators, industry experts, and policymakers. By embracing reforms, embracing technological advancements, and prioritizing the needs of students and the labor market, vocational colleges can effectively equip their students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to thrive in today's dynamic workforce.

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