

# Training Model of Vocational Education of Australian Students and Its Enlightenment

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**Keywords:** Vocational education, Student training model, Australia, Inspiration.

**Abstract:** Higher vocational education is an important part of the national education system, and higher vocational education in China is at a stage of continual development, exploration and reform. This work analyzed the training model of vocational education of Australian students and compared Australian and Chinese student training models. Training model of vocational education of Australian students is worthy of learning and reference.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Higher vocational education is an important part of the national education system and plays an irreplaceable role in promoting the economic development of the society. With the social need of China and the changes of the economic development, there has been a higher need of higher vocational education. Vocational education theories and talent training models in some overseas developed countries have been continually upgraded for many years, which is worth our learning and reference (Jiao Hongli,2012). The Australian education model of TAFE (Technical and Further Education) takes lifelong education as a basic principle. It is employment-oriented and industry-leading, which connects ordinary education, vocational education with higher education. After nearly 40 years' development, the Australian TAFE has been one of the successful vocational education models worldwide.

## 2 TRAINING MODEL OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OF AUSTRALIAN STUDENT

### 2.1 Focusing on vocational competencies to cultivate practical skilled talents

The key task of Australian vocational education is to satisfy the social needs of various skilled talents, and it aims at enabling students to grasp skills for posts and promote students' employment and development. The Australian Government thinks "the Australian future prosperity is closely related to labor skills and production abilities" (Li Zuozhang,2011). It puts forward that "Australia should enforce the capital investment for a high skilled labor force so as to have sustained low inflation and succeed in the global economic competition." The research forecasts between 2006 and 2016 Australia will have 2.5 million people who can acquire vocational education and qualification training. Among them, about 1.7 million people will obtain vocational education and qualification training certificates with the level above three. Hence, Australia has taken the training aim of the vocational education as "Cultivating high skilled and practical talents of technology to maximum serve the economic and social development."

Australian vocational education focuses on vocational abilities, and the characteristics are embodied in that vocational training skills are market-oriented (Wu Shuang,2012). Various industries' associations work out nation-wide abilities standards according to the market need. The process of vocational training focuses on improving

students' practical operational abilities and cultivating students' job adaptability. There are only two assessment results "Competent" or "Not Competent" for students' vocational training. The various industries' competency standards are the yardstick for professional qualifications' recognitions.

**2.2 Developing training kit of vocational education by leading industries' skills**

The training kit is made and issued by the Australian Industries' Skills Committee. It recognizes and evaluates employees' skills with the aim of assessing the necessary skills and knowledge of employees. It does not specify the training forms. The training kit includes the part recognized by the country and facilitation materials [4]. The latter is also called the part unrecognized by the country. The recognized part includes "Competency Standard", "Vocational Qualifications", "Assessment Criterion", etc. All states have the flexibility to set up and arrange the training as per the actual situation.

**2.3 Training adaptable talents on the basis of school-enterprise cooperation**

The students' training model of the Australian vocational education is under the influence of both schools and enterprises. It implements school-enterprise training, and the cultivation model is confirmed by TAFE and enterprises according to the enterprises' needs and post requirements. Generally TAFE has a board of directors and a committee of industry consulting. The board plays a linking role in schools and enterprises. The role is to master the training direction and make relevant policies adapting to the economic development needs. Some schools set up industry committees, with which schools negotiate to conduct vocational training and training modes. Some schools have a school-enterprise coordinator and its key responsibilities are to collect industry information, promoting school-enterprise cooperation and liaison enterprises to participate in training programs.

Table 1 Australian AQF

Ordinary middle school	Vocational education and training	Higher education
		Doctorate
		Master's degree
		Postgraduate diploma
		Postgraduate certificate
		Bachelor's degree
	Advanced junior college diploma	Associate degree / advanced junior college diploma
	Junior college diploma	Junior college diploma
	Level Four Certificate	
Level Three Certificate		
Level Two Certificate	Level Two Certificate	
Level One Certificate	Level One Certificate	
High school education certificate		

## 2.4 Using vocational qualification acquisition as a tool to implement open cultivation

Australian vocational education is based on lifelong education philosophy and has passed the national qualification certificate system. It has realized a very good connection among vocational education, or Level Two can apply for elementary work. Level Three is a senior certificate, and those who have acquired Level Three can apply for mid-level managerial positions. Holders of Level Four certificate can work as junior managers. Holders of diploma and senior diploma are based on a Level Four certificate. To acquire the diploma and the senior diploma they need to study for a period of time. The work of them shall be senior management. The Australian AQF has a rule that all levels are coherent. That is, a lower level certificate shall be acquired before a higher level certificate can be obtained. Students can study at TAFE College at grade two or three of Senior High School. Besides the senior high school diploma, they can acquire a Level One or Two certificate of a certain vocation. Students can directly study grade two or three of the university after acquiring the TAFE's vocational diploma, and the credits are mutually recognized. University graduates can study at TAFE College to receive corresponding vocational certificates. After graduation postgraduates can also study at TAFE for a six-month curriculum for a corresponding certificate.

The Australian vocational education is a lifelong educational process. The enrollment of TAFE College does not consider pre-vocation and post-vocation, difference in ages and degrees. It encourages people to study repeatedly and continuously and has established a lifelong educational model of "study-work-restudy-rework". The learning methods of Australian students are open. Students at TAFE College can choose a full-time or half-a-day and correspondence or distant education. They can obtain certificates or diplomas as long as they pass examinational evaluations. situation, which is to evaluate whether a job task is accurately performed. For example, students majoring in food and beverage should be able to make food in a hotel or restaurant or practical operational room, etc. Indirect evidence refers to the evidence of the evaluated person which cannot be observed, such as a work or investigation report of a completed project or assignment, a handling of an emergency or a simulated situation. Facilitative evidence is that the evaluator checks the third

ordinary education and university education. The existing Australian AQF is shown in the following table which has 12th-level qualification certificates including certificates, diplomas and senior diplomas. The certificates have four levels. Level One and Level Two are for elementary certificates, and those who have acquired Level One

party's evidence to understand his or her vocational competencies. The evidence, for example, can be a diploma or some other evidence of the evaluated person's previous study experience. As long as the evaluated person can provide the above evidence, he or she can pass the assessment to obtain the vocational qualification certificate.

Besides, there is an important system called RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) in the assessment methods. It is a recognized system for learners' skills and knowledge acquired from their normal or abnormal education, training, work experience and living experience. For example, the prior study scores and experience in enterprises can be recognized as study time so that the learning period can be shortened.

## 2.5 Diversified assessment centering on skilled assessment

During the whole process of assessment, teachers can choose various suitable methods at different stages as per students' actual conditions. The main assessment methods include observation, oral test, operation, the third party's evaluation, certificate, interview, self-evaluation, case study report, work production, paper exam, tape-recording and so on. The evidence of the evaluated person is diversified and includes mainly direct, indirect and facilitative. Direct evidence is the performance at a set work

## 3 INSPIRATION

### 3.1 Development of vocational education curriculum centering on vocational key competencies' cultivation

#### 3.1.1 Focusing on competences to speed the development of vocational education curriculum system.

The development shall take the practical skills needed by enterprises and industries as a

fundamental. From cultivating students' practical operational abilities to their competencies for a certain profession or post, the system can help students' acquire vocational key competencies. Only by centering on vocational key competencies' cultivation, can our talents for vocational education be really adapted to meet the social needs.

### **3.1.2 Promoting the diversification of the curriculum led by industries.**

The Australian TAFE curriculum system has a main body of diversified curriculum development. Not only industries and enterprises' experts, government officials, educational experts and teachers get involved but also parents and student are part of the main body. We shall take it as reference to effectively ensure the development of curriculum meets the needs of enterprises and industries while meeting the needs of students' future development. We shall make students, parents and employers satisfied with the curriculum.

### **3.1.3 Keeping adjusting the curriculum based on the social needs.**

It is the basic social requirement of the vocational education curriculum to develop the vocational education by keeping close alignment with the social economic life and development.

## **3.2 Positive reform of teaching methods and establishment of open teaching concept**

### **3.2.1 Vigorously promotion of teaching methods' reform centering on students.**

Firstly, we can change teaching concepts from the "teacher-centered" to "student-centered" and establish a concept that teachers are mentors, counselors and assistants for students who take the initiative to study. A variety of methods are used to mobilize students' learning enthusiasm, build interactive classrooms and establish an equally interactive teaching mode.

### **3.2.2 Combination of theory and practice and strengthening of practical skills training**

Students not only learn the theoretical knowledge, but also need to walk into the training room and practical teaching base to experience hands-on operation. Therefore, we should reform and innovate

in the form of training to ensure the practical operation and timeliness of training projects.

## **3.3 Promotion of diversification of assessment methods and use of comprehensive evaluation methods**

### **3.3.1 Seeking new ways on evaluation of students**

Every examination or test will be able to cover as many relevant competency factors as possible. Questions and answers, practical operation, social surveys, innovative design, operating experience reports, participation in group activities, internships and comprehensive graduation practice reports can be adopted as the main form and content of the evaluation methods.

### **3.3.2 Positive and rational use as a training base or enterprise evaluation site.**

We can replace the traditional exam with work site assessment. We can also allow enterprises' experts, engineers and technicians to get involved in the assessment. Students' competencies can be assessed by actual operational level and work performance.

### **3.3.3 Focusing on assessment on students' whole learning process.**

The summative and formative evaluation can be combined. Teachers can use behavioral observation and growth record on student's learning situation to make a relatively complete, true and accurate evaluation. The evaluation is linked with vocational or technical qualification certificates to be more career-oriented and effective. It promotes personal and all-round development of students.

## **3.4 Improving students' training mode in vocational education guided by the concept of lifelong education**

Australian vocational education has already exceeded the scope of academic education and has used the theory of lifelong education. It has integrated academic education and training, diluting academic education and job training, the boundaries of general education and adult education, as well as full-time education and part-time education. It closely links vocational education and economic construction with social development. All these are worthy of our reference. Therefore, we shall take the

lifelong education theory as a guide to expand the scope of the concept of vocational education. It incorporates the production line workers, laid-off workers, to-be-employed workers into continual education and higher vocational education. It makes the higher vocational colleges to become social workers' lifelong learning place, middle vocational education, higher vocational education, undergraduate and postgraduate education will be gradually linked while improving the students' training mode of higher vocational education.

*Journal of Tianjin Vocational College*, 2012, 10: 25-27.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

Currently, China's higher vocational education is in constant development and exploration stage of change. It is necessary to learn from the advanced experience and modes of foreign vocational education. Through the analysis on the vocational education mode of Australian students, precious experience can be provided for China's development of vocational education development. It is helpful to explore a suitable training mode of China's vocational education in line with the needs of society and economic development.

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