



Research on “3+2” Joint Training Program of Business English Major Between Higher Vocational Education and Applied Undergraduate Education

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Abstract

To actively respond to a set of national guidelines on promoting the high-quality development of modern vocational education released by Chinese government, Shenzhen Polytechnic University (SZPU) has been carrying out a pilot project of “3+2” joint training program with South China Normal University (SCNU) since 2019. This joint training program has cultivated a batch of high-quality practical talents for the companies in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). Simultaneously, a complete roadmap of talent cultivation has been constructed from Higher Vocational Education to Applied Undergraduate Education, Technical Professional Master of Education, and Technical Professional Doctoral Education. This pilot program has been providing practical experience and solid support for launching vocational education at the undergraduate level in Applied English Majors across China.

Key words: Joint training program; Vocational Education and Training (VET); Applied undergraduate education; Business English

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INTRODUCTION

In order to systematize the teacher education from Higher Vocational Education training to technical professional master of education training, Guangdong Provincial Department of Education has issued a clear statement that by 2025, Guangdong will have set up a training system of teacher educators to cope with current challenges. It will further improve the teacher professional development system, combining with the resources of province, city, county, school, studio. And the system is supposed to run a number of high-level, distinctive colleges and universities for first-class teacher training programs, prevent the supply of teacher talent regional and structural imbalance, as well as enhance the ability of teacher training in colleges and universities to serve the basic education.

In 2019, Shenzhen Polytechnic University (SZPU) and South China Normal University (SCNU) jointly applied for the pilot project of “3+2 joint program”, and the project was approved by the provincial government in May of the same year. As one of the first batch of national exemplary majors, the Business English major in SZPU and the English major (Teacher Education) of South China Normal University have been engaged in the collaborative cultivation of “3+2 joint program”. The purpose of the pilot program is to take advantage of the strengths of both sides to train excellent VET teachers. Through the pilot project, two problems existed in the source of professional teachers in vocational schools in the past. The first problem is that professional and technical personnel have

a high level of professional and technical skills but are not good at handing over their professional expertise to students. The second problem is that teacher educators are well versed in the way of teaching and learning, but their professional and technical skills have great rooms to improve.

The pilot program will address the structural contradiction in the quality of VET teachers, and Teachers with Double - Qualifications who have high levels of expertise and know how to teach students. Relying on first-class vocational resources, the project focuses on training students' professional skills by enrolling them in the Business English major of SZPU for the first three years. After completing the study tasks at the senior vocational level and passing the transfer examination, students will enter South China Normal University (SCNU) and study for two years to complete the credits and meet the requirements for undergraduate diploma and bachelor's degree.

1. MODES OF COOPERATION

1.1 Guidelines

Guided by *the Action Plan for the Revitalization of Teacher Education (2018-2022)*, *Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on Comprehensively Deepening the Reform of the Construction of Teacher Teams* in the new era, Guangdong Province have launched a "New Teacher Training" plan that calls for SCNU and 4 vocational schools to take action for the construction of "New Teacher Training". SZPU and SCNU strive to explore new paths and new methods of training vocational education teacher trainees, reform and innovate the enrollment system and training mode of vocational education teacher trainees, strengthen the construction of vocational education teachers from the source, and cultivate the vocational education teachers with high moral character, excellent business skills, which are satisfactory to the Party and the people.

1.2 Pilot Project Format

Implementing the "3+2 joint program", Shenzhen Polytechnic University (SZPU) adopts "Experimental Class for Cultivation of Excellent Vocational Education Teacher Talents in the first three years". According to the requirements of the five-year personnel training program, students of the experimental class can complete three years of study, pass all the tests and meet the relevant conditions and requirements to obtain the certificate of the pilot higher vocational institutions, and then enter the training of South China Normal University through the "transfer examination" organized by Guangdong Provincial Education Examination Institute. In accordance with the relevant policies of our province, the experimental class of students to enter the South China Normal University to

participate in the section of the transfer of post-secondary enrollment and unified examination and the province's undergraduate students enrolled in the same year and the unified examination at the same time. Students who have completed their studies and meet the relevant conditions and requirements can obtain the South China Normal University undergraduate diploma and degree certificate.

1.3 Program Objective

--Cultivate front-line teachers who possess a solid foundation of educational theory, a complete professional knowledge structure, as well as proficient pedagogical skills in classroom teaching and management, and are capable of undertaking the teaching work of relevant majors in secondary vocational schools.

--Train senior specialized talents who have excellent educational attainment and organizational management abilities, are proficient in the policies, theories and techniques of enterprise or industry training related to relevant majors, are good at training trainers in enterprises or industries of these majors, and are qualified for human resources development and training management work in these majors.

--Cultivate innovative talents with a pioneering awareness who can start their own businesses independently in industries related to education and training of relevant majors.

--Train junior research talents in the field of vocational and technical pedagogy who have the awareness of lifelong learning and the ability of independent exploration, so as to provide reserve talents for postgraduate education.

2. REFORM AND PRACTICE

2.1 Educational Philosophy

This project adheres to the concept of the integration of industry and education and school-enterprise cooperation, and conducts in-depth and all-round cooperation with many well-known enterprises. It mainly focuses on post-course docking internships, joint curriculum construction, school-enterprise cooperation in teaching, and the construction of the teaching staff, striving to cultivate high-quality technical and skilled talents that meet the needs of the service industry in the new era and realizing the implementation of the "dual-subject" education model. A teaching model integrating classroom practical teaching, on-campus practical training teaching, and enterprise-industry post internships is implemented to cultivate students' solid practical abilities. Close cooperative relationships are established with multinational enterprises and leading domestic enterprises in the industry. A network of enterprise mentors is established by utilizing strong alumni resources to provide students with employment planning and guidance as well as

interpersonal network support, fully empowering students’ employability and lifelong learning abilities.

This project emphasizes the career development of students. In order to cultivate compound talents, it adheres to the “integration of industry and education” and the “integration of theory and practice”. Through school-enterprise cooperation, students can obtain sufficient post internships and skill training in enterprises. The cultivation and tempering of career planning, professional awareness, professional ethics, and professional habits are set as one of the teaching objectives of each course, and students’ professional qualities are cultivated through subtle influence.

2.2 Training Objectives

The Ministry of Education issued the 2020 Statistical Bulletin on the Development of the National Education Sector, which suggested that secondary education had moved from “quantitative streamlining” to “qualitative improvement”. While the number of secondary vocational schools continues to shrink, the enrollment of secondary vocational schools and the number of students has increased significantly in the past two years, indicating that the attractiveness of secondary vocational schools is increasing. Guangdong is a large province of vocational education, with more than 600 secondary vocational schools and technical schools of various types, with more than 2.9 million students enrolled, and the scale of secondary vocational education has ranked first in the country since 2010. However, there is only one institution specializing in vocational education teacher training in Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University (GPNU), which is far from being able to meet the demand for quality teachers in Guangdong vocational education.

Vocational teachers in Guangdong face a problem: professional and technical personnel from various professional backgrounds have high professional and technical levels, but they have not received systematic teacher education and are not good at teaching their professional and technical expertise to students; while teacher education professionals are well-versed in the way of education and teaching, but not as good as the former in terms of their professional and technical levels, therefore, the “3+2” program aims to cultivate a large number of students who not only master high professional and technical skills, but also know how to teaching”. It also aims to cultivate vocational teachers with solid foreign language skills, complete knowledge of international business, ability to work in front-line business positions and practical skills, knowledge and ability of sustainable development, and comprehensive vocational literacy.

Through three years of specialized study, students focus on strengthening the foundation of foreign language, having the ability to engage in frontline business work, having initial contact with the theory and practice of education and teaching, which provide a solid foundation

for the subsequent two years of professional training in SCNU, for high-quality vocational teachers training. The curriculum and teaching are set up with an eye to enabling students to further develop comprehensive job occupational competence on the basis of mastering vocational skills, and ultimately to move towards complex occupational competence and become high-level skilled personnel.

Therefore, in the process of teaching and training, SZPU not only pays attention to cultivating students’ foreign language and business professional ability, but also focuses on cultivating students’ critical thinking, cross-cultural communication awareness and ability, digital ability, self-study and other methodological abilities, as well as social abilities such as communication, coordination, teamwork, research and other social competencies, and also focusing on cultivating students’ cultural literacy, professional literacy for teachers and other comprehensive literacy. Through teaching and learning, basic vocational abilities and key competencies are constructed to provide the foundation and possibilities for the subsequent development of talents to a higher level.

2.3 Course Design

The curriculum should be designed with the characteristics of modern business and language service orientations, specifically with the goal of cultivating students’ basic language skills and workplace and creative abilities:

2.3.1 “5 R” Principle

The program is based on the principle of “5R” in the curriculum design, i.e., real problems, real content, real processes, real relationships and real results, to stimulate students’ motivation from the outside and the inside, to cultivate students’ ability to identify problems and solve them in real work situations, and to improve their social adaptability. Students experience immersive cross-cultural exchanges and real-life corporate projects through the integration of the “Belt and Road” International Symposium on Vocational Education, the Sino-Dutch International Exchange Program, and Huawei’s projects in China’s leading corporations into the teaching process. The cross-culture learning process changes students’ perceptions, strengthens their willingness to communicate and interact with each other, and enables them to acquire context-specific work skills. During the process, students are provided with Chinese and foreign tutors for academic guidance, and corporate tutors for industry literacy and skills guidance. The tutoring system provides students with a broad international perspective, in-place personalized tutoring, and multi-dimensional and multi-dimensional learning evaluation.

2.3.2 Process-Oriented

The program stimulates deeper learning motivation through a student-centered process action learning design. For example, by forming a research group with international students, the program effectively creates a vivid resource and place for cross-cultural communication

in the “third space”, realizing true equality and dialogue between national and foreign languages and cultures, so as to enable students to form a cross-cultural composite personality. Through the design of enterprise projects, students can solve real problems in workplace scenarios to enhance their sense of professional achievement and pride; through the design of diversified teaching activities, such as students playing the roles of workplace dramas and cultural fables, students can fully experience language learning and business knowledge. The process-based design emphasizes critical reflection to record students’ learning process. It expands the depth and breadth of the program and demonstrates the dynamic development of talent cultivation.

2.3.3 Integrate of coherent instructional strategies and assessments

In terms of instructional design, the principle of consistency construct is followed, i.e., internal consistency is maintained in the analysis of learning situation, teaching methods, learning outcomes, and teaching evaluation. SZPU analyzes the overall learning situation, students’ five personalities, and the record of personal growth

before the class, in a bid to adjust the strategy and length of reaching the teaching objectives, and optimize the teaching content. The knowledge objectives are mainly achieved through video guidance, self-tests, case reading and real-life training to complete the basic knowledge learning, the application and consolidation of knowledge through the introduction of enterprise projects, and the measurement by Chinese and international tutors, expert evaluation, group scoring and system scoring.

Skill Orientation are based on the intermediate and advanced indicators of the practical English communication vocational skill level standard, mainly relying on classroom action learning projects, case teaching, actual business operations in enterprises, teacher-student and student-student interaction, and other methods, and measured through the evaluation of the enterprise tutor, the group evaluation, and the teacher’s evaluation. Achievement of literacy goals mainly relies on cross-cultural teaching and learning, case study analysis, enterprise internship, etc. Measurement is accomplished through direct observation, data collection of questionnaires, strengths-oriented coaching, etc.

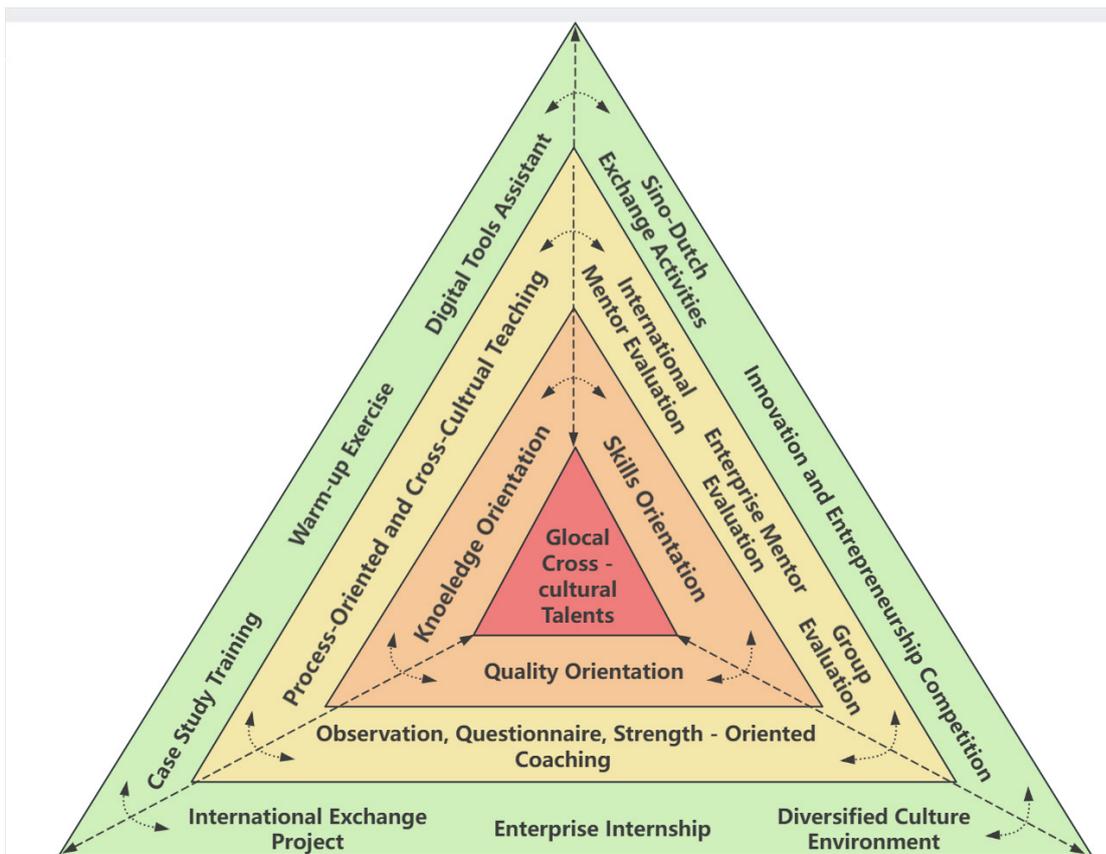


Figure 1
The Model of Teaching Instruction and Assessment

2.3.4 Strength of Faculty Team

Teachers with postgraduate degrees account for 94%, among which those with doctoral degrees account for

23%. And teachers with senior professional titles account for 69%.

In the School of Foreign Language and Business

School (SFLB) in SZPU, there are currently 3 cultivation objects of the “Thousand - Hundred - Ten” Talent Project for Higher Education Institutions in Guangdong Province, 3 local leading talents in Shenzhen, 1 pioneer of curriculum reform in Shenzhen, and 4 outstanding teachers in Shenzhen, all of whom participate in the teaching practice of this project. In addition, SZPU has set up a pool of nearly 100 experts outside the university and a steering committee composed of 10 experts from enterprises, with the proportion of part-time teachers in the front line of the enterprises exceeding 50%, who are deeply involved in the whole process of the talent cultivation program of this project. These experts are committed to offering valuable resources and opinions on the cultivation program, curriculum design, comprehensive practical training, internship and employment and other aspects of the talent cultivation process.

2.3.5 Teaching Reform

This project is committed to the reform of “teachers, teaching materials, and teaching methods” in vocational education, seeking the paths for the upgrading, transformation, and development of the Business English major in higher vocational colleges in the digital age.

--Teacher empowerment

Through skills competitions and teaching competitions, renowned teaching masters in SZPU have been bred, and young teachers have begun to shine on the stages. For example, they won the first prize in the provincial competition of the “2022 National Teacher Skills Competition”, the first prize in the “English Teacher Oral Ability Competition of the National Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation Vocational Education Teaching Steering Committee’s Weijia Chaoxing Cup in 2019” as well as the second prize in the “Guangdong Province College Young Teachers Competition” in 2018, etc. In addition, teachers of this project have widely carried out teaching activities such as classroom observations, curriculum seminars, and on-site trainings to help teachers adapt to the challenges of new technologies like artificial intelligence, master new teaching methods and design approaches such as “blended teaching” and “MOOCs”, and promote the implementation of teaching reform measures like “small class teaching”, “hierarchical teaching”, “project-based teaching”, “workshops”, and “flipped classrooms”. Great efforts have been made to cultivate a compound teaching staff. Through school-enterprise cooperation and internships in enterprises, young teachers are encouraged to integrate theory with practice and quickly grow into a vital force in the transformation and development of the Business English major.

--Teaching Method Renewal

SZPU adheres to the student-centered, competence-based, and outcome-oriented educational concepts, and actively conducts curriculum teaching reforms that are

project-based and go beyond the traditional classroom settings. It promotes the “six transformations” classroom teaching revolution based on the “OBE” concept, including the professionalization of teaching objectives, the dualization of teaching locations, the projectization of teaching content, the cooperation of teaching subjects, the informatization of teaching means, and the work-based assessment of teaching. Positive feedback has already been generated in teaching. During the exploration period of vocational education reform, the Business English Department of Shenzhen Polytechnic has obtained 41 scientific research and teaching research projects at various levels (including 6 provincial and ministerial-level projects), published more than 80 papers, and published 20 works (among which, “Speech Act Metaphorization - Based on the Corpus of Modern Chinese Dramas” was selected into the “Achievement Library of Philosophy and Social Sciences in Guangdong Province” in 2016).

--Teaching Material Reform

Teachers in the course group of this project, combining their own advantages in curriculum construction, have cooperated with institutions such as Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, Higher Education Press, and Fudan University Press to continuously launch national authoritative textbooks. They have edited 30 various textbooks, among which 10 are national planned textbooks. In addition, under the guidance of the “National Vocational Education Reform Implementation Plan”, the major is currently compiling a series of textbooks, “Beyond English” and “Practical English for Prospects” (Third Edition). These textbooks break the limitations of traditional textbooks and fully reflect the teaching concepts centered on students’ autonomous learning and oriented towards learning outcomes, and have been widely praised among other vocational schools.

--Practical Teaching Reform and Training Base Construction

Relying on the provincial higher vocational education training base and the provincial intelligent translation industry-education integration innovation platform of SZPU, this project provides 7 provincial and municipal training bases, such as the training teaching base for the International Furniture Expo and the business English practical teaching base for the China Hi-Tech Fair. On campus, there is a smart learning center and a language training center under the Business English Training Room (covering an area of 1,900 square meters with an equipment investment of 11 million yuan). On-campus training platforms such as a business interpretation simulation combat platform, an international trade practice operation platform, and a cross-border e-commerce simulation combat platform have been established, connecting the pathways of knowledge transfer and ability cultivation in “teaching, learning, practice, actual operation, and training”.

--International Exchanges and Cooperation

This project actively carries out international exchanges and has launched cooperative education projects with the School of Management of The Hague University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, Kent State University in the United States, Seattle City University in the United States, University of Cumbria in the United Kingdom, and Queensland University of Technology in Australia. It has also carried out in-depth cooperation with universities in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan of China, jointly holding seminars on Business English teaching across the Taiwan Strait in the context of the information age and international seminars on cross-cultural communication. The “Advanced Training Course on English Classroom Teaching Design in Higher Vocational Colleges” jointly organized by Queensland University of Technology and the Business English major is open to the backbone teachers of the Business English major in more than ten sister institutions across the country. This has enhanced the reputation of the Business English major of Shenzhen Polytechnic among sister institutions and also explored a new path for the major to train talents through an international cooperation and collaborative education mechanism.

3. FEATURES AND EXPERIENCES

3.1 Project with Stronger Vocational Orientation Achieves the Cultivation of High-Skilled Talents

It has a stronger vocational orientation. Guided by the target employment position groups, through analyzing the typical work tasks and processes of the target employment position groups, the core skills and knowledge required to complete these typical work tasks are extracted. And the teaching contents are reasonably selected and organized according to the work processes and the formation rules of learners’ knowledge and abilities, rather than being restricted to the disciplinary system logic of knowledge and skills. Therefore, the “3 + 2” joint training program in this major has a closer connection with the actual work of the target employment industries and positions, and the vocational pertinence of talent cultivation is stronger.

3.2 Implementing Interdisciplinary and Inter-school Collaborative Education to boost Students’ Compound Abilities

The Business English major in SZPU was established in 1994. There are currently more than 800 students on campus. It is one of the majors with the longest history, the largest scale, and the strongest strength in SZPU. It is also the major with the longest history among similar majors in domestic higher vocational colleges. It ranks among the top in comprehensive strength among similar majors in higher vocational colleges, becoming the founder of vocational foreign language education ideas, the demonstrator of practice, the pioneer of reform, and

the leader of the direction, and has a wide influence in the vocational foreign language field. This major is a key construction major in the first batch of national model colleges, a national excellent teaching team, a backbone major in the National Vocational Education Innovation Action Plan, a teaching reform pilot major in Guangdong Province’s higher vocational colleges, and one of the first batch of first-class brand majors in Guangdong Province’s vocational education.

In 2022, the Business English major reached a new level. The translation discipline became the first batch of master’s degree cultivation sites in our school, Applied English became the second batch of undergraduate majors in our school, the Guangdong Province Intelligent Translation Industry-Education Integration Innovation Platform was approved, and the model Party branch of the Business English major of the Ministry of Education successfully passed the acceptance inspection. Relying on a series of major construction projects, the Business English major has improved the talent cultivation system, deepened educational and teaching reforms, and formed its own characteristics and advantages in professional construction, and has accumulated rich experience in aspects such as teaching staff, talent cultivation, curriculum construction, and training base construction.

The Vocational Education Department of South China Normal University was established in 2013. Adhering to the development concept of “establishing the school with disciplines, prospering the school with academics, putting students first, and applying what has been learned”, it has constructed a “one-stop” talent cultivation system from undergraduate, master’s degree graduate students, doctoral degree graduate students to postdoctoral fellows. Aiming at the outstanding vocational teachers with dual qualifications, relying on the school’s teacher education advantages and the multi-disciplinary and comprehensive school-running advantages, it cultivates students’ liberal arts and sciences accomplishments.

Through interdisciplinary and inter-school collaborative education, it cultivates students’ compound abilities. With the help of the applied and digital practical teaching system and experimental teaching system, it cultivates students’ practical skills. Relying on the excellent teaching staff and experience of SZPU and SCNU, the first collaborative project of the “3 + 2” joint training program has achieved remarkable results.

3.3 Establishing a “Three-in-One” Through-Practice Teaching Model

Three-in-One Teaching approach combines classroom learning, practical training and enterprise internships. The vocational education school of the Business English major pays more attention to the cultivation of students’ practical abilities. Having stronger practical operation abilities and being able to adapt to job requirements more quickly is one of the main differences between graduates

of vocational undergraduate education and those of ordinary undergraduate majors. Learning from the Work-Integrated Education (WIE) projects and Co-op projects of international institutions, large-scale school-enterprise cooperation that provides students with innovation, exercises their cross-cultural communication abilities, improves their professional abilities, and promotes their all-round development is carried out. Close cooperative relationships are established with multinational enterprises and leading domestic enterprises in the industry. A network of enterprise mentors is established by utilizing strong alumni resources to provide students with employment planning and guidance as well as interpersonal network support, fully empowering students' employability and lifelong learning abilities.

3.4 Adopting the Comprehensive Education Model of “Posts, Courses, Competitions, and Certificates” to enhance Students’ Comprehensive Competitiveness

The 2021 National Vocational Education Conference proposed to promote the comprehensive education model of “Posts, Courses, Competitions, and Certificates”. “Posts” are the standards for course learning. The content of curriculum setting should aim at post requirements, be aligned with vocational standards and work processes, absorb new knowledge, new technologies, new processes, and new methods in the industry's development. Professional course textbooks should be aligned with mainstream production technologies and jointly developed by schools and enterprises, fully reflecting the content of post skills and general technologies. Teacher teams should explore modular teaching organization methods with division of labor and cooperation. “Courses” are the core of teaching reform.

Through curriculum reform, the “classroom revolution” should be promoted to adapt to the characteristics of diversified student sources and improve the learner-centered professional and course teaching evaluation system. “Competitions” are the high-end display of course teaching. By establishing and improving the national, provincial, and school-level competition mechanisms for teachers and students, the level of course teaching should be improved. “Certificates” are the industry inspection of course learning. By developing and integrating various vocational skill appraisal certificates, qualification certificates, and grade certificates, the comprehensive abilities required for vocational activities and personal career development should be integrated into certificates to expand students' employment and entrepreneurship skills.

This project has always complied with exploring the integrated education model of “Posts, Courses, Competitions, and Certificates”. In order to achieve the cultivation goal of high-level technical and skilled talents, build a more effective employment ability improvement

mechanism, and better serve and promote industrial upgrading as well as employment and entrepreneurship, Business English major has taken the “four-in-one” comprehensive education model of integrating posts with courses, courses with competitions, courses with certificates, and competitions with certificates to enhance the adaptability of vocational education.

To deepen the reform of the cultivation model of high-level technical and skilled talents, the integrated design and practice of “Posts, Courses, Competitions, and Certificates” have been carried out around the teaching level. Specifically, when formulating the talent cultivation plan, the major adheres to the employment orientation, connects with work posts, analyzes typical work tasks, dissects post knowledge and ability requirements, optimizes the curriculum system to achieve the talent cultivation goal. According to vocational standards, courses integrating courses with certificates are set up, and certificate examination work such as The English Test for International Communication (ETIC), Business English Certificate (BEC), and 1 + X Practical Communicative English is actively carried out.

3.5 Deepening the Integration of Industry and Education and School-Enterprise Cooperation to Jointly Build a New Talent Cultivation Model

The vocational undergraduate education of the Business English major emphasizes students' career development more. For training talents, this major group has always adhered to the “integration of industry and education” and the “integration of theory and practice”. Through school-enterprise cooperation, students can get sufficient post internships and skill training in enterprises. The cultivation and tempering of career planning, professional awareness, professional ethics, and professional habits are set as one of the teaching objectives of each course in the vocational undergraduate education of this major, and students' professional qualities are cultivated through subtle influence.

In accordance with the principles of school-enterprise cooperation and joint construction and sharing, in-depth and all-round cooperation has been carried out with many well-known enterprises, and stable off-campus training bases have been built. Mainly focusing on post-course docking internships, joint curriculum construction, school-enterprise cooperation in teaching, and the construction of the teaching staff, efforts are made to cultivate high-quality technical and skilled talents that meet the needs of the service industry in the new era. Up to now, the Business English major has built 2 provincial-level, 2 municipal-level, and more than 40 school-level off-campus practice bases for college students, providing powerful condition guarantees for off-campus practical teaching. These enterprises provide relevant internship positions such as foreign trade clerks, business secretaries,

and language service specialists, covering the basic requirements of the current development of applied English and being able to accommodate a large number of students for internships.

Moreover, Business English major in SZPU has further deepened the integration of industry and education and school-enterprise cooperation in the talent cultivation. It successfully carries out the “dual-subject” education model, and opens up a new path for the model of “Business + Foreign Language + Digital Technology” in China’s higher vocational foreign language majors. So far, under the “dual-subject” education model of deepening the integration of industry and education and school-enterprise cooperation, remarkable achievements have been made in the talent cultivation of the collaborative cultivation project of the “3 + 2” undergraduate upgrading.

3.6 Based on Its Own Development and Exerting Social Radiation Effects

SZPU upholds the student-centered, competence-based, and outcome-oriented educational concepts and actively conducts project-based and beyond-classroom curriculum teaching reforms, achieving good results in talent cultivation. In recent years, with the goal of building a domestic first-class and professional major, SZPU has increased the connotation development of the major. It has successively formulated and published teaching documents such as the “Business English Talent Cultivation Plan”, the “Business English Major Construction Standards”, the “Typical Cases of the Combination of Work and Study in the Business English Major”, and the “Business English Major Course Standards”.

It has taken the lead in aspects such as teaching mode positioning, curriculum construction, teaching evaluation, teaching staff construction, integration of courses and certificates, training room construction, and network technology development and application, providing shared resources and construction experience for colleagues across the country and playing an important exemplary role in the reform and development of vocational foreign language teaching in China. Due to the dominant position and achievements that the Business English major enjoys in the country, SZPU has been established as the “National Higher Vocational College Foreign Language Teacher Training Base” and the “National Higher Vocational Foreign Language Teacher Network Technology and Multimedia Technology Training Base” by the Ministry of Education. It has trained more than 3,000 backbone teachers for higher vocational colleges across the country. In 2022, the National Training Base of the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press was established, and it cooperated with the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press to host the Business Foreign Language Training for higher vocational colleges across the country.

5.7 Focusing on High-quality Talent Cultivation and Optimizing the Quality Assurance System

To ensure the quality of talent cultivation in the pilot project, SZPU Business English has established a quality assurance group, whose members include professional leaders, backbone teachers, industry and enterprise experts, and experts from other schools. The main work contents include diagnostic analysis and improvement of talent cultivation goals, professional curriculum systems, on-campus and off-campus practical conditions, teaching staff, course implementation, and teaching methods. It also establishing and improving curriculum teaching standards, practical teaching standards, teaching staff construction plans, and teaching staff access standards, carrying out investigation and research on graduates’ post adaptability, and establishing a feedback mechanism.

Apart from that, it has established a standardized dynamic monitoring system for the daily teaching operation and order inspection, strengthened the organization, operation, and management of daily teaching, regularly carried out diagnostic analysis and improvement of curriculum construction levels and teaching quality. Most importantly, the school is strictly enforcing teaching discipline, strengthening the teaching organization function, giving full play to the role of experts on the education supervision and guidance.

4. CHALLENGE AND DIFFICULTY

4.1 Further deepening of synergistic training between the two partners

According to the agreement on collaborative training, during the three-year senior vocational stage, South China Normal University (SCNU) is responsible for providing relevant professional preparatory courses and lectures for VET teacher training, so as to further strengthen the students’ professional awareness and aptitude as VET teacher candidates. For the sake of constructing the curriculum in a more rational and scientific manner, SCNU needs to communicate with the partner institutions in advance to determine the curriculum. Given the cooperation agreement, in the last two years of undergraduate training, teachers with associate degree or above or doctoral degree from the partner institutions will be deeply involved in the training of students in the undergraduate education stage, and will take part in some of the specialized theoretical courses and practical training courses. Those who meet the requirements can even serve as postgraduate supervisors. At present, one teacher of SZPU has become a postgraduate supervisor of SCNU, and the cooperation between SCNU and SZPU in terms of teachers’ cooperation is yet to be further deepened.

4.2 Consolidating exchanges and cooperation with other vocational institutions

As the first attempt to run a joint project, there have been situations where communication with South China Normal University has not been smooth and the rights and responsibilities are not clear enough. Besides, there are four other vocational colleges participating in this project in Guangdong Province. If more extensive and in-depth exchanges can be carried out with these four cooperative vocational colleges and successful experiences can be learned from each other, it will contribute to the long-term and stable development of this project. It is proposed to establish a teacher-student exchange platform between South China Normal University and the cooperative vocational colleges to promote the effective improvement of teaching and students' professional abilities.

4.3 Internships of the “3 + 2” Pilot Classes

Based on the regulations of the examination syllabus, the time for the transfer examination of the pilot classes overlaps with the time for students' post internships. Students are doing internships in enterprises while preparing for the examinations at the same time, which has aggravated students' anxiety. In a bid to ensure that students can complete the transfer examination with high quality, the time for post internships needs to be arranged in a flexible manner. For example, the internship time during winter and summer vacations can be included in the calculation of post internships, so that students can complete the internship credits required for the junior college degree and have more sufficient time to prepare for the transfer examination.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above difficulties and challenges, this paper discusses more detailed countermeasures and suggestions at the system level, organizational level and individual level with the help of the new approach to education proposed by Daniel Goleman and Peter Senge in the book “Triple Focus” (2014).

5.1 Establishing a Collaborative Community for the “3+2” Undergraduate

At the systematic level, VET Collaborative Training Program involves different stakeholders, including SZPU, SCNU, Guangdong Provincial Examination Office (GDEA), and four other vocational colleges. Accomplishing the goal of high-quality training of VET teachers requires the consensus of all stakeholders to work together. Therefore, the establishment of a collaborative community is crucial for the program to achieve good parenting results. The difficulty and key to the collaborative training program is how to realize the integration of the two stages of talent cultivation between higher vocational colleges and undergraduate colleges,

as two different education subjects in the 5 years. This report believes that it is necessary to accurately define the objectives of 3+2 program, construct the integrated step-by-step curriculum system of higher vocational colleges and applied undergraduate colleges, construct the mechanism of sharing resources for collaborative cultivation, and establish the mechanism of articulating teaching and learning activities in an integrated way, and so on.

5.2 Accurately positioning the objectives of “3+2” project training

Implementing the “3+2” training not only facilitates students' academic ability but, more importantly, paves the way for the elevation of the vocational ability. Ultimately it aims to cultivate high-level application-oriented talents for regional economic development. To realize this objective, accurately positioning the subsection cultivation objectives is pivotal. The hierarchical positioning of junior college vocational education and applied undergraduate education should reflect continuity. The cultivation objectives of the three-year vocational college stage embody dual goals of “employment” and “further education”. For the “3+2” project of the Business English major, on the one hand, based on the requirements of four core job position groups, namely business management, cross-border e-commerce, language services, and English education, students' professional technical skills are strengthened to cultivate high-quality skilled talents.

On the other hand, the cultivation of students' basic qualities and continuous learning abilities is emphasized to provide necessary learning preparations for receiving undergraduate education and ensure their smooth progression to undergraduate studies. The cultivation objectives of the two-year undergraduate education are as follows: while continuing to enhance students' professional technical skills in alignment with the typical positions in the vocational college stage, the improvement of students' management techniques, cultural connotations, and innovation and entrepreneurship abilities is emphasized to cultivate high-level application-oriented talents with “solid basic knowledge, outstanding skills, and excellent qualities” (Zhu, 2014).

5.3 Constructing an integrated and progressive curriculum system for higher vocational and applied undergraduate school

The key to the collaborative cultivation, coupled with higher vocational and undergraduate education, is to realize the vertical coherence and effective articulation of the curriculum systems of higher vocational and undergraduate education. The articulation of curriculum system is not simply a combination of two independent curriculum systems of higher vocational colleges and undergraduate colleges, but requires the cooperative

colleges and universities to take the OBE education concept as a guide under the framework of cooperative community, and to oppose the teaching content and curriculum system through the cultivation objectives, so as to build a progressive curriculum system for the integration of higher vocational colleges and applied undergraduate colleges. In addition, both higher vocational and applied undergraduate curricula should be oriented to the needs of the front line of local economic construction, focusing on the construction of technical and applied disciplines and the development of technical and applied scientific research, emphasizing on the cooperation between teachers and local leading enterprises, and insisting on the combination of industry-university research in the construction of curricula and course contents.

5.4 Erecting a sharing resources mechanism for collaborative training

According to the requirements of the Guangdong Provincial Department of Education to carry out the pilot project of collaborative education between higher vocational colleges and undergraduate university, the collaborative education unit must adhere to the three principles, which are complementary advantages, resource sharing and win-win cooperation. It is highly desirable to give full play to the disciplinary and faculty advantages of undergraduate university as well as the advantages of higher vocational colleges, so as to build a resource sharing mechanism that adapts to the cultivation of high-level technical skills and talents.

The mechanism of resource sharing adapted to the cultivation of talents should be constructed. On the one hand, SZPU will strengthen the construction of practical teaching bases and resource sharing mechanism in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, and make full use of the practical training conditions of higher vocational colleges to carry out vocational qualification training and examinations, so as to ensure that students are equipped with a higher level of skills, such as 1+X Practical English Communicative, BEC Cambridge English, etc. After transferring to undergraduate colleges and universities, students still share the resources of excellent practice bases in higher vocational colleges and universities, and the partner institutions carry out scientific research and technical services through projects, so as to cultivate students' VET teaching ability and innovation ability.

On the other hand, the construction and resource sharing of dual-qualification teacher is strengthened. In terms of collaborative training, the cooperating institutions implement mutual recruitment to carry out teaching, and teachers are jointly instructed in the aspects of top-ranking internships and graduation designs, so as to realize the collaborative training of both sides with the sharing of teachers' qualifications.

5.5 Focusing on integrated articulation of teaching and learning activities

The two sides of collaborative cultivation need to set up teaching teams together, communicate with each other in a timely manner through teaching and learning activities, and set up a mechanism for the integrated articulation of teaching and learning activities. Higher vocational colleges and undergraduate university ought to discuss the development and dynamic adjustment and optimization of talent training. Since timely communication of teaching operation, and mastery of students' learning, psychology, and internship are crucial factors that should not be neglected. After passing the transfer assessment and entering undergraduate colleges and universities, SZPU is supposed to continue to follow up the students' situation in the original student growth record, and achieve teaching and practical training, so as to improve the students' practical ability and innovation ability as vocational education teachers.

5.6 Optimizing the teaching management system

At the organizational level, the "3+2" collaborative cultivation is a novel attempt between vocational education and applied undergraduate education. Therefore, facing new challenges in teaching management, it is necessary to innovate the teaching management model. In the college stage, students selected for this project generally have relatively high admission scores and, overall, stronger academic abilities compared to students in regular class. Thus, vocational colleges need to consider rationally allocating high-quality teaching resources to carry out teaching activities, maintain communication with students, and respond to their needs at any time. In terms of the teaching process, it is recommended to establish a "3+2" teaching supervision group with cooperating institutions, hold regular teacher-student exchange meetings, and conduct a multi-faceted and comprehensive evaluation of teaching quality.

In terms of student's work management, innovate the content and form of "3+2" students' quality education activities. Since the career orientation of students in this project is to become secondary vocational school teachers, emphasis should be placed on ideological and political qualities, humanistic qualities, and professional qualities education for these students. Through activities related to the history of Communist Party of China (CPC), humanities knowledge, and professional qualities, renowned scholars from universities, enterprise professionals, and technical experts are invited to the school to give reports and special lectures to further broaden students' horizons, and understand the development trends of industry.

5.7 Fostering the diversified development of students in terms of both virtues and qualifications

At the individual level, from the case study of 3+2 cooperation between SZPU and SCNU, it is found that in vocational colleges and universities, the students have reached a high level of academic and technical skills, but the humanistic qualities and foundations needed to be a secondary school teacher are still lacking. Huang Yao (2009) points out that “vocational education is no longer a technical education that focuses on the cultivation of professional knowledge, professional skills and other hard skills for a single oriented vocational position, which is not only difficult to satisfy the demand for the complete development of individual personality, but also difficult to satisfy the demand for the occupation to be more diversified and flexible for the individual’s vocational ability, under the circumstances that the contents and forms of the vocational world are constantly changing.

This is not only hard to meet the need for the full development of the individual personality, but also, in the context of the changing content and forms of the vocational world, to meet the needs of careers for more diversified and flexible individual vocational competencies. The focus of vocational education is to train students to master certain vocational skills, so as to fulfill the educational purpose of cultivating and shaping human beings in vocational skills, and to measure whether a student has become a qualified vocational skills laborer, in addition to possessing excellent technical skills, he or she also needs to have a certain degree of humanistic qualities. Hence, it is also pivotal to strengthen students’ humanistic qualities through a series of liberal arts education programs. At the stage of applied undergraduate education, in order to foster students to become excellent secondary teachers, cultivating students’ digital literacy are essential as well, including digital content production capacity and digital teaching ability.

The “3+2” joint training program between vocational colleges and undergraduates provides an educational pathway for the growth of high-skilled talents and promotes the construction of the modern vocational

education system. Currently, the “3+2” program is still in the pilot stage. Based on the case of collaborative education between South China Normal University (SCNU) and Shenzhen Polytechnic University (SZPU), this report explores the mechanism of cultivating applied talents in the “3+2” post-secondary education. The framework and strategy of this program are constructed from the systematic, organizational and individual levels.

At the systematic level, it is necessary to accurately locate the talent cultivation objectives of the program, build an integrated system of “3+2” courses for students, establish the basic conditions and resources for collaborative cultivation, and share the mechanism to establish an integrated articulation of teaching and learning activities.

At the organizational level, innovative management modes are explored jointly by the college and the academic staff to improve students’ ideological and political qualities, humanistic qualities and professional qualities.

At the individual level, in strengthening students’ professional skills, the focus is on developing students’ digital competence and lifelong learning ability. The development and exploration of the pilot project of articulation between higher vocational specialized education and applied undergraduate education provides practical experience for the gradual transformation of vocational specialized education into vocational undergraduate education. It contributes a novel paradigm for the improvement of China’s higher vocational education hierarchical structure and vocational education.

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