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Construction and Implementation Path of Characteristic Curriculum System of Design Specialty in Private Vocational Undergraduate Education-Research on the Innovation of Education Mode Based on School-based Practice

Bo Yuan
School of Design, Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou 571126, Hainan, China

Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.

Abstract: School-based practice serves as the cornerstone for private vocational undergraduate institutions to highlight their distinctive educational features and address homogenization issues, while innovative talent cultivation models form the critical foundation for implementing specialized curriculum systems. Current design programs in private vocational undergraduate education face challenges including disconnection from institutional resources, inadequate practical teaching, and mismatched educational approaches with industry demands, hindering the development of high-level technical professionals who combine theoretical knowledge, specialized skills, and institutional-specific competencies. This study adopts school-based practice as a starting point, aligning with the vocational orientation and practical nature of design disciplines in private vocational education. It establishes fundamental principles for constructing specialized curriculum systems, explores implementation pathways through three dimensions (course objectives, structure, and content), and innovates talent cultivation models tailored to school-based practices. By proposing targeted implementation strategies, this research aims to provide theoretical references and practical paradigms for creating distinctive, hands-on curriculum systems and educational models in private vocational undergraduate design programs.

Keywords: Private vocational undergraduate; Design major; Distinctive curriculum system; School-based practice; Innovative educational model; Implementation pathway

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1. Introduction

Private vocational undergraduate education constitutes a vital component of China's modern vocational education system, with its core mission being to cultivate high-level technical and skilled professionals who possess both theoretical knowledge at the undergraduate level and practical operational capabilities for occupational roles. As a quintessential applied discipline, the development of design programs heavily relies on the exploration of institutional resources and

the implementation of practical teaching. Currently, some private vocational undergraduate design programs still rigidly adopt the curriculum systems and educational models of regular undergraduate or vocational college programs, failing to integrate institutional heritage, regional industrial characteristics, and school-enterprise collaboration resources to develop distinctive institutional features. This results in curriculum systems that are disconnected from occupational demands, superficial integration of practical teaching with institutional practices, and a lack of innovative educational approaches. Consequently, graduates exhibit insufficient job adaptability, making it difficult to demonstrate the distinctive advantages of private vocational undergraduate education [1].

The development of a distinctive curriculum system and innovative educational models rooted in school-based practices is essential for private vocational undergraduate design programs to achieve differentiated growth and enhance talent cultivation quality. School-based practices provide resource support and practical scenarios for the curriculum system, while innovative educational models facilitate the transition from “framework construction” to “implementation”. These two elements complement and synergize to drive progress. This paper, grounded in the realities of private vocational undergraduate institutions and aligned with the disciplinary characteristics and industry demands of design programs, explores pathways for constructing a distinctive curriculum system, innovates school-based practice-based educational models, and outlines implementation strategies and safeguard measures. The aim is to promote the specialized and high-quality development of talent cultivation systems in private vocational undergraduate design programs.

2. Basic principles of constructing characteristic curriculum system based on school-based practice

2.1. School-based characteristics and differentiated development

Based on the positioning of private vocational undergraduate colleges, the advantages of faculty, the resources of school-enterprise cooperation, and the characteristics of the cultural industry in the region, we will deeply explore the unique resources of the school, transform regional culture, school-enterprise cooperation projects, and school-based teaching and research achievements into distinctive course features, build a curriculum system that is different from other colleges, avoid homogenization, and highlight the characteristics of professional education [2].

2.2. Vocational-oriented, integration of positions and courses

Based on the core position ability standard of design industry, the course system construction process is integrated with the vocational skill level standard, enterprise position task and industry design standard, so as to realize the course goal and position ability docking, course content and work task docking, teaching process and practice process docking, and ensure the vocational and practicality of the course system.

2.3. Unity of knowledge and action, practice as the priority

With the strong practicality of design specialty, the school-based practice is integrated into the whole process of curriculum system construction and implementation, the ratio of theoretical teaching and practical teaching is optimized, and the progressive practical curriculum module is constructed, so that students can complete the “learning-doing-creating” integrated learning in the school-based workshop, school-enterprise training base and other scenes, and improve their vocational practical ability [3].

2.4. System collaboration, education as the core

The curriculum system is regarded as an organic whole, with emphasis on the logical connection and coordinated linkage among various course modules. At the same time, it takes talent training as the core, taking into account the “undergraduate” and “professional” characteristics of private vocational undergraduate education. On the basis of consolidating students’ theoretical literacy, it strengthens the dual cultivation of vocational skills and school-based characteristic literacy.

3. The construction path of private vocational undergraduate design specialty curriculum system based on school-based practice

3.1. Anchoring school-based and vocational needs to clarify curriculum system objectives

The core of curriculum system construction lies in establishing training objectives that align with school-based practices and professional demands, avoiding vague goals and inaccurate positioning. First, conduct dual research on school-based resources and occupational needs. Systematically review institutional resources such as school-enterprise collaboration platforms, faculty research directions, and on-campus training facilities. Simultaneously, conduct in-depth research on regional design industry trends, core position settings (visual communication design, product design, environmental design, etc.), and job competency standards to clarify the integration points between school-based characteristics and professional requirements. Second, define training objectives. Position talent cultivation as developing high-level technical and skilled design professionals who possess undergraduate-level design theory literacy, refined professional design skills, distinct school-based characteristic competencies, and are capable of meeting core position demands in regional design industries. This approach distinguishes itself from both general academic undergraduate training and basic skill-oriented vocational education. Finally, clarify the positioning of the curriculum system. With “empowering vocational ability cultivation through school-based practices” as the core, achieve deep integration between school-based characteristics and professional demands, making the curriculum system a bridge connecting school-based practices and vocational competency development [4].

3.2. Integrating school-based features to optimize modular curriculum structure

Breaking away from the traditional linear curriculum structure of “public foundation courses + professional foundation courses + specialized courses”, this innovative system integrates school-based practical resources with occupational competency requirements to establish a distinctive modular framework featuring “five interlinked modules”. Each module operates independently while maintaining organic connections, forming a curriculum architecture that ensures “solid foundational grounding, focused professional development, distinctive program features, and continuous practical application”. All modules incorporate school-based practical elements.

The Public Foundation Curriculum Module emphasizes “competency-based education + school-specific curricula”, expanding national curriculum standards with courses like professional ethics, innovation and entrepreneurship, and regional cultural studies. Through case-based explanations of industry standards, students develop institutional identity and regional industry awareness while building comprehensive competencies. The Professional Foundation Module focuses on “practical application + school-based training”, offering core courses including design sketching, three fundamental design principles, and software fundamentals. Practical instruction is integrated into foundational courses via school-based design workshops, embedding operational standards from training platforms to solidify design fundamentals. The Core Professional Courses Module highlights “industry-academia integration + school resources”, where curriculum development collaborates with enterprises to incorporate real-world projects and research outcomes. Specialized courses like Brand Design and Product Form Design ensure students master essential professional skills. As the curriculum’s cornerstone, the School-Specific Curriculum Module emphasizes “uniqueness + hands-on practice”, developing distinctive programs such as Intangible Cultural Heritage Design Applications, Enterprise Custom Design Practice, and Regional Cultural Product Development – creating unique professional course identifiers through localized resources. The progressive practical curriculum module emphasizes “comprehensive coverage + school-based scenarios”, spanning the entire talent development process. It comprises three components: foundational practice (school-based workshop training and course implementation), professional practice (corporate awareness internships and school-based project training), and integrated practice (on-the-job internships and school-based graduation projects). This framework achieves deep integration between practical teaching and school-based scenarios as well as occupational roles.

3.3. Grounding in school-based practice, reconstructing the curriculum content system

Curriculum content serves as the core component of the distinctive course system. It requires school-based practices as the foundation to align with occupational demands, restructuring and optimizing course content while eliminating disconnected or overly theoretical elements. This approach aims to achieve "integration of school-based elements, updating of occupational content, and seamless integration of theory and practice". First, leverage school-based resources to develop unique content by transforming real-world design projects from industry-academia partnerships, regional cultural elements, and teaching research outcomes into instructional cases and practical training topics, making school-based characteristics an integral part of the curriculum. Second, update course content to reflect evolving occupational standards by incorporating cutting-edge design technologies (e.g., 3D printing, digital twins, new media design) and industry norms, replacing outdated materials to ensure curriculum alignment with industry development. Third, streamline theoretical content through school-based practices tailored to the learning characteristics of private vocational undergraduate students. By integrating theoretical knowledge with practical case studies and corporate project examples, the "theory-practice integration" approach enables students to grasp theoretical concepts through hands-on experience [5].

4. Innovation and implementation path of educational model based on school-based practice

4.1. Innovating the three-in-one education model of "school-based practice + school-enterprise collaboration"

With school-based practice at its core, the program integrates in-school teaching, corporate internships, and regional industrial services to innovate a tripartite educational model: "in-school workshops + off-campus industry bases + regional industrial projects". This approach fosters deep integration between the educational process and school-based practices as well as professional roles. Within the school, workshops and training laboratories are utilized to deliver theory-practice integrated instruction and specialized training programs, cultivating students' foundational skills and school-specific competencies. Off-campus, partnerships with enterprises establish training bases where students participate in real-world design projects, enhancing their practical skills. By aligning with regional industrial needs, students engage in local initiatives such as cultural and creative design and rural revitalization projects, combining school-based practice with regional industrial services to achieve "learning through application and application-driven learning".

4.2. Specific implementation path of the specialized curriculum system

The teaching methodology adopts an integrated "workshop-based instruction + project-based learning" model. Moving beyond traditional lecture-based approaches, it relocates learning scenarios to school-designed workshops and industry-academia training bases, enabling students to complete coursework through hands-on practice. Project-based learning is implemented using school-specific initiatives and real-world corporate projects, where students work in project teams to complete the entire process from design research and conceptualization to final product development, thereby cultivating collaborative skills and practical design capabilities. For school-specific course modules, specialized workshops are established, co-taught by in-house faculty and industry mentors, ensuring synchronized development of specialized and vocational skills.

To strengthen faculty development, we are building a "dual-qualified" teaching team with school-based characteristics. Through school-based practices and industry-academia collaboration, we aim to cultivate educators who excel in undergraduate teaching, professional practice, and school-specific pedagogy. On one hand, we enhance in-house teacher training by assigning faculty to internships at partner enterprises, where they participate in regional industrial projects and school-based research initiatives to improve practical teaching skills. On the other hand, we recruit veteran industry designers, intangible cultural heritage inheritors, and regional cultural experts as external adjunct faculty, integrating industry insights and school-specific resources into classroom instruction. Additionally, we establish a dedicated team for

school-based courses to ensure the quality of these specialized programs.

To develop a diversified evaluation system that integrates "school-based characteristics + vocational competencies", this study transforms the traditional exam-centric model into a comprehensive framework. This new system emphasizes school-specific competencies and practical vocational skills, featuring multi-stakeholder participation, multidimensional content, and a balanced integration of process and outcome. The evaluation process now involves not only in-house teachers but also industry mentors and experts, covering theoretical knowledge, vocational skills, school-based competencies, and project outcomes. It particularly assesses students' ability to design school-specific programs and their suitability for professional roles. The evaluation combines formative assessments (classroom performance, workshop training, project progress) with summative evaluations (graduation projects, final products, and internship performance), providing a holistic reflection of students' learning journey and skill development.

Resource integration to establish a school-based teaching resource repository. This repository consolidates internal school resources, external corporate resources, and regional cultural resources, integrating teaching cases, practical training topics, design materials, and video tutorials. It features authentic design projects from industry-academia partnerships, regional cultural elements, and teaching cases with practical manuals for school-based courses. The repository maintains dynamic updates, incorporating new content in response to industry developments and school-based practice progress, thereby providing continuous resource support for curriculum implementation.

5. Implementation guarantee strategies based on school-based practice

5.1. Strengthening the construction of school-based practice platforms

Enhance investment in school-based practical platforms by establishing specialized facilities such as design workshops, digital design labs, and intangible cultural heritage design training rooms that align with the program's distinctive features. These platforms should be equipped with professional design tools and equipment to provide hardware support for hands-on teaching. Improve management systems to ensure open sharing of resources, enabling students to engage in independent practice and teachers to conduct school-based research. Additionally, deepen industry-academia collaboration by partnering with leading local design firms to create off-campus training bases. This approach provides students with authentic professional practice environments while achieving resource complementarity between on-campus platforms and off-campus enterprise bases.

5.2. Improving the school-based practical education mechanism

We will establish a school-based practical education mechanism aligned with our distinctive curriculum system and innovative pedagogical approaches. This includes developing management protocols for school-based practical teaching, implementation guidelines for industry-academia collaboration, and regulations for specialized graduation projects, with clearly defined responsibilities across all departments and stages. Furthermore, a joint conference mechanism will be implemented to coordinate interdepartmental meetings involving teaching staff, partner enterprises, and regional cultural institutions. These efforts will advance school-based practical education, industry-academia partnerships, and regional industrial collaborations, ensuring seamless implementation of all initiatives.

5.3. Improving incentive and protection policies

To enhance teacher engagement, the school will implement incentive policies for both faculty and students. Teachers' participation in developing school-based distinctive courses, conducting practical teaching, and fostering industry-academia collaboration will be incorporated into performance evaluations, with corresponding bonus points and rewards to boost their motivation. Students excelling in school-based projects, regional industrial initiatives, or academic competitions will receive credit recognition and awards, encouraging active involvement in practical and innovative activities. Additionally, a dedicated school-based practice fund will be established to support the development of distinctive courses,

the construction of practical platforms, and the execution of industry-academia cooperation projects.

6. Conclusion

The development of a distinctive curriculum system and innovative educational models for private vocational undergraduate design programs, grounded in school-based practices, serves as a pivotal strategy to address homogenization in academic disciplines and elevate talent cultivation quality. This approach prioritizes the unique context of private vocational institutions, integrating school-based practices throughout curriculum design, pedagogical innovation, and instructional delivery to achieve seamless alignment between institutional characteristics and professional demands. The curriculum framework must adhere to three core principles: school-specific identity, vocational focus, and practice-oriented emphasis. It requires systematic design across three dimensions, namely the objectives, structure, and content to establish a modular, specialized, and practice-driven curriculum system. The educational model should pioneer a tripartite framework combining school-based practices with industry-academia collaboration, fostering deep integration between educational processes and real-world scenarios, occupational roles, and regional industries.

The successful implementation of a distinctive curriculum system requires three key elements: building a school-based practice platform, cultivating dual-qualified teaching teams, and establishing a diversified evaluation framework with robust institutional safeguards. For private vocational undergraduate design programs, the key lies in leveraging school-based practices to fully utilize institutional resources, strengthen industry-academia collaboration, and synergize specialized curricula with innovative pedagogical approaches. This strategy enables the cultivation of high-caliber design professionals who combine theoretical knowledge, technical expertise, and unique institutional strengths. By overcoming homogenization challenges, such programs can highlight the distinctive value of private vocational education while providing solid talent support for regional design industry development.

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