

# **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: PATH SELECTION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISABLED INDIVIDUALS IN CHINESE HIGHER VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

China is home to a substantial disabled population, with approximately 82.96 million individuals, representing about 6.34% of the nation's total population. The Outline of the National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2020) underscores the importance of promoting vocational education for people with disabilities, emphasizing the development of higher education opportunities for this segment of the population. It calls for enhanced provincial government coordination to facilitate the alignment of secondary and higher vocational education, fostering the coordinated growth and resource sharing of vocational education within each province. During the 12th Five-Year Plan period, secondary vocational education for individuals with disabilities witnessed a steady, upward trajectory. Concurrently, higher vocational education for this demographic advanced in parallel. The seamless connection between secondary and higher vocational education plays a pivotal role in the holistic development of vocational education for individuals with disabilities.

This research investigates the linkage between secondary and higher vocational education for individuals with disabilities, with the aim of assessing the current state, identifying existing challenges, and providing valuable insights to facilitate the effective development of vocational education for this population.

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**Keywords:** Disability Education, Vocational Education, Secondary Education, Higher Education, Inclusive Education

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## **1. Introduction**

There are currently 82.96 million disabled people in China, accounting for approximately 6.34% of the total number of people in the country. The Outline of the National Medium - and Long Term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010-2010) points out that it is necessary to vigorously promote vocational education for people with disabilities, attach importance to the development of higher education for people with disabilities, strengthen provincial government education coordination, coordinate the development of secondary and higher vocational education, and promote the coordinated development and resource sharing of vocational education within the province<sup>[1]</sup>. Throughout the 12th Five Year Plan period, secondary vocational education for people with disabilities has shown a gradual and spiral upward trend. At the same time, higher vocational education for people with disabilities is also developing synchronously, and the smooth and effective connection between secondary and higher vocational education for people with disabilities directly

affects the development process of vocational education for people with disabilities<sup>[2]</sup>. Based on this background, research is conducted on the connection between secondary and higher vocational education for people with disabilities, aiming to understand the current situation of the connection between secondary and higher vocational education for people with disabilities, identify its existing problems and challenges, and hope to provide reference and reference for effective development of secondary and higher vocational education for people with disabilities.

## **2. The Characteristics of Higher Vocational Education for Persons with Disabilities and the Role of Educational Connection**

### **2.1. Characteristics of Higher Vocational Education for Persons with Disabilities**

#### **2.1.1. The complexity of educational objects**

The individual differences of students are a major characteristic of higher vocational education for people with disabilities. On the one hand, there are differences between disabled students and healthy students. For example, blind students have low abstract thinking ability due to visual loss, but their hearing sensitivity is usually high due to organ compensation: deaf students have impaired hearing, but their attention and concentration are higher. So in terms of knowledge learning and ability development, it is necessary to plan and carry out teaching based on their strengths<sup>[3]</sup>. On the other hand, there are also significant differences between groups of disabled students. Due to the different causes, types, and levels of disability, schools must tailor personalized training plans for individuals with complex and diverse needs based on their self-development needs and existing foundations, emphasizing individual differences and characteristics. Through the compensatory effect of the senses, the potential of the educated is maximized.

#### **2.1.2. Practicality of teaching content**

Higher vocational education for disabled individuals directly corresponds to meeting their individual survival needs. Promote the development of the personality of people with disabilities, and enable educated individuals to acquire the professional knowledge and skills required for a certain profession or production labor<sup>[4]</sup>. So while providing cultural education, we emphasize the cultivation of practical skills and practical work abilities for disabled people. The entire education process of employment oriented vocational education for people with disabilities should revolve around the actual needs of the target job group, impart the skills and techniques needed in practical work, adapt the teaching content to the needs of economic and social development, and through scientific market research and analysis, target the unique sensory characteristics of individuals, repeatedly train them to form proficient operational abilities.

### **2.2. The role of connecting higher vocational education for people with disabilities**

#### **2.2.1. Meeting the Urgent Need for Persons with Disabilities to Develop a Moderately Prosperous Society Simultaneously**

In February 2015, the State Council issued the "Opinions on Accelerating the Process of Promoting a Moderately Prosperous Life for Persons with Disabilities", which made arrangements to ensure and improve the livelihood of people with disabilities, help them share development achievements, and strive for a moderately prosperous life together. Currently, among the 85 million disabled people in China. There are still 12.3 million rural disabled people who have not yet lifted themselves out of poverty<sup>[5]</sup>. The level of achieving a moderately prosperous life for disabled people in China is only 71.1%, which is 56.2% of the national average. The guiding opinion of the "Opinions" states that

it is necessary to strengthen and improve basic public services for disabled people, improve their education level, and promote the development of high school education for disabled people with a focus on vocational education. Employment is the foundation of people's livelihood, and the development of higher vocational education for disabled people is the prerequisite and foundation for promoting the formation of human capital for disabled people and achieving full employment for disabled people.

### **2.2.2. Realizing the Actual Needs of Personalized Development for Persons with Disabilities**

With the popularization of higher education and the demand for talents in society, secondary vocational education for disabled people is increasingly unable to meet their own upward development needs. The adjustment of economic structure and the upgrading of industrial institutions are changing the concept that vocational education is a terminal education, and people with disabilities are eager to further their studies and attend higher vocational education for people with disabilities. Due to the varying development scale and speed of secondary and higher vocational education for people with disabilities in China. Therefore, studying the theme of the connection between secondary and higher vocational education for disabled people can help us better understand the current situation of the connection between secondary and higher vocational education for disabled people in China, and provide empirical basis for further exploration of the connection between secondary and higher vocational education in China<sup>[6]</sup>.

## **3. Current situation of the connection between secondary and higher vocational education for people with disabilities**

### **3.1. Inaccurate educational talent goals**

At present, the talent cultivation goals of higher vocational education for people with disabilities in China show a state of ambiguity, overlap, and dislocation. Whether it is the government, education regulatory departments, or schools, their positioning for the development of higher vocational education is not clear. The 12th Five Year Plan points out that "secondary vocational education focuses on cultivating frontline technical and skilled talents required for the revitalization of modern agriculture, industry, service industry, and traditional ethnic crafts; higher vocational education focuses on cultivating developmental, compound, and innovative technical and skilled talents required for industrial transformation and upgrading and enterprise technological innovation<sup>[7]</sup>.

### **3.2. Lack of standardized and unified professional settings**

At present, the most important problem in the specialty setting of the secondary and higher vocational education for the disabled is the lack of uniformity and standardization, which is manifested in the large randomness of specialty classification, specialty name, and specialty scope. Secondary vocational education schools for people with disabilities exhibit the characteristics of multiple and complex majors, as well as small and detailed majors, often mainly considering the characteristics of people with disabilities and the characteristics of local economic development; Higher vocational education schools for people with disabilities exhibit a characteristic of fewer and highly concentrated majors in their professional settings. They are often influenced by higher education and adopt a discipline centered approach to setting up majors, which is disconnected from the current industrial structure or vocational positions.

### **3.3. Disordered and lack of targeted teaching content**

At present, there are mainly similar professional courses and duplicate knowledge points in the teaching content of higher vocational education for people with disabilities; The difficulty of public courses varies and lacks hierarchy; There are many theoretical courses and few practical courses. This is mainly because the starting point of curriculum development in various vocational schools for people with disabilities is often the requirements of local economic and social development for people with disabilities, which are all employment-oriented curriculum design. Therefore, whether it is curriculum standards, teaching plans, teaching outlines, curriculum textbooks, they are all carried out with this purpose, with certain regional and limitations<sup>[8]</sup>. There is less consideration given to students' further education, cross regional mobility, job adaptation or promotion, and more emphasis is placed on highlighting their "regional" and "uniqueness", while "commonality" and "mobility" are not obvious.

### **3.4. Lack of teaching staff in vocational education**

The basic way to cultivate high-quality and skilled talents is through teaching. Teaching is the learning and growth process of students under the guidance of teachers. "Excellent teachers are not only the specific implementers of various education and teaching linkage plans, but also the guarantee for achieving effective linkage in higher vocational education for people with disabilities<sup>[9]</sup>. However, currently, both teachers conducting secondary vocational education for people with disabilities and teachers of higher vocational education have little knowledge of each other's talent cultivation goals, curriculum design, teaching content, etc.

## **4. Linking Paths for Secondary and Higher Vocational Education for Persons with Disabilities**

### **4.1. Accurate positioning and hierarchical connection of training objectives**

China's talent cultivation positioning for secondary vocational education focuses on the cultivation of "frontline technical and skilled talents"; The goal of talent cultivation in higher vocational education is to cultivate "developmental, compound, and innovative technical talents". So we should clarify that the common ground between the two stages is to cultivate "skilled" talents; Secondly, attention should be paid to distinguishing the differences and progressiveness between the two stages<sup>[10]</sup>. Vocational schools need to strengthen their "frontline operational abilities", while vocational colleges need to strengthen their "comprehensive practical abilities". There is a gap between the two in terms of difficulty, depth, breadth, and extremely poor abilities. Course content should be selected and segmented according to the principles of hierarchy and gradient, with clear academic boundaries and logical gradients. There is a hierarchical difference between vocational and vocational education, and the specific teaching content is manifested as differences in depth and breadth. Overall, secondary vocational education for people with disabilities mainly recruits graduates from special schools, which is a vocational education implemented in the high school stage on the basis of junior high school education. Its training goal is to cultivate professional and technical personnel in the frontline of production, management, and other fields; Finally, the positioning of the training goals for vocational and technical talents with disabilities also requires targeted setting based on the characteristics of students with different types of disabilities. Based on the economic and social development characteristics of the region, talent training goals should be designed to meet the development needs of vocational education students with different types of disabilities and levels.

#### **4.2. Standardizing Professional Settings and Promoting Scientific Connection of Disciplines**

It is recommended to strengthen the construction of standards for the establishment of vocational education majors for people with disabilities and the compilation of professional catalogs, in order to standardize the names of major categories and transferable majors in the connection of vocational education for people with disabilities, so that the connection between middle and higher vocational education can be based on rules and evidence. For example, the relevant departments organize the compilation of the Catalogue of Vocational Guidance of Vocational Schools for Persons with Disabilities as a reference for teaching in secondary and higher vocational education institutions for persons with disabilities, and set up scientific, standardized and unified majors, and ensure the consistency of teaching between vocational schools for persons with disabilities and all majors. On the other hand, the state and local governments need to introduce relevant policies and documents to guide secondary and higher vocational education schools for the disabled to carry out professional settings scientifically, emphasize timeliness, not only consider the physical and mental characteristics of the disabled, but also consider the combination with the characteristics of the local economy and industry, which can effectively serve the society and extend in the future.

#### **4.3. Coordinate the systematization of higher vocational education content**

Firstly, it is necessary to establish a curriculum setting mechanism that integrates government, schools, industries, and enterprises. By coordinating the relationship between vocational and secondary schools, industries, and enterprises through the government or education regulatory authorities, the development principle should be systematic and sustainable. It is necessary to consider both the employment needs of some students and their requirements for further education, design differentiated curriculum standards, and balance the needs of disabled students for further education and employment; Secondly, strengthen the connection between vocational skills education and vocational qualification certificates in schools, follow the principle of "integration of courses and certificates, spiral progression" in curriculum development, and clarify their respective teaching levels and priorities in accordance with vocational qualification standards, actual requirements of industry enterprises, and the needs of professional connection in secondary and higher vocational education. Vocational colleges for people with disabilities strive to achieve clear internal logic in the same or similar courses, and the courses should reflect different level requirements. It is also necessary to reflect the overall connection between the two. Finally, formulating corresponding curriculum standards not only plays a huge role in the process of connecting vocational and secondary school courses, but also plays a guiding, diagnostic, and benchmark role in improving the practice of educational quality, serving as a bridge and link between theory and practice of educational quality.

#### **4.4. Improving the level of the teaching team and promoting the growth and professionalization of teachers**

One is to regularly carry out relevant teacher exchange and learning systems. Teachers who carry out vocational education for people with disabilities can understand each other's teaching situation through online communication, on-site visits, literature reading, and other methods, laying a good cognitive foundation for each other's teaching connection; Secondly, various secondary and higher education institutions that carry out vocational education for people with disabilities need to guide



teachers to accurately understand and grasp the stratification and positioning, connection and differentiation, division of labor and cooperation of vocational education for people with disabilities in talent cultivation, professional settings, course content, teaching evaluation, and other aspects through research topics, conference discussions, expert interpretation, and other methods. On the other hand, the characteristic of vocational education for people with disabilities lies in its "professional" nature. However, surveys have shown that the proportion of teachers who can carry out "professional" operations and training is relatively low. Therefore, it is recommended to strengthen school enterprise cooperation, especially in terms of teacher construction, emphasizing the "introduction", that is, inviting professional and skilled experts and technical experts from outside the school to participate in the teaching of students' practical skills; Emphasis is also placed on "sending out" and the establishment of a visiting engineer system, which involves sending teachers who lack practical skills to participate in learning relevant professional skills of the enterprise, conducting on-the-job training, adopting various methods such as joint public relations, research and development, and focusing on cultivating a well-trained and skilled dual teacher team, laying a good teaching foundation for the improvement of the quality of connection between secondary and vocational schools for disabled people.

## **5. Conclusion**

In summary, by identifying problems based on the current situation, in order to achieve effective connection between secondary and higher vocational education for people with disabilities, it is necessary to promote the hierarchical connection of training objectives, the scientific connection of professional settings, the systematization of content connection, and the professionalization of teacher team growth. This can allow us to have a more comprehensive and objective understanding of the next development direction of vocational education for people with disabilities, Provide reference basis for the further improvement of modern vocational education in China.

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