

Innovation in Labor Education for College Students in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract: In today's world, artificial intelligence (AI) is a crucial direction in global technological development, permeating various sectors of society and even replacing manual labor in certain fields, significantly enhancing societal productivity. Simultaneously, people's reliance on AI is increasing, leading to a shift in the labor paradigm and a gradual weakening of labor consciousness. College students are high-quality talents cultivated by the party and the state, and their labor consciousness not only determines their own development but is also crucial for societal progress, especially in the face of significant challenges posed by the development of AI on their employment prospects. Therefore, innovating the way labor education is provided to college students to enhance their labor consciousness, skills, and quality, and fostering innovative development in labor education practices for college students is essential to help them adapt to the evolving era, lead societal development, and achieve comprehensive personal development.

Artificial intelligence plays a pivotal role in technological innovation, directly impacting people's quality of life. General Secretary state leaders has emphasized the importance of upholding the fundamental interests of the vast majority of the people in terms of economic and social development to realize the Chinese Dream through labor. In the new era, labor education for university students must undergo a transformation from traditional paradigms to adaptive paradigms, utilizing artificial intelligence for both theoretical and practical innovation in labor education. This will stimulate students' self-directed learning, making them consciously engage in labor education, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of labor education for university students and nurturing qualified successors to socialism.

1. Reasons for the Weakening of University Students' Work Ethic in the AI Era

In contemporary society, the advent of artificial intelligence has brought about profound changes in how people produce and the way they live. University students are increasingly distanced from direct manual labor, as tasks can often be completed with a few keystrokes or voice commands. While university students benefit from the convenience of artificial intelligence, they are also negatively affected. Despite the weakening of their work ethic, they can still create and enjoy a good life. Thus, the necessity of labor education in the context of the AI era has been strongly questioned. However, even in the AI era, labor education for university students remains crucial and

urgent. It is essential to find innovative ways to instill work ethics and qualities that enable university students to adapt to contemporary work habits and attitudes.

1.1 Diminished Practical Labor in Daily Life

The liberation of human hands from manual labor occurred with the advent of production tools. Correspondingly, the liberation of human minds began with the widespread use of artificial intelligence.[1] Tasks that previously required significant manual effort can now be completed within seconds by intelligent tools. With the proliferation of smart homes, people are freed from tedious household chores. In this high-tech era, university students are increasingly unable to experience the hardships of manual labor. This decline not only affects their labor skills but also hinders their development of innovative and creative abilities. They begin to believe that AI can replace human labor and become the primary creator of value. University students overlook the fact that AI itself is a product of human labor. The value created by complex human labor cannot be replaced by AI. Therefore, it is essential to use labor education to correct this distorted perception of work values. In this context, labor education should guide university students to engage in diligent and sincere labor, encouraging them to adapt to contemporary work habits and attitudes while developing a stronger work ethic and work quality. Only by aligning their mindset and recognizing that "human labor is always the sole source of value" can contemporary university students understand the importance of labor education and actively participate in practical labor. They will then realize that labor is the source of wealth and the foundation for creating a better tomorrow, fostering a correct work ethic.

1.2 Dependence on Online Communication for Interpersonal Relationships

Karl Marx pointed out that the essence of humans is the sum of all social relationships. In the information technology era, communication methods have changed, breaking through temporal and spatial constraints. People's interactions with each other have become simpler and more convenient, but there is always an "electronic barrier" between them. University students rely on online communication rather than face-to-face interaction, which keeps them away from practical labor and may lead to problems such as "social anxiety disorder." Therefore, labor education remains crucial in the AI era.

1.3 Overreliance on the Internet for Learning and Reflection

Artificial intelligence is a double-edged sword. While it has brought great convenience to our lives, it has also eroded our thinking abilities. Marx's labor theory holds that the complexity of human labor often creates more value. Nowadays, many university students excessively rely on the internet and artificial intelligence, undermining their work ethics and creating an illusion that AI can free their minds, leading to a reluctance to learn and think independently. [2] They depend on scientific calculators to solve problems that should be solved with pen and paper, and they use translation software to decipher foreign-language articles they cannot understand, bypassing the process of independent thought. This learning mode is shallow and detrimental to the innovation and creativity of university students. Therefore, universities must strengthen labor education for university students, guide them in practicing labor, and enhance their ability to think independently. This is a top priority in current higher education.

2. The Real Significance of Strengthening Labor Education for College Students in the AI Era

In the AI era, strengthening labor education for college students holds significant practical value. Labor education in universities aids in developing the correct labor outlook, instilling an understanding of labor's importance, and fostering respect for and devotion to labor, thereby shaping the right values for life.[3] Furthermore, labor education helps students improve their practical and critical thinking skills, enabling them to identify and solve real-world problems, enhancing innovation and problem-solving abilities. Labor education also underscores the importance of vocational skills, enhancing students' vocational competence and laying a solid foundation for future employment and career development. Therefore, prioritizing labor education for college students contributes to their holistic development and their ability to contribute to the nation and society.

2.1. Providing Practical Conditions for Integrating "Five Education"

Labor education is a vital pathway to integrating "five education." This concept involves the fusion of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education, emphasizing that labor education should complement and enhance other aspects. Through labor education, students develop a strong work ethic, enhance their innovation capabilities, and engage in practical problem-solving. Labor education also deepens students' understanding of society, human civilization, and the natural environment, instilling social responsibility and environmental awareness. Moreover, labor education fosters logical thinking and teamwork. Labor values, a core component of Marxist ideology, emphasize that labor is the fundamental source of value in society. [4] Labor education can serve as the foundation for other forms of education, promoting the integration of "five education."

2.2. Meeting the Needs for Comprehensive Development:

Marxist theory of comprehensive human development does not advocate for balanced development or assembly-line education. Instead, it promotes the cultivation of high-quality individuals capable of comprehensive and free development. The rapid advancement of science, technology, and productivity in contemporary society requires higher standards from college students. They must not only adapt to AI but also avoid being controlled by it. Labor education's essence lies in cultivating a proper work ethic, enhancing labor skills, and promoting labor quality, helping students integrate into society effectively and achieve comprehensive personal development.

2.3. Necessity of Labor Education in Nurturing the New Generation for the Era

The prevalence of AI places new demands on the labor skills of college students. Modern labor is not merely about transforming material elements but also involves the production of intangible goods such as services, knowledge, or communication. College students must become versatile professionals with innovative thinking and their knowledge systems. Labor education helps them develop labor consciousness, allowing them to control AI rather than be controlled by it, aligning with the goal of nurturing the new generation for the era.[5] As the reserve force for the new era, college students must embrace a proper labor value system, create a better life for themselves, and become leaders of their time.

3. Innovative Paths for Labor Education for College Students in the AI Era

AI conceals direct human labor, creating the illusion that machines create value. This has led to the weakening of labor consciousness, challenging the relevance of labor education. With the rapid development of AI technology, it is beginning to play an increasingly significant role in the field of education, particularly in labor education. The application of AI technology offers new perspectives and methods for the intelligent integration of labor education content.

3.1. Intelligent Integration of Labor Education Content

The emergence of AI has brought about significant changes in labor practices. As AI technology continues to advance and proliferate, traditional labor tasks are increasingly automated by smart devices and robots. New forms of labor are emerging. Labor education content faces new challenges and opportunities. The target of education, namely university students, should create in household chores, innovate in production, and excel in service. They need to break free from excessive reliance on technology to achieve their own independent and comprehensive development, transitioning from "education for the acquisition of labor skills" to "education through labor."

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