

PRACTICE FORUM

Thoughts on the development of teaching staff for Chinese + Vocational Skills: Taking Access to Vocational Chinese (elementary level) textbooks as a case

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Abstract

Chinese + Vocational Skills represents a significant innovation in the fields of international Chinese language education and vocational education. In recent years, the development of teaching resources for Chinese + Vocational Skills has witnessed rapid development, yet problems still threaten the development of Chinese + Vocational Skills teacher training, such as lagging training of dedicated full-time teachers and a serious shortage of teaching staff, hindering the development of the Chinese + Vocational Skills initiative. Taking Access to Vocational Chinese (elementary level) textbooks as a case, this paper introduces the textbooks' characteristics as well as teachers' essential qualifications and core competencies for using them. Drawing on survey research, the paper further analyzes the current status of teaching staff engaged in Chinese + Vocational Skills education and proposes a practical "triple-integration" approach to teacher development to cultivate a teaching cohort for Chinese + Vocational Skills; integrating international Chinese language education with vocational education; connecting colleges and universities with enterprises; and integrating academic education with training. This paper provides a reference for developing Chinese + Vocational Skills education and cultivating a staff for teaching it with the aim of promoting the high-level, high-quality development of Chinese + Vocational Skills education.

Keywords

Chinese + Vocational Skills, Vocational Education Going Abroad, Access to Vocational Chinese, dedicated full-time teachers, team teaching

INTRODUCTION

The second phase of the Double High-Level Program initiated by China's Ministry of Education establishes new, stricter requirements for expanding international exchanges and cooperation in vocational education. As a national strategy, Vocational Education Going Abroad requires the simultaneous promotion of Chinese + Vocational Skills education (Zhao *et al.*, 2025). It should not only adhere to

its principle of education following industrial output and colleges cooperating with enterprises to carry out overseas academic education and skills training, cultivate international high-skilled talents and local skilled talents urgently needed by Chinese-funded enterprises, but also integrate language training with skills training to strive to build a high-quality model of "Chinese Language + Vocational Skills" (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Finance, 2025). Education in Chinese + Vocational Skills must


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proactively undertake its historic mission of disseminating China's excellent traditional culture, aiming to provide enterprises with talents who are not only proficient in Chinese communication but also equipped with professional competencies and to nurture builders for countries along the Belt and Road who understand China, feel close to China, are friendly to China and share a bond of heart with China (Education Project Research Group, 2021).

At the end of 2021, the Center for Language Education and Cooperation (CLEC) issued the Action Plan for the Development of Chinese + Vocational Skills Teaching Resources (2021-2025) (hereafter referred to as Action Plan). Action Plan aimed to publish 300 textbooks in the Chinese + Vocational Skills series, develop 500 online course resources and 2000 micro-courses for 50 majors experiencing shortages, research and develop a mobile learning app for Chinese + Vocational Skills, and establish a multi-lingual digital teaching resource database (Center for Language Education and Cooperation, 2021). Since 2022, CLEC has collaborated with the China Nonferrous Metals Industry Talent Center (CNMITC) and relied on Chinese vocational colleges to organize experts from vocational education, international Chinese language education, publishing houses, and related enterprises to jointly develop the Chinese + Vocational Skills series of textbooks and complementary teaching resources based on the actual needs for developing Chinese + Vocational Skills teaching in various countries (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Finance, 2025). By the end of 2022, CLEC had approved 57 teaching resource development projects focused on Chinese + Vocational Skills. This major initiative represents a milestone and has very far-reaching implications for Vocational Education Going Abroad. The first batch of 55 Chinese + Vocational Skills textbooks—the Access to Vocational Chinese series—was officially published in April 2025.

Meanwhile, in 2021, CLEC launched the Center for Chinese Language and Professional Skills (CCLPS) in cooperation with vocational colleges, enterprises (especially Chinese-funded enterprises overseas), and other institutions. Led by CLEC, this flagship project of Chinese + Vocational Skills aims to cultivate local dual talents who are proficient in both Chinese and professional skills. Adopting a collaborative model involving governments, industries, enterprises, and colleges, the project currently covers fields such as e-commerce, CNC technology, new energy vehicles, and the like. As of February 2025, it had established 33 teaching sites in 24 countries around the world (Baidu Baike, 2025). In recent years, CCLPS has developed rapidly through an innovative model that has greatly enriched the types and core connotations of Vocational Education Going Abroad (Wang & Bao, 2026).

Practical experience confirms that Vocational Education Going Abroad requires the assistance of Chinese + Vocational Skills and in particular, cannot prosper without the support of teaching staff with international competence. However, there is a serious shortage of dedicated full-time teachers proficient in both Chinese language teaching and vocational skills instruction (Zhou *et al.*, 2023).

INTRODUCTION TO THE ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL CHINESE (ELEMENTARY LEVEL) SERIES TEXTBOOKS

The term Chinese+ has appeared frequently in the field of international Chinese language education in recent years, and a wide variety of Chinese+ textbooks have sprung up like mushrooms (Li, 2025). These textbooks are categorized into several categories, including Industrial Chinese as represented by *100 Common Industrial Chinese Sentences* and the Chinese for Industries series. Another is Major + Chinese, including textbooks such as *Tourism Chinese*, *Economy and Trade Chinese*, and *Legal Chinese*. A third is Chinese + Vocation, including such textbooks as *Business Chinese* and *Medical Chinese*. At present, however, there are few textbooks officially termed Chinese + Vocational Skills, with the main ones being the *Career Chinese for Industry* textbook and the New Silk Road Chinese + Vocational Skills textbooks and Access to Vocational Chinese series, *etc.*

A Chinese + Vocational Skills textbook differs from both general Chinese textbooks and professional textbooks in vocational education. It is an entirely new genre of textbook that fully integrates Chinese language and vocational skills, both teaching Chinese and imparting vocational skills and thus enabling students to improve their Chinese proficiency and vocational skills simultaneously (Liang, 2025). The teaching objective of such textbooks is to support the training of local employees in Chinese enterprises that operate abroad, cultivating dual-skilled talents who are proficient in both Chinese and professional skills to meet the needs of international production capacity cooperation and the development of enterprises overseas (Qiao, 2023).

The newly published Access to Vocational Chinese textbook series falls under the category of Chinese + Vocational Skills textbooks. This refreshing series integrates two distinct fields—Chinese language and vocational skills—and represents a bold, innovative initiative, marking a significant breakthrough in both the international Chinese language education and vocational education sectors.

The Access to Vocational Chinese textbook series comprises three categories at the elementary, intermediate,

and advanced levels. Among them, the difficulty level of the elementary volume is defined with reference to Levels 1-2 (Elementary) of the Chinese Proficiency Grading Standards for International Chinese Language Education, the intermediate volume with reference to Levels 3 (Elementary) and 4 (Intermediate) of the standards, and the advanced volume with reference to Levels 5-6 (Intermediate) of the standards.

The structure of Access to Vocational Chinese (Elementary Level) textbooks (hereinafter "elementary textbooks") includes eight sections: Review, Warm-Up, New Words, Text, Grammar, Chinese Character Exercises, Cultural/Vocational Expansion, and Summary/Evaluation. The textbooks are characterized by deep integration of language and skills to enable students to improve their language proficiency and vocational skills simultaneously. They proceed from a "double zero foundation", indicating no prior knowledge of either Chinese language or the relevant vocational skills. A textbook's corpus comes entirely from the most commonly used workplace communication topics or work task scenarios in professional fields, specifically the distinct work scenarios or typical work tasks on the production line. The target learners are local frontline employees of Chinese enterprises overseas who receive on-the-job language and skills training. It is also suitable for others, such as students of China-overseas vocational colleges, international students receiving training in China or studying in vocational colleges, and students of Confucius Institutes and CCLPS (Liang, 2025). The editorial team comprises experts in the field of vocational skills, experts in international Chinese language education, foreign language experts, and corporate professional and technical personnel or engineers.

To summarize, an elementary textbook has four key features (Liang, 2025). (1) Bold innovation: It provides in-depth integration of Chinese language and vocational skills. (2) Emphasis on practicality: It breaks the traditional mode of compiling professional textbooks. (3) Market adaptability: It meets the training needs of frontline employees of overseas Chinese enterprises in multiple countries. (4) Shouldering the mission: It disseminates China's excellent traditional culture and corporate culture.

ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATE OF CHINESE + VOCATIONAL SKILLS TEACHING STAFF

The widespread emergence of Chinese + Vocational Skills textbooks raises a major question in the fields of both international Chinese language education and vocational education: Who will teach with these textbooks? Liu and Jiang (2024) point out in their article "Chinese + Vocational

Skills Talent Cultivation: Motives, Objectives and Pathways" that the Chinese + Vocational Skills teaching cohort falls into three main categories: Language teachers, skills teachers, and practical teachers. Currently, three main types of teacher are engaged in teaching in this new field: Teachers of Chinese to speakers of other languages, professional teachers in vocational colleges and the professional and technical personnel of Chinese enterprises overseas, and teachers of foreign languages.

There are two main teaching models: Individual teaching and team teaching. Individual teaching refers to a single professional teacher, teacher of Chinese to speakers of other languages, or teacher of foreign languages conducting Chinese + Vocational Skills teaching independently, which is relatively rare. Team teaching describes a teacher of Chinese to speakers of other languages and a professional teacher jointly teaching the Chinese + Vocational Skills course. Sometimes, if these two teachers possess insufficient foreign language proficiency, a teacher of foreign languages may even need to join. At present, most Chinese + Vocational Skills training programs adopt the team teaching model. However, team teaching has high costs and poor effectiveness, bringing many challenges to Vocational Education Going Abroad and invisibly increasing the pressure on Chinese + Vocational Skills teaching. Therefore, individual teaching is the ideal and expected teaching model.

Currently, individual teaching also presents some problems. Taking the elementary textbook as an example (Figure 1), this study analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of these three types of teacher for this teaching task.

Analysis 1: Teaching this lesson by teachers of Chinese to speakers of other languages

Teachers of Chinese to speakers of other languages have rich experience in Chinese teaching and excellent foreign language proficiency, so they encounter relatively few problems in language teaching. In the example shown in Figure 1, they can teach new words to students, clearly explain the text, thoroughly analyze the structural particle "de" (a particle marking adverbial modification) and the correlative conjunctive phrase "yibiān...yibiān..." (meaning while or at the same time as), and guide students to practice until they fully understand them. Because they lack professional expertise, skills, and practical teaching experience in the specific vocational field, they cannot teach how to scribe or punch a hole, do not know how to choose the correct drill bit, and have no idea what a feed handle is or how to drill holes or remove chips. As a result, they cannot teach students the skill of processing through holes, making it impossible to complete the lesson's teaching task effectively.

Analysis 2: Teaching this lesson by professional teachers in vocational colleges or the professional and technical personnel of Chinese enterprises overseas

Professional teachers in vocational colleges as well as technical personnel possess professional knowledge and skills along with strong hands-on ability and practical experience. They can easily teach students to process through holes step by step. However, they do not know how to teach new words, cannot explain the text, are unaware of the grammatical points in the lesson, and fail to elaborate on the structural particle "de" or the correlative conjunctive phrase "yibiān...yibiān..." (... while ...). Their lack of experience in international Chinese language teaching means they do not know how to conduct language instruction or impart relevant international Chinese language knowledge to students, so they too cannot teach this lesson well.

Analysis 3: Teaching this lesson by teachers of foreign language

Foreign language teachers have a high level of foreign language proficiency, so they easily communicate with students and can fully and clearly explain the text to them. However, they lack both professional knowledge and practical skills, so one can imagine their difficulty in teaching students the skill of processing through holes. Additionally, due to their lack of experience in international Chinese language teaching, they do not know how to teach elements such as grammar, the text, and new words to students, making them too unable to complete this teaching task.

The above analysis shows that accelerating the training of a truly competent teaching population for Chinese + Vocational Skills is a practical problem to be solved as well as a heavy responsibility in the fields of international Chinese language education and vocational education.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS AND CORE COMPETENCIES FOR DEDICATED FULL-TIME CHINESE + VOCATIONAL SKILLS TEACHERS

A dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teacher—also commonly known as a dual-qualification (bilingual) teacher—is a professional who possesses the ability to teach both the Chinese language internationally and a specific professional skill within vocational education (Liu & Ou, 2024). In simple terms, such teachers should be dual talents with abilities in both Chinese language and vocational skills, competent in Chinese language teaching and able to conduct professional practical training, organically inte-

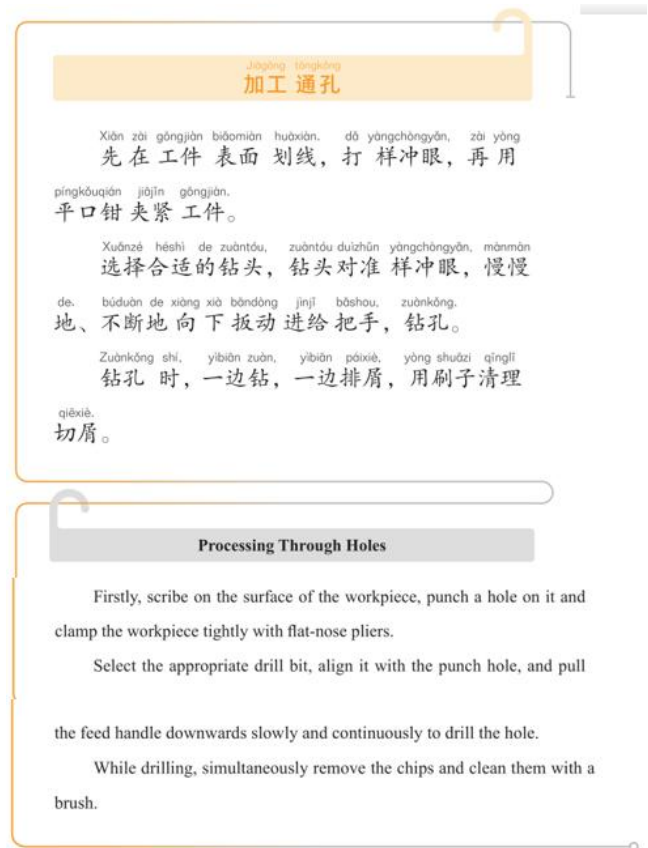


Figure 1. A text from *Mechanical Manufacturing Technology*, Lesson 12. Reused from Jinan Vocational College (2025).

grating the communicative and practical nature of language education with the professionalism and practicality of vocational education (Qiao, 2023). The author contends that such high-quality, professional, dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers should meet at least the following three essential requirements and core competencies.

Solid proficiency in Chinese language and cross-cultural communication skills

Dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers should hold the Certificate for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages (CTCSOL). They must have a thorough command of Chinese linguistic knowledge and be able to use Chinese accurately and fluently in teaching and communication. Additionally, they should be familiar with second-language teaching theories and methodologies, formulate reasonable teaching plans, and flexibly apply various teaching methods or tools to teach effectively. They must skillfully use modern teaching tools (such as multimedia technology and online platforms) to enhance teaching effectiveness, design scientifically sound teaching plans, and compile practical and effective teaching materials and resources based on the teaching objectives and students'

characteristics.

Dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers should possess cross-cultural communication skills and foreign language proficiency. They must understand Chinese culture, respect cultural differences, and have cross-cultural communication awareness and competence to communicate effectively with students, helping them overcome cultural barriers and better understand and grasp Chinese.

Robust professional skills and practical industry experience

Dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers should be proficient in a specific professional skill, possess professional knowledge and skills in a given field, and obtain relevant professional qualification certificates. They should have rich practical and work experience in a relevant industry, combine theoretical knowledge with practical experience, conduct case teaching and guidance in practical operations, and improve students' vocational skills.

Dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers should understand the trends and dynamics of industry development; keep abreast of the latest industrial technologies, standards, and specifications; and integrate the latest industrial advances into teaching.

Sound professional ethics and professionalism

Dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers should be dedicated, love the fields of international Chinese language education and vocational education, possess a strong sense of responsibility and mission, and be willing to contribute wisdom and strength to the cultivation of talents in Chinese + Vocational Skills. They should have good professional ethics, abide by professional ethical standards, set a good example for students by their own conduct, care for students, respect students' personalities, and treat every student fairly and impartially.

The above three points are the most essential conditions and core qualities for full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers. However, there are far more than these, such as ability to innovate, engage in teamwork, and use AI and other intelligent tools.

MULTICHANNEL DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE + VOCATIONAL SKILLS TEACHING STAFF

The Chinese + Vocational Skills educational model emerged only recently, so a sound teacher training system has not been established either in China or overseas, leading

to a serious lag in the training of dedicated full-time teachers and a severe shortage of teaching resources (Pang & Liu, 2024). Currently, the primary practitioners on the frontline of Chinese + Vocational Skills teaching are the previously mentioned three types of teachers, who work in team teaching. However, the teaching quality is not satisfactory, which will no doubt greatly affect the further development of Chinese + Vocational Skills education.

Theoretically, cross-boundary learning suggests that cognitive restructuring is a continuous necessity when traversing boundaries—specifically those separating academic disciplines or dividing theory from practice (Chen, 2020). "Boundary-crossers" carry learning elements from one practice area to another, and learners themselves become "boundary-breakers" (Jin & Wang, 2021). Teachers of Chinese + Vocational Skills play precisely such a cross-boundary role; they must not only cross the boundary between international Chinese language education and vocational education but also bridge the gap between colleges/universities and enterprises as well as those between different cultures. Consequently, they face multiple challenges and must constantly restructure their own practical and theoretical systems. Furthermore, Chinese + Vocational Skills textbooks with such cross-boundary characteristics impose higher demands on the training of dedicated full-time teachers in this field.

A questionnaire survey was completed by 463 professional teachers in vocational colleges/universities who lacked a background in international Chinese language education, focusing on the number of training sessions they had attended to improve their cross-boundary competence. The survey results show that 208 teachers (44.9%) had participated in 1-2 sessions, 70 teachers (15.1%) in 3-4 sessions, and 46 teachers (9.9%) in 5 or more sessions, whereas 139 teachers (30.0%) did not participate at all. Among the surveyed teachers, 40.0% had practical experience in industries or enterprises, 19.0% had undergone training related to cross-cultural communication, 14.9% had developed knowledge and skills associated with international Chinese language education, 14.0% had participated in training on overseas vocational education, and 12.1% had no cross-boundary learning or practical experience.

Overall, two conclusions may be drawn. First, over 70.0% of the respondents had attended at least one relevant training session, but less than 10.0% had participated in five or more sessions for in-depth learning, which indicates that such training programs for cross-boundary competence improvement are relatively widespread yet unsystematic. Second, most respondents (over 40.0%) had a foundation in cross-boundary learning or enterprise practice, with indus-

trial and enterprise practice being the most common type, whereas only about 10.0% had no relevant experience. This suggests that the teaching population has established a foundation for accumulating cross-boundary experience, with industrial practice and cross-cultural communication training currently being the main types of cross-boundary experience.

In addition, this research conducted in-depth interviews with teachers working on the frontline of teaching at Sino-Zam Vocational College of Science and Technology (SZVCST). One teacher said the following in an interview: "Being able to speak Chinese is not the same as being able to teach it. To better perform my overseas duties, I specially took part in the specialized training organized by CLEC and successfully passed the exam to obtain the certificate. This training and certificate have helped me to have a systematic command of teaching methods. Now, I feel more confident in class, and I can respond to various teaching problems more flexibly, and interact with students more smoothly".

Therefore, the author argues that it is urgently imperative to cultivate dual talents to serve as dedicated full-time teachers of Chinese + Vocational Skills. We should adopt multiple approaches and pursue various channels to foster the development of such teachers through cross-boundary training: Integrating international Chinese language education with vocational education, connecting colleges and universities with enterprises, and linking academic education with training programs so as to jointly develop such dual teaching talents.

The first channel involves integrating international Chinese language education and vocational education to cultivate dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers. Vocational education offers rich experience in teaching professional skills, whereas international Chinese language education has significant advantages in the field of Chinese language teaching. Together, the two sides can fully integrate resources. For instance, vocational colleges can open their internships and training bases to allow international Chinese language teachers to gain an in-depth understanding of the practical operations of vocational skills, enabling them to include vocational scenarios when teaching Chinese. In return, international Chinese language education can provide systematic training in methods of teaching Chinese to skill teachers in vocational colleges, covering matters such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary teaching techniques, and cultural communication in language teaching. Through such cooperation, the two sides will learn from and promote each other, representing one way of cultivating dual teachers who are proficient in both international Chinese language teaching and vocational skills.

The second channel requires cooperating between colleges/universities and enterprises to cultivate dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers. The participation of industries and enterprises in the training of such teachers is indispensable. As direct users and demanders of vocational skills, industries and enterprises have a profound understanding of the development trends and practical needs of vocational skills. Colleges and universities can establish close, cooperative relationships with enterprises, inviting technical experts and senior managers from enterprises to work as part-time teachers and with them jointly cultivating dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers. These personnel from enterprises can both impart the latest vocational skills and practical experience and integrate real industry cases into teaching. At the same time, through college-enterprise cooperation, dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers can also visit enterprises for practical training to understand their production processes, management models, and technological innovations, which will greatly enrich the teaching content.

The third channel combines academic education with training to cultivate dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers. The combination of academic education and training can address both short- and long-term cultivation needs. Training meets urgent demands, whereas academic education focuses on long-term development. Establishing majors in Chinese + Vocational Skills education is an important approach to cultivating such dual talents. Currently, however, the launch of Chinese + Vocational Skills majors is still in its infancy, making it impossible to train dedicated full-time teachers in this field in the short term. With more and more enterprises going abroad, the demand for Chinese + Vocational Skills education has become increasingly urgent due to the ongoing advancement of the Belt and Road initiative, the proliferation of China-overseas vocational colleges, CCLPS, Chinese Bridge programs, and the rapid growth of international students in vocational colleges. Training is a relatively effective method and approach to solve the shortage of teachers. Outstanding vocational education teachers, international Chinese language teachers, and foreign language teachers can attend institutions to receive international Chinese language education training and vocational skills training and then obtain CTC SOL and vocational qualification certificates, solving the shortage of teachers in the short term.

FOUR PATHWAYS FOR CULTIVATING FULL-TIME "CHINESE + VOCATIONAL SKILLS" TEACHING STAFF

From a practical perspective, typical cases of building a high-quality teaching team through cross-boundary training

models in the field of Chinese + Vocational Skills since 2017 provide strong evidence for the above viewpoint. In 2017, SZVCST collaborated with the Open University of China (OUC) to jointly establish the Learning Center of OUC in Zambia, which launched special training programs in Chinese for industries for local enterprise employees. In 2019, SZVCST joined hands with Beijing Polytechnic College to set up an independent Confucius Classroom, extending the Chinese + Vocational Skills training system to cover all its students. At the initial stage of the project, OUC took the lead in providing training on international Chinese language education theories and practical skills for professional teachers in domestic vocational colleges. The systematically trained teaching teams were dispatched to Zambia to undertake the teaching and training tasks of Chinese for Industries for more than 10 sessions with nearly 1000 participants. In the same year, CNMITC gained approval to set up an official examination center for CTC SOL. Focusing on the capacity-improvement needs of professional teachers in vocational colleges, it has successively organized 10 sessions of special training and certification tutoring and cultivated more than 600 interdisciplinary teachers with both professional technical backgrounds and Chinese language teaching capabilities. At present, the vast majority of teachers who work at SZVCST's Confucius Classroom and are responsible for Chinese + Vocational Skills teaching are professional teachers from vocational colleges who have received systematic international Chinese language education training and obtained corresponding certificates. In light of the above cases, the cultivation of dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers can be approached through the specific pathways described below.

The first pathway relies on universities and their training institutions to provide teaching and training in international Chinese language education to professional teachers in vocational colleges. Professional teachers from vocational colleges could attend universities and their training institutions to study the international Chinese language education major or receive professional training in the field. Through study or training, they will develop a good grasp of professional knowledge of international Chinese language education, understand its characteristics, learn its teaching methods, familiarize themselves with the principles of international Chinese language teaching, and finally obtain the CTC SOL. When these professional teachers combine international Chinese language teaching ability with their own expertise, they are fully competent to teach Chinese + Vocational Skills tasks.

CNMITC's practical approaches as described above are of great reference value. It should be made clear, however, that

the training model relying on short-term courses and certificate examinations can only help learners build a basic cognitive system for international Chinese language education, with their competence limited to meeting teaching needs at the elementary stage of Chinese + Vocational Skills; a notable gap remains in reaching the requirements of in-depth education and teaching. To be competent for advanced Chinese + Vocational Skills education and training, teachers must receive systematic professional training in international Chinese language education, but this requirement usually presents multiple practical obstacles to in-service professional teachers, such as allocating time and energy and balancing work and family. Overall, despite its limitations in competency development, the model combining short-term training with certificate assessment is the most convenient, efficient, and feasible path at this stage to help in-service professional teachers quickly transform into dual teachers of Chinese + Vocational Skills.

In the second pathway, vocational colleges leverage their own resources to independently cultivate interdisciplinary teachers of Chinese + Vocational Skills. Specifically, teachers of Chinese to speakers of other languages and teachers of foreign languages on campus can be assigned to their secondary colleges to facilitate regular collaborative teaching research and practice with professional teachers. Under this model, teachers of Chinese to speakers of other languages and teachers of foreign languages can gain an immersive understanding of the knowledge systems and skill requirements of specific professional fields and obtain the corresponding vocational qualification certificates through special training and on-the-job internships. In parallel, the professional teachers can study the theories and methods of international Chinese language education, complete systematic training, and obtain relevant qualification certificates. This intra-college collaborative training model offers the prominent advantages of high efficiency, convenience, and ease of implementation.

Even if it is difficult in the short term to directly cultivate dedicated full-time teachers competent to independently undertake Chinese + Vocational Skills teaching tasks, colleges during the initial stage of Vocational Education Going Abroad can effectively teach Chinese + Vocational Skills by building interdisciplinary teaching teams for team teaching. However, it must be frankly stated that this unstandardized intra-college collaborative training model currently has no mature precedents for reference. Its implementation requires breaking the constraints of the traditional teaching and research approach and having the pioneering courage to innovate. In addition, this model faces two practical challenges: First, the establishment and

management of interdisciplinary teaching teams will significantly increase the difficulty of college human resource allocation, and some colleges may adopt a wait-and-see attitude due to management cost concerns. Second, the integrated improvement of teachers' professional competence requires a long cycle, and the final training effect remains to be tested in practice. In terms of teaching adaptability, the teachers trained through this model can for the time being meet teaching needs only at the primary level of Chinese + Vocational Skills.

The third pathway relies on vocational colleges or enterprises to provide vocational skills training to teachers of Chinese to speakers of other languages. These teachers would attend skills training in a specific major at vocational colleges or enterprises or, alternatively, attend vocational colleges or enterprises for on-site internships to conduct practical skills operations. Through training or internships, they will learn the basic theoretical knowledge and fundamental skill operations of the major and ultimately obtain primary vocational qualification certificates. Equipped with practical abilities and a basic understanding of a specific major, these teachers can draw on their international Chinese language teaching competence to teach both Chinese and professional skill points, making them fully competent for Chinese + Vocational Skills teaching tasks.

However, the pathway of dispatching teachers of Chinese to speakers of other languages from nonvocational colleges to vocational colleges or enterprises to participate in Chinese + Vocational Skills teaching remains at the exploratory stage, and a mature operational mechanism has not been established. At the same time, the existing pool of teachers of Chinese to speakers of other languages in vocational colleges is inherently limited; most are burdened with heavy daily teaching tasks, leaving them with relatively scarce opportunities to be seconded for special training or further education. More crucially, for the group of teachers of Chinese to speakers of other languages, systematically grasping the professional knowledge and practical skills in a specific vocational field inherently presents a steep learning curve and considerable difficulty. Nevertheless, this training pathway offers exploratory value and can be regarded as a worthwhile direction for expanding the contingent of interdisciplinary teachers for Chinese + Vocational Skills programs.

The fourth pathway develops academic education by offering a Chinese + Vocational Skills program to cultivate specialized talents. This is an important approach to nurturing such talents from a long-term perspective, but this complex project demands careful research and sound top-level design. Simply launching a Chinese + Vocational

Skills program similar to regular undergraduate or postgraduate programs is relatively complicated, as the program requires students to study both international Chinese language education and the skills of a specific profession. It is quite challenging for students to master knowledge of international Chinese language education while acquiring the vocational skills of a given profession within four to five years. Furthermore, international Chinese language education and vocational skills belong to completely different fields. In developing academic education, choosing the right vocational skills specialty is rather troublesome, as it is impossible for a single Chinese + Vocational Skills class to cover multiple vocational skills specialties.

Focusing on the present, a relatively straightforward approach exists: Undergraduate programs in international Chinese language education can enroll junior college graduates from vocational colleges in a "zhuan sheng ben" (junior college to undergraduate) program. It is entirely feasible for vocational college graduates from various majors to study international Chinese language education in the same class. They have already completed three years of vocational skills study. By learning relevant knowledge of international Chinese language education in their undergraduate studies and obtaining the CTC SOL, they can become qualified dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers. In the future, postgraduate programs in international Chinese language education can similarly enroll graduates of vocational universities. It should be noted that this is only a shortcut method for training junior full-time teachers in the Chinese + Vocational Skills program. Based on the core competencies and qualities required of dedicated full-time Chinese + Vocational Skills teachers, the current academic qualification structure of vocational education teachers in China, and the continual improvement of China's modern vocational education system, the top priority is to accelerate the development of academic education programs for Chinese + Vocational Skills, and promptly establish an integrated talent training system spanning the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels.

This will cultivate for this field a contingent of high-caliber dedicated full-time teachers with distinct academic tiers and strong professional capabilities. In addition, we should break the traditional enrollment model that separates arts and sciences, cross the boundaries between them, and encourage students to pursue double majors and obtain double degrees—specifically, a double major or double degree in international Chinese language education and a specific major in vocational education.

CONCLUSION

In summary, Vocational Education Going Abroad cannot be achieved without the dual empowerment of Chinese + Vocational Skills. The in-depth advancement of the Belt and Road initiative also requires the support of Chinese + Vocational Skills, and Chinese-funded enterprises going abroad are even more in need of Chinese + Vocational Skills to cultivate interdisciplinary talents who possess both Chinese communication abilities and professional skills. The 2025 World Chinese Language Conference also clearly signaled the imperative to establish and improve a long-term mechanism to incentivize professional teachers to engage in the cause of Chinese + Vocational Skills education. Therefore, considering the limited time window and the urgency of advancing current tasks, the author believes that, in the short term, the cultivation of dedicated full-time teachers for Chinese + Vocational Skills should adhere to the core principle of taking professional teachers from vocational colleges as the backbone and international Chinese language teachers as supplements. In the long run, however, it is essential to accelerate the development of a comprehensive Chinese + Vocational Skills education system, launch relevant academic programs, and systematically cultivate specialized talents of all levels in areas of shortage to provide solid talent support for the sustainable, healthy development of this field.

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Author contributions

Liang CM: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing—Original draft, Writing—Review. Deng JQ: Data curation, Investigation, Resources, Writing—Editing. Both authors have read and approved the final version.

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Ethical approval

Not required.

Informed consent

The participants were informed that the interview data were only used for research purposes, and their information would be anonymized when presenting the research result. Moreover, they are also allowed to stop the recording at any moment during the interview, and they can refuse to respond to any question asked during the review.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Generative AI use declaration

None.

Data availability statement

Data used to support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

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