Discussion on Construction of Aesthetics Course System at Colleges and Problems in Its Teaching

Jin Wang
University of Jinan, Ji'nan, 250022, China

Key words: College; Aesthetic education; Course system; Teaching

Abstract. Aesthetics course of colleges is an important educational method in college students’ growth, where all aspects like morality, intelligence, physique and aesthetics supplement one another. Colleges should apply different art education forms to develop aesthetic education for students to make them learn and know beauty. In doing so, a good foundation on which beauty is felt and created can be laid. This thesis analyzes problems in aesthetic course teaching of Chinese colleges, elaborates construction of aesthetic course system at colleges and proposes suggestions to strengthen teaching of aesthetic course at colleges.

0. Introduction

As one of the important components in comprehensive education of colleges, aesthetic education plays a significant role in cultivating college students’ correct aesthetic standard, improving their aesthetic ability and creative ability, driving perfection of their personality, enriching their knowledge reserve and promoting their intelligence etc. For colleges, enlarging the force used to construct aesthetic course and publicizing positive aesthetic culture actively are an inevitable choice to satisfy college teachers’ and students’ continuously growing spiritual needs and maintain harmonious development and progress of socialist higher education cause with Chinese characteristics.

1. Problems in Chinese colleges’ aesthetic education

Firstly, construction of colleges’ aesthetic course system is not perfect enough. There is still a large gap between current situations of our colleges’ aesthetic education and that of Western developed countries. Many Western colleges include literature and art courses in the list of required courses and establish them for all students. Of course, there is a large gap between Chinese colleges’ aesthetics and college students’ demand. Aesthetic education is an interdisciplinary subject, which involves several subjects like aesthetics, art and psychology. Thus, it is quite difficult to perfect aesthetic course system. At the same time, the situation that the resource, i.e., college aesthetics teachers, is lacked has been a puzzle troubling us all the time. Because of many factors, for instance major setup of colleges, setup of aesthetic course usually appears to be quite weak and there are no enough professional teachers. Secondly, students from non-art majors at colleges do not have sound knowledge structure but especially lack humanistic spirit and humanistic care. Chinese colleges mainly direct at educating people, so it is essential to make college students know that they should not only improve their knowledge but also expand their minds and focus on enhancing their realm accordingly when they live in the world. However, some colleges unilaterally emphasize development of professional education so that they ignore aesthetic course setup and seem to be anxious to achieve quick success. As a result, college students spend most time and energy in learning professional knowledge and accept little education about humanistic and aesthetic knowledge during other time except that they have a few chances to take part in club activities in their spare time, which makes their knowledge structure have many shortages. Such a situation is expressed by the following aspects: scope of their knowledge is rather narrow, their thinking mode is rather mechanical and comprehensive humanistic quality is low. Thirdly, types of colleges’ aesthetic education are too monotonous. Although Chinese colleges pay more and more attention to building the second classroom in the process in which their implement education, the methods and approaches involving aesthetic education are still quite monotonous and the involved scope still appears to be narrow. Even if schools usually develop some activities, such as variety show, famous painters’ painting and calligraphy exhibition and aesthetic education seminar, only students who
show interest take part in such activities generally. It will be powerless and expected goals cannot be realized if schools only rely on several evening parties, exhibitions or seminars to improve college students’ aesthetic judgment, open their aesthetic emotion and realize comprehensive perfection of personality cultivation.

2. Elaboration about construction of colleges’ aesthetic course system

2.1 Cognition about colleges’ aesthetic course system

As core of colleges’ aesthetic education, art education is an important approach by which aesthetic education can be implemented. However, aesthetic course is completely different from professional art course. Art course of professional colleges uses specific technical approaches to finish training skills of learners in a certain aspect and excavating their artistic talent in a certain aspect, while aesthetic course applies wider aesthetic activities and appreciates different kinds of artistic forms to enrich college students’ emotional experience, cultivate their imagination and arouse yearning in college students’ inner heart for the true, the good and the beautiful. Aesthetic education does not aim at cultivating learners’ artistic ability but devotes itself to cultivating artistic appreciators. Thus, the author thinks that colleges’ aesthetic course system can be divided into three layers: the first layer is that schools should popularize basic knowledge of art, which is also the basis on which high-quality comprehensive talent can be cultivated. The second layer involves that a kind of appropriate emotional atmosphere is built by seeing and hearing artistic sensibility to arouse college students’ imagination and association practically, show and reshow images in life and obtain more abundant spiritual enjoyment. For young students who are going to be engaged in logical thinking work, significance of developing image thinking activities can even be mentioned together with learners at art colleges. This not only mediates and complements two thinking modes including logical thinking and thinking in terms of images but also acts as the training that develops their potential intelligence and creative ability. The third layer refers to artistic appreciation ability and criticism capability. After using imagination and association to obtain special emotions, learners should combine with background and connotation of aesthetic works and cultivate their ability to appreciate artistic works rationally in order to generate the skill that they can distinguish beauty from ugliness. Only On the premise of the cognition can educational workers at colleges construct aesthetic course system scientifically.

2.2 Setup direction of colleges’ aesthetic course system

Firstly, courses related to art appreciation. For current situations about quality of young students at colleges, it is quite important to strengthen art education and popularize aesthetic knowledge. In doing so, schools can not only show a brand new field to college students and enrich their current knowledge structure but also enable them to develop art practice and aesthetic activities under careful guidance of art and aesthetic theory. Colleges’ aesthetic education can achieve more ideal effect and realize expected goals only when their artistic culture and aesthetic cultivation are improved largely. The foregoing courses mainly include College Aesthetic Education, Music Appreciation and Art Appreciation etc. Using the foregoing courses to guide college students’ aesthetic feeling can achieve goals of aesthetic education and thus help them establish healthier, greater and more progressive aesthetic ideas. Secondly, courses about practice. Learning basic theory of aesthetic education deeply and developing art appreciation activities are two very important links in colleges’ aesthetic education structure. Certainly, it will not be complete or sound if there are only the two links. Aesthetic construction should follow the principle that links theory with practice strictly. In another word, aesthetic education should not only link art theory with practice of appreciation but also connect aesthetic theory with practice of creating beauty. Rationality of aesthetic education’s knowledge structure can be perfected practically only when the connection between theory and practice is finished. Thus, in addition to theoretical study and artistic appreciation, aesthetic education should have practical content about artistic creation. In detail, schools should establish basic theoretical courses and artistic appreciation courses and also need supplement courses about artistic practice to strengthen students’ direct feelings about beauty and realize the purpose that theory is used to guide practice and then practice verifies and deepens
theory. Thirdly, courses related to popularization, which mainly include courses about basic theory of art. Many college students have had little artistic education before entering colleges, for instance, the number of students who received professional music and painting training in the past is small. Thus, after students enter colleges, schools should establish related courses that can popularize basic theory of art in order to popularize and improve young students’ art appreciation ability.

3. Suggestions for strengthening colleges’ aesthetic course teaching further

3.1 Updating colleges’ concepts about aesthetic education

Aesthetic education refers to the education carried out for learners’ whole body and modern aesthetic value is featured by globality and multi-connotation etc. It not only pays much attention to cultivating people’s physical and mental quality but also attaches importance to indispensable nature of morality, intelligence, physique and aesthetics. Aesthetic education is independent of moral education, intellectual education and physical education and also permeates into them. They promote and rely on one another. Thus, position of colleges’ aesthetic education is consolidated, factors of aesthetic teaching are enlarged practically, and connotation of aesthetic education can be richer and sublimated to a higher layer. Thus, it can be said that colleges’ aesthetic teaching has become a comprehensive educational activity, which relies aesthetic influence to develop intelligence and improve moral ability, promote physique, train skills and realize value of life. It mainly directs at driving college students to obtain perfect personality and realizing comprehensive development and harmonious development. This is also the basic target of colleges’ aesthetic education, which forms the aesthetic value that reflects demands of the era so that a good ideological basis is built for implementation and development of aesthetic teaching.

3.2 Forming more perfect management mechanism for colleges’ aesthetic education

It can be said that aesthetic education is one of the important components in the process of college education. The higher education without aesthetic education lacks vigorous vitality and is incomplete education. Improvement in people’s comprehensive quality can be divided into five parts, i.e., ideological quality, cultural quality, physical quality, aesthetic quality and skill quality. Considering that educational reform of Chinese colleges deepens constantly, aesthetic education that has been ignored all the time should be paid attention to and strengthened. Overall, Chinese colleges’ aesthetic education still stays at its initial stage and its position and role have not been confirmed fundamentally and comprehensively. Up to now, aesthetic education has not become an indispensable component in Chinese colleges’ teaching plans. At present, teaching plans of Chinese colleges are not the ones that cultivate comprehensive talent with integrated development. For most of colleges, aesthetic course and aesthetic activities are excluded by teaching plans. Such an ignorant phenomenon in colleges’ aesthetic teaching should be eliminated energetically in order to change deficiency of aesthetic teaching completely, which is also a new and higher requirement that is proposed by social development for colleges. However, as aesthetic education is a quite complicated systematic project, college administrators and educators must realize importance of aesthetic education comprehensively to finish tasks of aesthetic education. In detail, they should not only unify understanding and strengthen leadership but also ask related departments to give close coordination, make concerted efforts, improve degree of propaganda work constantly and form more full-bodied atmosphere of aesthetic education within the scope of their schools. Additionally, colleges ought to perfect working mechanism of aesthetic education, build specialized teaching and research institutions about teaching and researches be responsible for developing teaching and research work about aesthetic education at their schools, guide development of aesthetic practical activities and thus provide better organizational guarantee for positive implementation of aesthetic education.

3.3 Popularizing aesthetic teaching activities comprehensively

Aesthetic education plays an important role in improving college students’ healthy aesthetic values and aesthetic judgment, cultivating moral sentiments, educating talent with more comprehensive talent. Thus, it is essential to improve students’ cognition about themselves, exert aesthetic education’s important role in colleges’ educational activities and develop various forms of aesthetic teaching activities according to respective situations of schools. Colleges should organize
social practical activities that publicize nature and law of social development and can bring people positive emotions in a planned way and with distinct purposes. Rich campus culture activities of higher colleges pay much attention to improving students’ comprehensive quality like ideological quality, cultural quality and physical quality. On the basis that college students’ knowledge level is improved, schools must not forget to cultivate young students’ positive attitudes towards life, strong physical quality and diligent and plain virtue etc. In return, the foregoing qualities can improve college students’ learning initiative, help them overcome disadvantages caused by attention to knowledge and ignorance for ability and enable college students to adapt to employers’ demands really.

3.4 Creating the first-class aesthetic teaching environment

Good campus environment has important edification and influence on construction of college students’ morality. Strengthening colleges’ campus environment construction mainly includes the following two aspects: firstly, it is necessary to construct good hard environment of colleges. For instance, show beauty of schools’ buildings and sculptures to beautify campus, make students be delightful and enhance their spirit by virescence, laboratory construction, classroom construction and recreational and sports facility construction. Secondly, it is essential to build good soft campus environment, such as schools’ cultural tradition, interpersonal relationship and spirituality. Simply speaking, schools should cultivate three kinds of spirit, including school spirit, class spirit and dormitory spirit. In detail, this mainly involves that atmosphere of dominance and governing effect should be exerted in each group environment, spirituality that group members have in common can be reflected and directions of individual actions can be guided and adjusted constantly. It is a force of globality and stability. Specifically, dormitory spirit is basic atmosphere in the three kinds of spirit, including common hobbies, habits and behaviors. Especially, as logistics socialization reform of colleges develops, class effect in traditional sense tends to be weakened constantly. As a result, dormitory has not been a rest area only but become the site where the comprehensive contact with college students is implemented and which holds the shortest distance to college students and has the most direct impacts on all aspects of college students. Thus, it is the most specific place where aesthetic education is carried out for college students. It should be said that dormitories of colleges are one of the main positions where aesthetic education is implemented. After good dormitory spirit has been formed, strong influence on each member living in the dormitory will be generated.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, schools can make learners become discoverers and creators in the world of aesthetic education and let learning process become more abundant spiritual enjoyment by joviality that aesthetic education should have in colleges’ aesthetic teaching activities. This may be the important role that aesthetic education can exert in colleges’ education.

5. Acknowledgments

This thesis is a project of Jinan University scientific research funds (social science) Primary Investigation on Colleges’ Aesthetic Teaching Mode (project No.: X1252) and A Research on Approaches Cultivating College Students’ Cultural Self-consciousness a major project of Jinan University’s teaching research (project No.: JZ1248).

References