



The Functions of Visual Identification System in the Construction of Campus Culture

Yansheng Zhu

College of Art and Appareluages, Tianjin Polytechnic University

Tianjin 300160, China

Tel: 86-22-2452-8145 E-mail: jsycdzys@sina.com

Hu Chen

Library of Tianjin Polytechnic University

Tianjin 300160, China

Abstract

Campus is not only an education place, but also is the carrier of campus culture. Every visual object at the campus can also effect the function of teaching. A beautiful and ordered campus environment will bring you the sense of beauty. A well-designed visual identification system is an indispensable part of modernized campus.

Keywords: Campus culture, Visual identification system, Visual culture

What is campus culture? What is visual identification system of schools? If we materialize these two concepts into real objects, they refer to everything that we see when entering a campus. As education place and the carrier of culture, a beautiful campus is established with careful design. The campus is definitely not of pure natural state. The ingenuity of designers is incorporated into every detail, endeavoring to keep the original taste of the campus, a pure place on the earth, and to provide educators and the educated with a Xanadu.

1. The significant functions of campus culture

It is defined in a dictionary that “culture” is the sum of material fortune and spiritual fortune created in the process of historical development of the society and specially refers to spiritual fortune, such as literature, art, education and science. Campus culture takes value views of teachers and students as the core and includes the material styles and activity forms of these value views, such as the education aim of schools, campus environment, campus thoughts, campus study style, cultural life, traditional customs and systems and norms of schools, and the management of people, capital and objects. To put it in short, campus culture refers to the common value tendency of a school formed in the long term teaching process. Campus culture is the sole of a school and is the cohesion force and energy source of a school. If a school does not have culture, strictly speaking, such a school cannot become a real school and is only an education unit. Campus culture exerts subtle influence on the thinking and actions of each member. If a school cannot form her own active and upward campus culture, such a school cannot maintain lasting life force and core competition force. When we conducted survey on world famous universities, such as Tsinghua University, Beijing University, Harvard University and Cambridge University, we found that all the afore mentioned schools had formed their distinctive campus culture through long term teaching accumulation. It is these distinctive campus culture that enables these internationally famous universities to stand erect in the woods of international education like evergreen trees.

2. The significant functions of visual system in education

Visual culture is the spiritual and material fortune of human beings with image symbols as composing elements. Image symbols is symbolizing symbols and is direct vision symbols where configuration structure resembles real objects. To examine from the token characteristics of symbols, the “reference” and “signifiant” of image symbols reach high accordance and basically reach “clear at one glance” and “what is seen is what is obtained”. Image reading can directly activate the sensitivity experience and visual and feeling thinking of readers. Therefore, image reading capacity is the common capacity of human beings (Poster, 2000). Microsoft Company changed computer operation system from the text operation of DOS into the Windows icon operations and advanced the rapid application and popularization of PC machines in the world. Afterwards, computer culture developed from the original somewhat mysterious elite culture into globally popular culture. This is an active and powerful example that shows the advantage of visual spreading. Image language is a direct language, easy to read and to understand, which can break through the limitation of regional language and national language and becomes the commonly used visual language. Therefore, image language is the best spreading language to popularize common culture education (Languages that wither away, 2001)

The value of visual spreading is also shown in the spreading effect: visual spreading cannot only enable readers to obtain information, but can also enable readers to imagine, even enables readers to take actions; hence, the “see and will not forget” spreading effect and general social effect are achieved. There are a lot of such examples. For one example, the Volga Boatmen by Repin endowed the images of Volga River and boatmen with extensive and profound Russian character and history source; this image is profound and moving and affords for deep thoughts. For another, a news picture named Big Eye taken by a Chinese photographer that expresses a countryside girl’s thirst for being educated triggers thousands of people of China to engage in the initiation and construction of “Hope Project”. Facts prove that visual spreading is a powerful culture spreading style of comprehensive functions. The visual spreading, with its presentation force, humanity and diversification characters, brings infinite energy for the construction of campus culture.

“Education is life”. Education aims at teaching human beings to act correctly, to live true life, to cooperate with others and to survive in the society. At the present stage where making education is advocated, the educational functions of the “latent education”, campus environment and campus culture, and the functions they exert are drawing more and more emphasis and have become important composing parts of education and teaching of schools. The campus latent education can be roughly divided into 9 types, politics, thoughts, culture, refinement, norms, standards, slogans and environment, of which culture, slogan and environment belong to visual identification system.

3. The construction of campus culture with visual identification as feature

The visual identification system of schools plays an important role in the construction of campus culture. What a good sigh delivers is not only its direct connotation, but also transfers the soul of the campus culture. Good identification system is of direct and visual feature and can be directly touched by the sense organs of the people; it contains the values views and aesthetic views of the constructors and users and is long lasting; actually, it is the design of campus environment. Identification system includes the geographical location of the school, the civil community environment as well as various architectures and facilities designed according to the exterior environment. It also refers to the reasonable overall arrangement of the gardens, roads, decorations, and sights. The good campus construction with special personality can beautify the environment and decorate the campus and can also exert influence students with its special material culture, education students’ sentiments and purify feelings, which is what we called environment educates people(We, 2001). Just as what the educator Сухомлинский said, “Our education shall teach every wall to speak.”

The essentials of campus visual identification system include the name and mark of a school, the environment and main architectures of a school, and the propaganda products of a school. The main architectures and buildings of a school will usually be under objective influence, such as planning, design, architecture materials, capital budget, technology and era tide, which will not change greatly. Others are more under the influence of subjective elements. Therefore, to construct a uniform and harmonious visual identification system within a campus mainly includes:

Fundamental essential system, including various pictures and the design of font of the school signs, such as the name of the school, the school badge, the school mark, and the school motto, etc.

Environmental sign system, including the exterior decorations of architectures on campus, various direction plates, sigh plates, green space, garden parergon, special regional sign planning, and culture sculpture design, and etc.

Office articles for use series, such as various papers, letter papers, greeting cards, certificates, credentials and campus cards.

Propaganda series, such as campus introduction, website design and manufacturing, the propaganda advertisement of the school towards outside world, and flags.

Clothes series, such as various work clothes and campus clothes.

By the visual identification system established according to the afore said aspects, uniform signs can be formed on campus, which relies on the images to express a state of culture, a impact on vision and an acknowledgement of psychology. At the same time, it can fully exert the functions of campus culture, guidance, restriction, cohesion, and radiance, in the development of campus so as to be recognized by the whole teaching staff, students and the society. Once campus culture is formed, people will feel positive, active, vigorous, and promising sense. This kind of atmosphere is a comprehensive reflection of the overall spiritual outlook and education level of a school and is also a comprehensive reflection of the teaching level of a school.

References

Languages that wither away (an exert from *World Observation* of America). *Literature Reading Weekly Paper*. The six edition on 11 August 2001.

Poster, Mark. (2000). *The Era of the Second Medium*. Nanjing: Nanjing University Press. Translated by Fan Jingye.

Wu, Fanghe. (2001). Join WTO-are we ready?-WTO and the education reform of China discussed by scholars. *China Education Paper*. The fourth edition on 23 November 2001.