

On the Crisis of University Literature Education and Its Reasons: A Case Study of Chinese Language & Literature Program

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Abstract

We had an investigation to the students of Chinese language & literature program of 5 universities in 2009, and found finally that the current situation of literature education was troubling. Students' practical psychology is serious. Many teachers are unable to deal with the contradictions of teaching and scientific research. Students do not pay close attention to current literary. In the present educational reform, literature education has failed to keep up with the paces of the reform. Visual culture has caused the enormous impact on students' accepting literature. We, the teachers are engaged in literature education, must reply with the positive psychology in the face of this kind of situation.

Keywords: Literature education, Chinese language & literature program, Crisis, Practical psychology

Literature is an important way that the mankind holds the world aesthetically. As modern urbanite's weary soul habitat, the literary works are their existing way. In the utility era that Consumption desire swells extremely, more and more persons realize the function of literature. Though in the era of materialization literature refuse to continue serving as beginner, literature is indispensable as usual in clear-headed people's heart. In present educational circles and social circles, a lot of people are extremely worried to the current situation of university students' humane quality. A lot of scholars have written out countless articles and called on it, but the overall result is not well. We can take Chinese language & literature program as an example. After many years' study, a lot of students' literary educational quality have not improved, and even have no interest to literature at all.

The students of Chinese language & literature program mainly study literature courses, and then how is their current situation? I am a teacher of literature. In 2009, many friends of my profession carried on the special investigation to many Chinese language & literature program students of several universities and drew the worrying conclusion.

Before the investigation, we designed two questionnaires. One faces university students of grade three and grade four to find out their understanding of literature education and contemporary current situation of literary world. The other faces academic to find out their actual ideas about literature courses instantly. As a result of students' questionnaires, out of 543 participants surveyed, 432 questionnaires are returned as being valid. We sent out 156 and regained 156. At the same time, we went on numerous informal discussions instantly with many persons of teacher and students about the current situation of literature education. This investigation involves five universities. These five schools are Nanjing University, Anhui University, Shandong normal university, Qufu normal university and Dezhou University. The following is some discoveries to the current situation of literature education in the research of ours, and our thinking based on the investigation. Though the investigation only involved few schools, it can be as a mirror to reflect the study current situation of Chinese language & literature program students and some problems on the literature education at present.

1. The current situation and question of literature education

As the students of Chinese language & literature program, literature education is highly correlated with their professional curriculum and job development, and they should pay attention to literature education, follow with interest at the current situation of literary world. But according to forum and questionnaire, a great deal of problems exists in the current situation of literature education, which need bring our attention.

1.1 Students' practical psychology is serious and their attention to professional courses is not enough.

In this questionnaire, we put forward such a question to students: "Well understanding a literary works, or getting a computer or CET four certificate smoothly, which one do you choose between the two?" In 543

student's questionnaires, 375 chose the latter, 128 chose the former, other questionnaires have not been answered on this question. To this question, in 2003 Mr. Wang Weiping ever pointed out that present university students have big difference with 1980s university student. They think highly of utility value and despise quality. They have huge utilitarian to study and think little of humanities spirit. They are not affected by the huge potential that the deep intellectual inside information to mould people. They pursuit the grade certificates of English and computer far greater than fondness in literature. Even to this day, students seldom get to literature class for ardently loving literature, and they come only in order to take the credit, deal with having an examination, and obtain the purpose of the degree.(Wang Weiping,2003,p28) But from the survey, that students' practical psychology is so serious is what we can't imagine. A lot of students have reached the high grade of the university, but still can't understand a novel or a poem smoothly, which can't but be the failure of our education. Through symposium, we find that a lot of students have no attention on study in normal times. They always are busy testing various certificate or other social relations to make multifarious friends. They only catch time by the forelock to review before the examination, and so it is very difficult to really improve their literature intension.

1.2 A lot of teachers are unable to deal with the contradictions of teaching and scientific research.

At present many university teachers have very huge pressure of scientific research. They are always busy writing the thesis to confer of academic titles, which causes a lot of teachers to often lay particular stress on scientific research and desalinize teaching. Many teachers' scientific research direction is inconsistent with their own content of courses, which makes their urgent time tense. Even some teachers' scientific research directions correlate with their content of courses, but their research is too advanced and can't apply to teaching, which is a kind of waste too. Some teachers like to follow the fashion among teaching and bring some new west theory into the literature classroom. Certainly such a method has certain advantages in broadening student's outlook, but overly theorized teaching makes literature lose original fresh activity. How to make sure to promote teaching by scientific research and use teaching to promote scientific research is a question that a lot of teachers have to face conscientiously.

1.3 Students do not pay close attention to current literature.

The questionnaire contains such a question:" in your opinion, is the writer a kind of job or a kind of noble spiritual undertaking? "On this question, 400 students think the writer is a kind of job, and only 73 students select the second answer. The professionalism of writers is the reality that we have to accept, but as the students of Chinese language & literature program talks, that so many persons approve the current situation is quite dangerous. It means that current students are too practical and easy to overlook the important function that literary works mould people's soul. As to the literary works, a lot of students know well about plenty of ancient and foreign writers and works, but while asking about the contemporary literary world, most of them only know some network writers and some teenage writers and do not know at all about the classical works of the contemporary literary world. A lot of students display disappointed mood to the contemporary literary world and deny having classical works. That contemporary students do not pay close attention to the contemporary literary world is quite dangerous for development of literature.

In addition, through this investigation, we have also found some other questions about literature education, and do not mention here one by one.

2. The reasons of literature education crisis

The reasons that literature education in the universities appears such a crisis at present are certainly in many aspects. According to the forum and in-depth analysis of the questionnaire, they are mainly in several following respects:

2.1 In the present educational reform, literature education has failed to keep up with the paces of the reform.

Since new century, in order to adapt to the present economic reform, the range of China's educational reform is changed greatly. In conformity with national course reform of basic education in 2001, Ministry of Education required that higher normal universities and colleges adjust training objective, interpose, course structure and reform the teaching method to adapt the course reform of basic education (Zhong Qiquan, 2001, p156). And in the past two years, in order to meet student's study of applicability and job knowledge, the class hours of literature courses were demanded to compress constantly. In this case, a lot of teachers' teaching fails to keep in step with the times and they still use the traditional teaching method. It can't handle the contradiction between the lessons content with enormous literature and urgent lessons time at all. It results in that originally rich and colorful literature only have the simple literature history explanation, and the intension of much literary works can't be let students experience. In those teachers who use the new teaching method, a lot just reveal the content

on the projection in a multifarious way, which makes lessons of literature come to the surface.

To a lot of students, because of lacking correct guide, they only regard the literature class as a test subject. They record the note while listening to the teacher, recite the notes before examination, and leave nothing after the test. They have not put body and mind into literature feeling and appreciation, and don't get aesthetic edifying at all. Their study on literature mainly proceeds from utility, which is mainly shown as valuing the memory of the literature history and ignore textual reading seriously. Literature study need the students to read a large number of literature texts, but a lot of students will not spend time in reading at all now. Giving up reading is and the greatest failure and unfortunate for literature education.

Whether no matter the specialization of teachers' teaching or the Utilitarianism of students' study, it beyond all doubt reflects that literature has lost the irradiator status, and become a simple discipline. In the present educational reform, a lot of universities and teachers pay attention to the innovation of the teaching means very much, but as the important link in teaching, the science of course offering seldom gets due diligence and lacks further investigation on it. It is the question that we must face.

2.2 *Visual culture has caused the enormous impact on students' accepting literature.*

In his works of *Contradiction of capitalist culture*, Danniell Bell said: "I firmly believe, contemporary culture is becoming visual culture gradually, but not printing culture, this is an absolutely true fact." (Danniell Bell, 1989, p8) visual culture is a culture shape of Sensationalism taking image, picture as the centre to look at culture. The picture has already become a set way that people experience and know life day by day. With the transformation of the picture, the position of characters that have dominated communication means exclusively for a long time is changed passively fundamentally. The fundamentals of the ways of literature acceptance and dissemination has changed, the readers' reading acceptance has been replaced by reading pictures.

Literature need people to carry on deep thinking, but the reading way of Visualization enable student incline to look and unwilling to think with the brain. Visual culture has limited students' imagination, and thus deprived students' power to recreate. It then cause modern propagation of visual culture to propagate loses that kind of meaningful sophisticated lingering charm in elite literature.

Certainly, the visual culture is unavoidable for us. So, under the electronic media era based on picture, vision, and network, we who work on literature education should be familiar with, understand and use the new media to promote our teaching instead of refusing it.

Literature education can equilibrate our perceptual and rational factors, make us up to soul harmony, and thus lay an essential foundation for moral and rational development. But now the marginalized literature makes our literature education present too many questions. The aesthetic educational function of literature can't be denied in any case. Under this kind of situation, it need the teachers engaged in literature education to define ultimate goal of literature education further, adapt to the changes of present social change and educational reform, reply actively, make great efforts to improve students' artistic appreciation and connoisseurship, and promote students' aesthetic interesting and humane feelings, so that literature education can march toward the health situation in the new century.

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