

Study on Three-dimensional Moral Education in Universities and Its Practical Approaches

Yongzheng Zhou, Ziqiang Qin, Xiaoling Deng & Xuxu Chai

Sichuan Agricultural University, Sichuan 625014, China

E-mail: haozhe3@sohu.com

Received: April 26, 2011

Accepted: May 29, 2011

doi:10.5539/ass.v7n9p189

Abstract

Three-dimensional moral education in universities is beneficial exploration to strengthen and improve moral education in universities as well as to enhance the practical effects of moral education. In order to strengthen pertinence and effectiveness of moral education among university students, the only way is to keep pace with the times and continuously give full play to the spirit of innovation. Starting out from the actual perspective of moral education in universities, three-dimensional moral education in universities realizes holistic interaction in terms of structure of moral education, pushes forward the three-dimensional progress of moral education, plays the role of moral education up to the hilt and promotes realization of the target of moral education in universities.

Keywords: Universities, Three-dimensional moral education, Practical approaches

Universities are not merely the garden of knowledge and sacred temple of culture, but also the major method to give full play to the role of moral education. In January 2005, the President of People's Republic of China, Hu Jintao, emphasized and pointed out at the conference of strengthening and improving the ideological and political education of university students, "we have to unswervingly carry out the educational policy of the Communist Party of China (CPC), regard education of people as the orientation, take as the first the moral education in the all-around moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetics development, give full play to the role of university students' ideological and political education as the major battle field, major classroom and major channel, push forward the ideological and political education of university students in an overall way and promote their overall development from all aspects." (Hu Jintao, 2005). Three-dimensional pattern of moral education exactly starts out from this consideration, regarding the universities as the major battle field for moral education, constructs with all efforts the three-dimensional system of moral education with "holistic process and position and multiple levels and fields", and providing education with direction teaching and indirect penetrating among educatees.

1. Proposal of the concept of three-dimensional moral education and its features

1.1 Concept of three-dimensional moral education

Three-dimensional moral education means that moral education has to be penetrated to all space where moral education factors exist, namely, all occasions in which individuals live, and exerts influences upon the individuals with consciousness in multiple aspects, which is a sort of vivid, affluent and real moral education with multiple positions, multiple channels and multiple factors. (Qin Ziqiang, 2004).

1.2 Features of three-dimensional moral education

1.2.1 Multi-dimensional hierarchies

Three-dimensional moral education has broken through the plane singleness of the traditional moral education and focuses more on hierarchy of moral education and broadens the dimensionality of moral education. Cultivation of moral education among universities students is not accomplished in one action and moral educators have to start out from reality, allow for differences, make a difference according to the ideological development rule of from low to high and from shallow to deep, teach students in accordance with their aptitude and continuously guide them upwards at different levels. Moral education is no long simply the traditional didactic moral education within unidirectional dimensions, but a multi-dimensional moral education with combination of management, service and moral education, which requires moral education to be conducted step by step and makes education subjects at different levels obtain development on the original basis.

1.2.2 Interactive penetrability

Three-dimensional moral education has to be integrated into all aspects in the daily learning, work and life, in which the bi-directional communication between educators and educatees should be conducted in a positive way. Three-dimensional moral education is a sort of moral education in which both educators and educatees receive education and they receive education together in contact of the life, but not one sort of “separated moral education” in which educatees receive education while educators are beyond the moral education. In the process of education, both educators and educatees interact with each other and affect each other, which makes moral education get successfully conducted without consciousness. Only if the moral education is penetrated into all concrete work, integrated into the life, getting close to the reality, life and the group of students, can it satisfy the demands of students, and can teachers discover and resolve problems in time, so as to strengthen the effectiveness and pertinence of moral education and promote normal and orderly development of moral education work.

1.2.3 Systematic comprehensiveness

Three-dimensional moral education emphasizes comprehensiveness and systematicalness of moral education, no more former scattered education, especially the education which is centered with inculcation in the classroom, but one which pays attention to collecting all resources and power that can be employed and generate a powerful cooperative force to offer guidance and cultivation to students. This is reflected by the fact that, whether teachers, managerial personnel and service personnel or the symbolic building and every tree and bush in the universities, or even the daily living entertainment of the universities, can all enable university students to get edification from moral education.

1.2.4 Open innovativeness

The largest difference between three-dimensional moral education and the traditional moral education lies in its keeping pace with the times and its open innovativeness. Three-dimensional moral education positively explores new ways and methods, not confined by the traditional routine, but making full use of all sorts of media, especially newly born network media technology to develop moral educational activities. Three-dimensional moral education not only inherits advantages of the traditional moral education, but also concentrates on exploration of the new fields of moral education and usage of such modern media as MicroBlog, MSN, Blog and Fetion, etc., to broaden the channels of communication of moral education, push forward establishment of three-dimensional moral education and better realizes effects of moral education.

2. Significance of three-dimensional moral education

Contemporary university students have open-minded thinking, strong sense of the times, willing to accept newly born things, optimistic and enthusiastic in the attitude towards living, full of ideals and long for self-development and self-realization. However, there are still part of students who are lacking in firm ideal belief and political conviction, pursue the instrumental hedonism orientation in selection of values, indifferent in the sense of social responsibility, with strong dependence in their living and have relatively weak psychological endurance ability and the capacity of resisting frustration, etc. Thus, university students are faced up with extremely arduous tasks in the moral education, and they need to continue to explore and innovate, which has quite important significance to pushing forward three dimensional pattern of moral education. First of all, the moral education has always been conducted in the classroom, but education in the classroom gives us the sense that it has strong theoretical feature and is difficult to accept resonance in thoughts in a relaxed way, lacking in attraction. Three-dimensional moral education makes students receive more vivid moral education, more real experience or undergo real processes, which is an effective means to overcome abstract teaching, and strengthen attraction and infection. Then, moral education has to follow its own rules. Moral quality of human being calls for the comprehensive functions of “knowledge, emotion, consciousness and action” and the process of cultivation and calls for learning moral knowledge, enriching moral emotion, strengthening moral consciousness and exercising moral practice. Three-dimensional pattern of moral education just starts out from the multiple factors of “knowledge, emotion, consciousness and action” to realize moral cultivation on students, which completely complies with the rules of moral education, and thus can receive better moral effects. Thirdly, there are numerous students in contemporary universities. The subjects of education are active in thinking, with abundant channels to receive information, strengthened autonomy and selection, whereas the former instructors team is regarded as the subject of education, disadvantages of which are brought into light. How to enable moral education to be touched upon each student and improve the covering scope and in-depth degree of moral education is extremely a realistic issue that moral educators have to be faced up with. In one word, the significance of three-dimensional moral education lies in that it can better adapt to the demands of the contemporarily changing situation, pioneer

in instruction and innovation and keep pace with the times, obviously enhance moral education effects, strengthen effectiveness of moral education, and help to realize the moral education target of cultivating a new era of talents with “lofty ideals, integrity, knowledge and a strong sense of discipline”.

3. Exploration of implementation approach to three-dimensional moral education

We ought to enrich and create new moral education approaches in the traditional and modern wave of tide. We should inherit and carry forward traditional moral education methods and approaches, but, moreover, we should grasp the pulse of the times, open new approaches to adapt to the developmental requirement of the new times, with a view to enrichment and development and continuously getting rid of the stale and bringing forth the fresh. We have to strengthen and improve the moral education work in universities, make all efforts to push forward the three-dimensional progress of moral education, make full use of advanced science and technology to offer new platforms for moral education and give full play to the effectiveness of moral education in a new era by means of penetrating moral education into all levels of work, learning, and living and combining it with other approaches. The specific approaches include the following five aspects.

3.1 Theoretical education in the classroom is the foundation for moral education

The Prime Minister Wen Jiabao definitely pointed out, “we have to take cultivation of talents as the first duty of higher education.” (Wen Jiabao, 2010) Talents should not merely grasp rich knowledge, but should also have perfect personality and unswerving political conviction. As for university students, theoretical education in the classroom is an extremely important approach. At present, one of the major channels for moral education in universities is still from the classroom. The implementation process of the classroom is one in which the attitude of students, their values and will of power are formed and cultivated. Political theoretical class is the most basic and important approach for the universities to provide systematic political, theoretical and thinking moral education. The universities may internalize the basic Marxism theory and basic socialism moral criteria into the motive, consciousness, thought and concept of students individuals through university political theory class, and lead university students to internalize these consciousness, thought and concepts into their own conscious action and form good moral education quality.

3.2 Full use of the new network media is the media support for moral education

The former Chinese President Jiang Zemin has ever pointed out, “We have to attach great importance to and make full use of information network technology and strengthen its influential strength.” (Jiang Zemin, 2000). Owing to its features of being all-inclusive, sharing of the internet and grass roots, Internet is deeply favored by university students. We ought to make great efforts to realize close combination of traditional methods and modern means, give full play to the functions of the new media of network and set up perfect campus network and moral education website. The universities have to make use of assisting moral education activities of internet and multi-media to enable students to perceive more profoundly the charm of moral education from the audio, video and touch, etc, learn to communicate with young people with the fashionable organizational means and communication means that young people are delighted to hear and see and make clear the problem agenda of young people’s growth education. They may also set up Blog and MicroBlog, and make a discussion board in BBC and the Social Network to offer education of current events on young people and publicize advanced typical cases to them to achieve better moral education effects. Also, they should make full use of the newly born communications means of Fetion, MSN and QQ, etc., to strengthen communication between moral education workers and students to draw a close distance between them. Besides, the universities have to explore the new mode of network ideological and political education which “highlights the subjectivity of students, focuses on coverage of content and strengthening functions of educating people”.

3.3 Network moral education and psychological health education are the point of strength in moral education

We should actively occupy the new battlefield of network ideological and political education, strengthen establishment of campus network culture in an overall way and enable network culture to become the important means and carrier to carry forward the major theme and offer ideological and political education. We also encourage instructors to set up real-name “ideological blog”, encourage those excellent university students with advanced thoughts to set up their own blog, promote communication between the extensive university students and those surrounding them and invisibly offer moral education propaganda, education and communication with the identity of a friend, enable educatees to have the feeling of closeness and trust and to strengthen the real effect of moral education.

Psychological health education mainly means that the universities cultivate the perfect psychological quality of students and promote activities for the comprehensive and harmonious development of students’ body and mind

and the overall improvement of their quality with the method and means of psychological education according to students' psychological and physiological developmental characteristics. (Li Xiaolu, 2009) In order to better conduct psychological and health education, the universities ought to set up a comprehensive psychological and health education system, set up perfect psychological assisting system, emphasize cultivation and improvement of young students' psychological quality, encourage them to exclude the difficulties and anxieties, alleviate their psychological stress and contradictions, recover their psychological balance and mould their healthy internal world, so as to lay firm psychological foundation for cultivation of their moral quality.

3.4 Hard environmental establishment and soft environmental establishment are the two wings of moral education

The environment of educating in universities can be classified into "hard environment" and "soft environment". As for hard environment, we have to lay emphasis on moral education function of establishment of campus landscape, establishment of every hill and every stream in the campus, the garden path and the building, have to design with cautiousness so as to embody the historical tradition and spirit of the times, realize harmonious unification of usage function, aesthetical function and educational function, enable each tree, each stone and each building to be casted with the brand of culture, and to give full play to their function of "moistening things silently". The university also has to enable university students to revivify their spirit in the campus landscape, encourage their ambition, burst out the spirit of developing forward and struggling with efforts, edify their perfect spirit of loving the nature, and caring about the society and others.

As for the soft environment, the varieties of cultural sediments, mainstream ideas and cultural ideas, campus culture and all sorts of atmospheres in the universities for quite a long period of time would have the function of moulding university students' political thoughts and moral quality. The most prominent is the moral education function of campus culture. Campus culture is the particular cultural landscape of the universities, which contains the elements of edification, gives one the edification of influencing them silently and has strong penetration function. Therefore, we have to direct and set up active campus culture to build the environment and atmosphere that can effectively carry out the work of moral education. The practice of establishment of university campus has proven that, we can resort to health spiritual food, civilized activities, high-spirited campus spirit and good campus atmosphere to affect the thought, behavior and life of teachers, students and employees, firmly grasp the correct direction of cultural establishment of universities and guarantee the positive and healthy growth of university students.

3.5 Innovative education and practical education are the essence of moral education

In terms of innovative education, the universities have to gradually cultivate the self-education consciousness of university students. the moral education itself in universities is a process of educating people, which, in essence, is also a process of teaching, namely, a process of integration of external implantation and internalization of the subject (Ren Qiping). The universities should transfer from the former means that teachers offer moral education to the multi-channel interaction between teachers and students in which teachers serve students and students educate themselves, change the former idea that is centered with "implantation of theory" and "management of students", change into the idea of "serving students" and strengthening students' "self education", concentrate more on demands of students and active service, and integrate moral education into all sorts of work. Besides, the universities ought to promote self management, self education and self service of university students. They have to give full play to the subjective function of students, enable students to obtain self education and self escalation in the process of actual participation and enable moral education to really be integrated into the heart of students. At the same time, they should take full advantages of the new media and use scientific means to improve the level of moral education. Also, they ought to promote realization of the strategy to combine of "reality" and "virtuality" of moral educators in universities, bring new media into the informationization establishment of moral education and enable the two to be better combined and better play the role of moral education.

During practical activities of moral education, learning of the three-dimensional pattern of moral education in universities is not purely realized through learning theories. Moral practical activities require us to adopt vivid and active means that suit with the characteristics of university students and stimulate them to continue to go forward in morality, making students discover the surrounding morality. The universities should let students to experience by themselves morality and enable them to realize unification of "knowledge" and "action" through combination of accepting theoretical education and practical practice. This process requires teachers to explain the profound meanings underlying, put forward clearly the teaching content and requirements of moral practice and let students come to realize the importance of this activity, which is able to achieve better effects and accelerate internalization of absorption of moral education theory.

4. Conclusion

Moral education among university students in China is under a new situation with diversifications of the society, economy, culture, thought and information, which will necessarily bring brand-new opportunities and challenges to the idea, method and mode of the moral education in universities. We have to be good at adopting and selecting under a diversified vision, select the excellent and innovate the train of thoughts in moral education in universities. We have to realize human-oriented value orientation for moral education, life-oriented moral education content, diversification of moral education carrier, and scientificness of moral education evaluation mechanism. So long as we firmly set up the concept of three-dimensional pattern of moral education, perseveringly explore the realization approach for three-dimensional moral education and positively push forward the three-dimensional progress of moral education, can we enhance the covering scope, influential strength and effectiveness of moral education to a large extent.

References

- Hu, Jintao. (2005). On Strengthening and Improving College Students' Ideological & Political Education Work. *People's Daily*, January 19, (1).
- Jiang, Zemin. (2000). Important talk at the Ideological and Political Working Conference of the Central Committee of CPC. *Liberation Army Daily*, June 29, (1).
- Li, Xiaolu. (2009). Reflection and Regression --- Setting of the Fundamental Task of Universities. *China Higher Education*, (6).
- Qin, Ziqiang. (2004). Promoting the Three-dimensional Project of Moral Education in Universities. *Journal of Southwest University for Nationalities*, (8).
- Ren, Qiping. Cultural Implication of Psychological Health Education. *Educational Research*, (10).
- Wen, Jiabao. (2010). Talk at the National Working Conference. *People's Daily*, September 1.