Construction of Aesthetic Education System in Universities from the Perspective of General Education

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Abstract. General education refers to the education of the common content to all college students, and it is an amendment to the narrow professional subdivision education pattern. The purpose of the university aesthetic education in this view is not to train and improve the special art skills, but to cultivate the ability of college students to fell, appreciate and create beauty, to improve the aesthetic quality of the college students, to promote the physical and mental harmony and freedom, and finally to lay the foundation for realizing the artistic and poetic life. In the field of general education, a "four-in-one" university aesthetic education system can be built to integrate four aspects of curriculum teaching, practical activities, campus culture and art exhibition and form a synergy.

I. The Concept and Perspective of General Education

General education originates from the thought of free education (also called Liberal Education) in ancient Greece, aiming at cultivating "people and citizens of the society and country who are actively involved in social life, socially responsible and fully developed ". General education was originally explicitly defined by Professor Packard of the United States: "a general education, a classical, literary, scientific and comprehensive education that is a preparation of students for any major study, and provides students with the teaching of all branches of knowledge. This will enable students to have a general and comprehensive understanding of the overall stage of knowledge before committing to a particular and specialized knowledge." [1] In 1945, General Education in a Free Society: Report of the Harvard Committee, known as the general education book, believes: "In a broad sense, education can be divided into two parts: general education and professional education. General education refers to a part of students' whole education, which aims to develop students into responsible persons and citizens, while professional education refers to an education designed to develop students' ability to pursue a certain occupation in the future. These two aspects of human life cannot be completely separated." [2] Although in the process of development, general education is a rich, multi-dimensional and multi-stage category. In general, general education refers to the education of common content to all college students, the purpose of which is to apply
comprehensively education to the educated persons as integrated subjects, so that the educated persons can achieve feel and harmonious development in personality and knowledge, intellect and emotion, body and mind. [3]

In the course of the development of modern higher education in China, especially in traditional key universities, general education has been paid more attention to, such as the thought of "liberal education" pursued by Tsinghua University in the early 20th century. Especially in recent years, in the process of connotation promotion and transformation, the educational concept of "Solid foundation, Wide range and Deep literacy" has been widely recognized and practiced in Chinese higher education. More and more universities proved wide-ranging professional education and general education. The educations are closely integrated to get rid of the talent training mode of excessive professional subdivision, and then turn to multi-disciplinary, multi-visual and multi-level student comprehensive ability improvement and all-round development of general education reform practice. In other words, comprehensively strengthening general education is a further deepening of the understanding of the nature of education. It is an inevitable requirement for higher education to meet the needs of economic and social development in the new era and to cultivate high-quality talents with comprehensive, harmonious and free development.

II. Important Content of General Education - Aesthetic Education

As far as the practice and reality of higher education in China are concerned, the general education of each university has its own historical traditions and characteristics, without a standard and unified model. It is based on extensive, interdisciplinary knowledge, and is a broad, non-professional, non-utilitarian education that does not directly prepare knowledge, ability and quality for profession, and then serves the talents training goals of various colleges and universities. As the basic content and core support of university general education, aesthetic education is of self-evident importance. It is helpful to the improvement of college students' knowledge structure, the improvement of aesthetic and humanistic literacy, the promotion of spiritual realm, and the edification and purification of the mind. Some scholars have even suggested that the aesthetics itself is a basic human right and belongs to the most basic power of human beings. [4] As early as in the book “On the Aesthetic Education of Man”, Schiller pointed out that the task of aesthetic education is to achieve the unity of sensibility and rationality, to pursue the perfection of human nature, and the spiritual freedom and liberation born from beauty. [5] Cai Yuanpei, a famous educator in modern China, said: "aesthetic education is to apply the theory of aesthetics in education and to edify feelings." [6]

Since the new era, the national policy requirements for aesthetic education have reached an unprecedented height. The Outline of National Medium-and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan, issued in September 2010, clearly states: "strengthen aesthetic education and
cultivate students' good aesthetic taste and humanistic literacy". In September 2015, "The State Council's guidance on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools" pointed out that: "aesthetic education is not only aesthetic education, but also emotional education and spiritual education. It can not only enhance people's aesthetic literacy, but also imperceptibly affect people's emotions, tastes, temperament, mind, inspire people's spirit, and warm people's mind." In March 2019, the "Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Strengthening the Aesthetic Education of Colleges and Universities in the New Era" re-emphasized that: "Follow the characteristics of aesthetic education, carry forward the spirit of Chinese aesthetic education and cultivate people with aesthetics."

From the perspective of pedagogy, art education is aesthetic education, which refers to the education in an aesthetic way. The educators guide the educated persons to discover, feel and create beauty from nature, society and art. The most important way and means of implementing aesthetic education is art education. Therefore, aesthetic education in a narrow sense is the art education to achieve the goal of education through the art (including art creation, art appreciation, art criticism, art history, and art theory). [7] However, there is a clear distinction between the aesthetic education as the general education and the art education courses that specialize in cultivating professional art talents. The purpose of the aesthetic education is not to train and improve the special art skills, but to cultivate elegant aesthetic taste and humanistic literacy. It is specialized in "Tao" rather than "technique". As far as the current university general aesthetic education curriculum, three types of different emphasis are also formed. First, the aesthetic education curriculums based on the background of philosophy and aesthetics have obvious metaphysical height of philosophy. It interprets the aesthetic thought and aesthetic education thought in eastern and western cultures, and highlights the academic system, historical evolution and theoretical thinking. Its vision transcends the general specific art category and favors to the combination of literature, history and philosophy. Second, the aesthetic education course of the art appreciation class analyzes and interprets specific works, media, forms, skills and development process of art from the perspective of art acceptance, and focuses on the art ontology. Courses include "music appreciation", "video appreciation", "art appreciation", "dance appreciation", "modern design appreciation", etc. Most of the current general education courses in university are more convenient to open and arrange for implementation, and are easily accepted and understood by the non-professional students. Third, the aesthetic education course of art practice emphasizes the artistic production and artistic experience of the scene, and the students can truly enter a certain art. In particular, the course of the art class mainly relies on art training room and the art workshop, such as the courses of "woodblock paintings", "ink paintings", "pottery ", "art photography", etc. By combining the understanding and
perception of art with the practice, students can not only appreciate the beauty, but also create beauty, which will produce a strong sense of achievement, value and beauty.

III. The Construction and Exploration of Aesthetic Education System in Colleges and Universities

University aesthetic education from the perspective of general education in the new era should establish the concept of great art and great aesthetic education, curriculum education, activity education, cultural education, environmental education, multi-faceted, multi-angle, multi-level formation of aesthetic education environment, cultivate the ability of college students to feel beauty, appreciate beauty and create beauty, effectively improve the aesthetic quality of college students, promote the physical and mental harmony and freedom, and finally lay the foundation for realizing the artistic and poetic life.

The construction of the "four-in-one" aesthetic education system shall be established by the school to achieve the collaboration and joint efforts of education in four aspects of curriculum teaching, practical activities, campus culture and art exhibition to form a synergy.

First, the construction of the curriculum teaching system is the key, and the classroom is the main position. Without the classroom teaching of art education, aesthetic education cannot be implemented, and it is impossible to consolidate the status of aesthetic education as the basic content of general education in universities. The word "general knowledge" of the general knowledge course is to distinguish from the professional art education, and the word "course" is to distinguish from the art education outside the class, ensuring that the central part of the course teaching is to provide the basic guarantee for the implementation of the aesthetic education. We should strengthen the construction of the aesthetic education course, set up the course of the art education and fully integrate into the school professional training program and teaching plan, and carry out the credit system management. In school, students must complete the corresponding courses and pass the course assessment. We should actively construct an art education curriculum system focusing on aesthetic and humanistic literacy, and focusing on innovative ability cultivation, covering art, music, dance, drama, film, television, design, etc., reflecting the breadth and coverage, and meeting students' cognition, experience, and learning needs for different types of art.

Colleges and universities can combine the characteristics of their respective subject characteristics and educational resources, highlight the key points, and focus on the creation of curriculum modules, such as art, music and dance, or drama, film and television, to form advantages and highlights. They should establish the practice path of aesthetic education course with the combination of art theory and art practice, online and offline interaction, highlight the outstanding traditional Chinese art and
regional art. A network resource course should be built, which turns the passive learning to active sharing and the fixed mode to dynamic mode, and provides the students with aesthetic education course resources of various forms, flexible time and customized packages.

Second, the aesthetic education course of art practice class is in parallel with the aesthetic education of art theory class course, and the two mutually promote each other. For many reasons (such as teaching staff, training conditions and venue equipment, etc.), colleges and universities tend to offer the aesthetic education courses of art theory and art appreciation class, mainly based on theoretical lectures. In addition, the professional teachers lack enthusiasm for the general education courses for non-professional students. As a result, it leads to the unbalanced development of university aesthetic education courses and the low opening ratio of aesthetic education courses of art practice class. The curriculum system of aesthetic education without artistic practice is incomplete, and it is also a lack of comprehensive understanding of the curriculum system of aesthetic education. Therefore, correspondingly, in order to cooperate with the teaching of aesthetic education courses in art practice class and meet the basic teaching conditions, it is necessary to comprehensively strengthen the training, laboratory and venue construction. The universities should establish art experience practice center or art and science and technology experiment center, including pottery museum, non-legacy workshop, painting room, studio, dance training room, etc., so that more students can personally carry out artistic practice, feel the joy of artistic expression, develop artistic imagination and creativity, and improve artistic aesthetic literacy. At the same time, the universities should advocate the social art education, lead the students to participate actively in the practice of social aesthetic education. The conditions and performances that the students visit the art museum, the art exhibition, appreciate the elegant literature and art performance, study the outstanding folk art can be used as the evaluation content of the artistic quality.

Third, the campus culture temperament should be enhanced in many aspects. Based on the school history, subject characteristics, campus geomorphology, architectural space characteristics, regional culture and other elements, the universities can set up a series of decorative sculptures, commemorative sculptures, artistic landscapes combining the campus public art, campus environment construction and campus culture construction and build a beautiful new campus full of cultural artistic conception and aesthetic realm. Accordingly, teachers and students can produce pleasure and aesthetic feeling when learning and living in it, the campus cultural environment full of aesthetic feelings can educate people with beauty, and the overall artistic environment can inspire people and shape people. At the same time, the excellent modern art and traditional cultural and artistic gene can infiltrate students through the campus culture environment and guide the students to discover the beauty of nature, the beauty of life and the beauty of the art.
The universities can set up a cultural and artistic society for college students, with professional teacher guidance and regular events. They can strengthen the platform construction, process management, classified guidance and characteristic development and form a new situation of "one school and multiple categories" in the field of art. The students can grow up in the art clubs, such as the photography club, the illustration club, the calligraphy club, the modern drama club, the sports dance club, the music chorus and the apparel model clubs, etc., can feel and enjoy the beauty in the art community, and promote the harmony of the human nature and the mind.

Fourth, in the aspect of art exhibition, the universities should strengthen art performance, art exhibition, art lecture and other activities, pay attention to the linkage inside and outside the school, introduce excellent drama performance, excellent traditional art and contemporary art exhibition into campus, enhance students' sense of presence, experience and closeness, thus forming a rich atmosphere of aesthetic education and cultural art.

References


