

# Analysis on the Construction of Aesthetic Education in Higher Vocational Colleges

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**Abstract:** Aesthetic education plays an irreplaceable role in shaping the personality of students, promoting their all-round development, and cultivating newcomers to the era of the great national rejuvenation. With the advent of the new era and the deepening reform of education, higher vocational colleges not only undertake the task of training high-tech talents, but also shoulder the important mission of improving comprehensive quality. In the current situation, the narrow view of education, the neglect of aesthetic education by schools, enterprises and students, and the blind study of other people's aesthetic education system have led to the failure of aesthetic education in higher vocational colleges. Therefore, this paper puts forward five development countermeasures, which are giving full play to local characteristic culture, creating campus culture, combining aesthetic education with all teaching activities, keeping pace with the times, enriching the second classroom, so as to perfect the system of aesthetic education in higher vocational colleges.

## 1. The Origin of Aesthetic Education and Its Significance In Education

### 1.1 The Origin of Aesthetic Education

Aesthetic education was first put forward by Schiller, a famous German litterateur, and it is called aesthetic education in English. The definition of Ci Hai is: education to improve the educatee's ability to feel, appreciate and create beauty. ① In order to strengthen and improve the aesthetic education work in colleges and universities in the new era in an all-round way and effectively enhance students' aesthetic and humanistic qualities, the Ministry of Education issued the Opinions on Effectively Strengthening the Aesthetic Education Work of Colleges and Universities in the New Age in April 2019 (hereinafter referred to as "Opinions"). It puts forward new requirements for the aesthetic education work of colleges and universities in the new era, and plans a development route that will make breakthrough progress in 2022 and form an aesthetic education system with Chinese characteristics by 2023. The release of "Opinions" has opened up unprecedented opportunities for aesthetic education in universities across the country.

### 1.2 The Significance of Aesthetic Education In Higher Vocational Education

In the campus of higher vocational colleges, there are often students who wear strange clothes, talk profanity, do not greet teachers, or even eat at will in class. Moreover, affected by the social environment, higher vocational students only make money or obtain employment in their future plans, blindly pursuing money and material comforts. Leaving self-fulfillment behind is actually a manifestation of aesthetic deficiency. Therefore, higher vocational colleges should attach importance to aesthetic education and integrate aesthetic education into daily teaching and students' life. So that higher vocational students can be guided to improve their ideological connotation, establish correct life ideals and plan for the future in a planned way.

## 2. Outstanding Problems of Aesthetic Education In Higher Vocational Colleges

### 2.1. Narrow View of Aesthetic Education

The narrow view is the bottleneck of aesthetic education. Many vocational colleges think that

aesthetic education is an art class or music class, and directly equate aesthetic education with art education, which is a narrow view of aesthetic education. Art education is indeed an important part of aesthetic education as well as an important means of implementing aesthetic education in colleges and universities. However, art education is only to improve the students' art professional level, and aesthetic education aims to guide and explore students' ability to appreciate beauty and create beauty. From beauty to goodness, beauty and goodness are integrated, so as to set up a correct outlook on life, values and the world, and establish lofty ideals and beliefs. Therefore, aesthetic education is more extensive and richer than art education. Viewing aesthetic education from a narrow perspective will inevitably affect the teaching behavior of aesthetic education for teachers other than arts and music. As a result, aesthetic education cannot be integrated into the subject teaching, and subtle aesthetic effects cannot be achieved.

## **2.2 The Neglect of Three Parties**

The three parties involved in this paper are: school, employer, and student. Firstly, school leaders do not attach importance to aesthetic education. According to the process of implementing aesthetic education in most vocational colleges in Yunnan, aesthetic education is still the weakest link in the "five education". Many higher vocational colleges haven't included aesthetic education in the relevant curriculum plans, and consider aesthetic education dispensable, especially for science and technology majors, some of which do not even offer relevant courses. Higher vocational colleges have the characteristics of short term, multi-disciplinary and long-time learning, so they mainly focus on teaching professional skills. This has caused many higher vocational colleges to devote most of their education resources to professional courses, and insufficient funds have been invested in aesthetic education courses, resulting in a lack of aesthetic education resources.

Secondly, students do not pay much attention to aesthetic education. According to a survey of students in higher vocational colleges in Yunnan, most students are mainly based on obtaining qualification certificates and preparing for college entrance examinations. Most aesthetic education courses are part-time by other professional teachers, who lack relevant teaching experience and their teaching attitude is full of arbitrariness. The course of aesthetic education with single and boring content only takes the way of inculcating in class, and the knowledge only needs reciting and memorizing without real life, which leads to the complete neglect of the cultivation of comprehensive quality. It inhibits students' enthusiasm for participating in aesthetic education courses. Students who have been taught in this way cannot think better about themselves and the world they live in, and remain in the stage of distinguishing beauty, with no ability of innovation and sustainable development.

Finally, the employer does not attach importance to aesthetic education. Employers often give priority to their interests, and take skills, technology, and professional qualifications as their primary criteria for employment. People with excellent skills, high efficiency and high professional level are good employees. Although this will not have much impact in the short term, in the long run, the past disadvantages will be exposed. Such standards make schools and students more emphasize on skills over aesthetic education, so that aesthetic education courses in higher vocational colleges become the decoration and are gradually marginalized.

## **2.3 Blind Learning**

In the early 20th century, Wang Guowei and Cai Yuanpei introduced aesthetic education into China from the west, and aesthetic education gradually became an important aspect of China's education policy. The aesthetic education in developed countries has been very mature, with its own educational characteristics, and it enables students to have their strengths, providing conditions for the sustainable development of students. Higher vocational colleges should indeed learn from advanced foreign education experience, but some higher vocational colleges do not combine their own reality and blindly learn from foreign school experience. With the rapid development of education in our country, we have entered the stage of mass education. Under this kind of environment, the students of higher vocational colleges also show diversified characteristics. Higher vocational colleges should combine the characteristics of domestic students, learn from foreign

outstanding teaching experience, and sort out a set of education systems suitable for Chinese students.

The aesthetic education system of most undergraduate universities in China is approaching maturity and has formed an aesthetic education system with Chinese characteristics in the new era. After investigation, some higher vocational colleges blindly copied this set of aesthetic education programs formulated for undergraduate students, completely ignoring the differences between undergraduate students and higher vocational students. The admission score of higher vocational colleges is low, and the quality of their students is uneven. There are single-enrolled social personnel, junior high school students, and students who pass the college entrance examination. Higher vocational students have strong self-awareness and like to keep up with the Joneses. They pursue fashion but their aesthetic ability is weak. Compared with undergraduates, they have the characteristics of weak learning ability, weak self-control and insufficient self-confidence. Aesthetic education in higher vocational colleges should be based on the undergraduate aesthetic education, combined with the psychological characteristics of higher vocational students in the new era, to develop a set of aesthetic education programs with new features and contents.

### **3. Countermeasures for the Development of Aesthetic Education in Higher Vocational Colleges**

#### **3.1 Carry Forward the Local Outstanding Characteristic Culture**

Yunnan is located in southwestern China. Among the 56 ethnic minorities in the country, 25 are in Yunnan, which is the province with the most ethnic minorities in China. There are 75 national intangible cultural heritage lists, ranking in the forefront of all provinces in China. For example: Dongba painting of the Naxi people, paper cutting of the Dai people, tie-dyeing skills of the Bai people, etc. After investigation (Take Yunnan College of Foreign affairs & Foreign Language as an example), 30% of the students in an administrative class are ethnic minorities, and 60% live in ethnic minority areas. And these 60% have a certain understanding of Yunnan's intangible cultural heritage, which has a natural advantage over higher vocational students in other provinces and cities. The "Opinions" mentioned that by 2035, a diversified and high-quality aesthetic education system for modern socialist colleges with Chinese characteristics will be formed. Therefore, from the perspective of culture, higher vocational colleges in Yunnan should incorporate local excellent cultural traditions, especially intangible cultural elements, into the aesthetic education curriculum, so that students can continuously experience the extensive and profound Chinese traditional culture and inherit and carry forward it, thus forming the aesthetic education system of higher vocational colleges with Chinese characteristics in the new era.

#### **3.2 Utilize All Favorable Factors to Create A Unique Campus Culture**

The school is an important place for students to acquire knowledge in aesthetic education. It is not limited to studying in the classroom. The internal cultural atmosphere of the school is also helpful to improve students' comprehensive quality and aesthetic ability. For example, while the flowers, mountains and rivers in the school are built like gardens, scenic spots with the characteristics of the school can also be designed on campus. Make full use of all favorable factors to carry out aesthetic education for students, such as arranging exhibition boards to introduce professional talents in the corridors of the classroom aisles to make students feel the beauty of their profession, setting up aesthetic education section in the library, creating a beautiful classroom environment, and so on. The charming campus culture will attract more talents. After graduation, they will also bring their own campus culture to reflect in all aspects of their work and life.。

#### **3.3 Aesthetic Education is Closely Related to All Teaching Activities**

In addition to possessing the necessary professional knowledge of the subject, a teacher should also reserve a wealth of aesthetic knowledge, improve his own aesthetic cultivation, and have the advanced concept of actively incorporating aesthetic education into daily teaching. As the saying

goes, it is difficult to achieve anything without support. In order to better cultivate the students' aesthetic consciousness, other professional teachers should also change their teaching methods that neglected aesthetic education in the past. So teaching aesthetic education will not only be the responsibility of art teachers or music teachers. In addition, teachers should also pay attention to the beauty of deportment and language in the classroom. Elegant and dignified teachers can mobilize more students' interest in learning, create a harmonious and lively atmosphere, and achieve the subtle effect of aesthetic education in daily teaching. Therefore, in order to improve students' humanistic quality, the whole school faculty should reach a consensus that "aesthetic education is everyone's business, and it is closely related to all teaching activities."

### **3.4 Keep Pace with the Times**

Aesthetic education has a strong nature of the times, and its teaching contents and teaching methods should keep pace with the times. In recent years, aesthetic education teaching has gradually entered into the platform of higher vocational colleges, but its teaching methods are still teaching-oriented, emphasizing theoretical knowledge. "It is the basic law of the aesthetic kingdom to grant yourself through your own," Schiller said in *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*. ② Therefore, aesthetic education cannot be forced to instill, and a flexible and changeable education model should be adopted. Various methods should be combined in teaching methods. Besides, teaching methods such as discussion, dialogue, debate, and visiting should be used in class. Teachers should make full use of the school's educational resources such as projectors, computers, televisions, acoustic equipment, etc. This will help students focus their attention during the learning process and allow students to think aesthetically while attending classes. Aesthetic education cannot be done by teachers just standing on the podium or students only facing a book. Teachers should use modern teaching tools to vividly impart aesthetic knowledge to students.

The assessment methods should also be flexible and diverse, keeping pace with the times. Traditional aesthetic education usually uses the final exam or the final essay to check students' learning outcomes. Hegel once said, "aesthetics has a liberating nature." ③ Aesthetic education has the characteristics of freedom. Therefore, the assessment method of aesthetic education courses should not be too rigid, and the view of "one test to determine results" should be abandoned. In short, the old assessment methods should be diversified, focusing on assessing the comprehensive ability of students, so that it reflects the importance of aesthetic education.

### **3.5 Enrich the Second Classroom**

The second classroom should also keep pace with the new era. After investigation, the campus activities of most higher vocational colleges in Yunnan only include painting and singing competitions, which are simple and boring, and the students' enthusiasm for participation is not high. Schools should organize activities in line with the times, such as the campus shooting competition, the simulated entrepreneurship competition, the campus creative competition, etc. These activities not only enrich the campus culture, but also attract more students to participate, making campus activities an important platform for students to feel beauty and create beauty.

## **4. Conclusion**

Students in higher vocational colleges are in their youth, and their quest for beauty is intense. If higher vocational students are guided by correct aesthetic education during this period and their ability to appreciate and create beauty is excavated, they can be better helped to establish a correct outlook on life, values and world. Higher vocational colleges should earnestly strengthen the emphasis on aesthetic education and cultivate creative, comprehensive and freely developed talents, so as to provide a powerful safeguard for the realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the construction of a strong socialist modern country.

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