

# The Construction of Hidden Curriculum for Art Design Major in Colleges and Universities

## Taking Xijing University as an Example

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**Abstract**—Both hidden curriculum and explicit curriculum are indispensable and important curriculum resources in schools. Hidden curriculum is not only an important way to construct tacit knowledge of students, but also an effective means to carry out moral education and promote all-round development of students. It is the main ways for the construction of hidden curriculum in college design art education that exploring the hidden curriculum resources of teaching materials, raising the awareness of teachers to construct hidden curriculum, and strengthening the construction of school spiritual culture and the construction of campus material environment. Schools should consciously use the combination of explicit curriculum and hidden curriculum to achieve the purpose of teaching and educating people.

**Keywords**—explicit curriculum; hidden curriculum; curriculum resources; campus culture

### I. INTRODUCTION

Since the mid-1980s, the study of hidden curriculum has begun to emerge in Chinese educational circles. Up to now, “hidden curriculum” has become a well-known vocabulary in the Chinese education community. However, for the special field of art design education in colleges and universities, the cognition and teaching practice of hidden curriculum are far from satisfactory.

### II. THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

Hidden curriculum is also called latent curriculum and invisible curriculum, which is relative to the curriculum (explicit curriculum) in the school schedule. The hidden curriculum was first mentioned by American scholar P. Jackson in *Life in Classroom* in 1968. He believes that students not only get growth and progress in the formal curriculum of the school, but also get attitudes, motivations, values and other psychological development from the educational life of the school. Jackson called this informal cultural transmission a “hidden curriculum”. It is generally believed that explicit curriculum refer to direct, clear, pre-programmed subject and activity courses that are included in the school curriculum, while hidden curriculum are informal courses that exist outside the classroom teaching plan, it refers to the educational influence of educators on students

through the educational environment, thus playing a subliminal educational effect. Therefore, the campus material environment, spiritual culture, institutional form and behavior of educators and so on are all regarded as hidden curriculum resources.

The explicit curriculum and the hidden curriculum are two aspects of the school curriculum system. They are interdependent and interrelated, and they play an important role in school education and teaching activities. Therefore, hidden curriculum is not dispensable, but a part of curriculum design and curriculum implementation; “The hidden curriculum is a course carefully designed by educators to be conveyed in a hidden and potential way to guide students to comprehend the curriculum by themselves.”<sup>1</sup> School education should consciously combine explicit curriculum with hidden curriculum, and exert influence on students with the combined force of curriculum, so as to achieve the purpose of educating people. On September 22, 2009, the University of Hong Kong conferred the title of “Honorary Academician” to “San Sao” Yuan Sumei, a school worker who has been cooking and sweeping for students for 44 years and knows only five words. Because she “influences the life of college students with her own life”, she is “the soul of a university dormitory”. In the course entitled “Dormitory History”, each freshman has to learn the song of the dormitory. There are such lyrics: “The university hall has three treasures, rotating copper ladders, David's deer sculptures and 'San Sao'.”<sup>2</sup> The “incident” of Yuan Sumei is a “carefully designed” course of the University of Hong Kong. It is also a vivid portrayal of the school's emphasis on hidden courses.

<sup>1</sup> Jin Yule. *Hidden Curriculum Theory* [M]. Jiangxi: Jiangxi Education Press. 1996.33-34.

<sup>2</sup> Annie Zhang. “San Sao”: From Dormitory Waiter to Honorary Academician [N]. *China Education Daily*. March, 5, 2010, 009 Edition.

### III. THE ROLE OF HIDDEN CURRICULUM IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

#### A. *Hidden Curriculum Is the Main Way to Construct the Tacit Knowledge of Students*

Modern cognitive theory holds that in educational activities, the tacit knowledge of students is the “guide” and “master” of learning, which plays an important role in interest, ambition and even lifelong achievement of students. However, the education that forms the “tacit knowledge” of students is often not the formal curriculum of the school, but the campus environment, school spirit and style of study, spiritual culture and institutions, and even the behavior of teachers. Under the subtle influence of campus environment, students gradually construct their own emotions, attitudes and values, which play an important role in the formation of students' healthy personality and the choice of life path. Therefore, tacit curriculum is the main way to construct tacit knowledge of students.

#### B. *Hidden Curriculum Is an Effective Means of Moral Education*

L. Kohlberg, an American psychologist of moral education, believes that “hidden curriculum is more powerful than explicit curriculum as an important means of moral education”. Because explicit moral education courses tend to emphasize teaching students “knowledge related to morality”, while ignore the internalization mechanism of students. In fact, moral education can only be internalized into the moral concept of students through the special experience and understanding of the mind, thus regulating the behavior of students. The hidden curriculum in a subtle way has catered to this feature. When students receive various hidden curriculum education, although there is cognitive participation, but they are more involved in non-cognitive psychology such as emotion, attitude, value and interest, which is the result of students' inner understanding. The influence of hidden curriculum on students is not only on the cognitive level, but also internalized into deep moral qualities and accomplishments of students such as emotion, will, personality and values. Therefore, its role and effect are very lasting and profound, and even affect the life of students.<sup>3</sup>

### IV. SUGGESTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT OF THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM FOR ART MAJORS IN XIJING UNIVERSITY

It is generally believed that the basic development approaches of recessive courses are mainly in the following aspects: such as the way of campus material environment construction, the way of school spiritual culture construction, the way of school system form construction, the way of educator behavioral construction, and the ways to develop hidden curriculum resources of teaching materials and so on. Based on the specific situation of Xijing University, the

author believes that relevant work can be carried out from the following aspects:

#### A. *The School Management Department Should Pay Attention to the Development of Hidden Curriculum*

Hidden curriculum is interdependent and interrelated with explicit curriculum, which is an indispensable part of school curriculum. Therefore, hidden curriculum is not dispensable, but an indispensable part of the whole school curriculum system. As the organizer and executor of the curriculum, the school must establish a clear hidden curriculum consciousness and take the construction of the hidden curriculum as an equally important work as the explicit curriculum. Otherwise, it may make the teaching of the explicit curriculum become an isolated teaching behavior and lose the necessary support and connection between the implicit curriculum and the explicit curriculum. In a sense, the teaching management department of the school is the decisive factor in the development of the hidden curriculum. If the school management does not consciously lead the development of the hidden curriculum, then hidden curriculum development will be impossible, or in the state of “stragglers and disbanded soldiers” that the teachers themselves act on the basis of their interests, which is not conducive to the development of talent training work for school.

#### B. *Optimizing the Construction of Existing Explicit Curriculum*

From the perspective of knowledge classification theory of information processing psychology, the knowledge of plastic arts is mainly about how to implement painting (including sculpture) and design creation. It is a knowledge system with procedural knowledge as the main body. As a private university, the curriculum of Xijing University is basically derived from the teaching system of public universities, in which the content of “theoretical” course, especially the traditional Chinese humanities course, is insufficient. Therefore, the author suggests that appropriately weaken the course of “painting” and “design” in the existing curriculum group, and add more courses of traditional Chinese culture, folk art and so on. Specific recommendations are as follows:

- Appropriately increase the proportion of courses in Chinese aesthetics in the aesthetics curriculum;
- The art practice courses such as sketching and collecting folk songs in the majors of fine arts and design, the local folk art as the main content of the examination(or internship);
- All majors in fine arts and design must add local folk art courses that are suitable for the development of disciplines and professional education.

#### C. *Strengthening the Construction of Campus Humanities Environment*

Teaching environment is also one of the excellent hidden curriculum resources. Rosovsky, the former dean of Harvard

<sup>3</sup> Fu Wenzhong. The Construction of Moral Education and Hidden Curriculum in Colleges and Universities [J]. Curriculum. Textbooks. Teaching Method. 2006, 5. (5)

College of Arts and Sciences, has said, “I would like to reiterate my argument that the physical environment of the workplace has a huge impact. Every morning, I realize that when I entered the courtyard (Harvard University campus) through the dirty Harvard Square in the city, it seems that I have found an oasis in the desert, and immediately feel relaxed and refreshing to start my day's work.”<sup>4</sup> Rosovsky emphasizes the potential significance of campus environment for talent cultivation and illustrates that the construction of campus humanistic environment is an indispensable hidden curriculum resource for schools.

According to the specific environment of Xijing University, the author suggests that the construction of campus humanistic environment can be enriched from two aspects of unique humanistic landscape and “sound landscape”, so as to give students profound humanistic ideological education and noble aesthetic edification, and actively promote the all-round development of student personality.

- Based on the tenet of Xijing University, with the consensus of all the teachers, students and staff, determine the colleges “campus flower”, “campus tree” of the university, and on this basis, forge the campus cultural landscape that build in “campus flower” and “campus tree” as the artistic image, the unique campus culture of Xijing University is taken as the ideological content, and the landscape sketch text such as purpose of running school, the school motto and so on;
- To establish AI (Audio Identity, School Audio Recognition System - Note by the author) of Xijing University, and improve the school auditory recognition system. For example, the use of school songs or other music melodies with characteristics, create a distinctive school music ringtone, school radio music, mobile phone ring tones, and so on. At the same time, by improving the level of campus landscape greening, it naturally gathers the unique bird resources and other natural sound resources in the location of the school, so as to create a particular sound scapa of Xijing University, leaving an unforgettable school sound imprint in the minds of students.

#### *D. Teachers Should Clearly Establish the Awareness of Hidden Curriculum and Actively Develop Hidden Curriculum*

The Library of a university in China has implemented a new way of borrowing books - borrowing teachers. The method is that students can talk freely with teachers in the prescribed borrowing time (30 minutes) and share the successful experience and lessons learned of teachers in learning and life by booking a “teacher book” owned by the library (the “teacher book” is a successful person and well-known professor hired by the library inside and outside the

school). This case illustrates that the faculty and staff themselves are one of the hidden curriculum resources, so teachers should establish a good awareness of the hidden curriculum and the desire to actively develop hidden curriculum.

The author believes that when teachers implement the development of hidden curriculum resources, they can take the following two paths as a starting point to carry out the development work:

Frist, teachers should explore hidden curriculum resources in teaching materials. In textbooks, besides the literal language conveyed explicitly, the text implicitly conveys the deep content of “meaning” to students. It is just as the fable “Fox and Crow” tells us not to believe in the good words of others, and do not to fall into the traps of others easily. When teachers are in each class, they should not only teach the literal meaning, but also focus on the interpretation of the “deep silent structure” of the course. For example, in the course of aesthetics, it is necessary to highlight the cultural soil, cultural concepts, religious beliefs, social structure and other issues that have been constructed in the basic spirit of Chinese aesthetics; In the course of “Chinese folk art”, it is also necessary to tell the historical background of the generation of folk art works, the practical needs of social life and aesthetic needs and so on, so that students can deeply understand the relationship among folk art and contemporary art and design, and promote the national development of art creation and design;

Second, teachers must not only do a good job in the teaching of explicit curriculum, but also must always bear in mind the leading and exemplary role of teacher in the face of students and become a qualified hidden curriculum teacher. Teachers should always treat their academic attitudes, values, speech and behavior as hidden curriculum, and pay attention to the impact of their words and deeds on students. For example, teachers should adhere to scientific and honest academic attitude, oppose academic corruption with a clear banner, and set up a good academic research style for students; in the process of classroom teaching, teachers should strictly abide by the requirements of classroom teaching, prepare lessons and attend classes conscientiously, so as to promote students to learn actively and conscientiously with a good teaching style, and so on.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Due to the design discipline and professional characteristics and the knowledge structure of the teachers, there is little content about hidden curriculum construction in art and design education of colleges and universities in China in the process of teaching reform again and again. Therefore, in view of the specific situation of the College of Design and Art of Xijing University, the author puts forward some ideas and methods to strengthen the construction of the hidden curriculum by raising the awareness of the hidden curriculum. The author appeals to the relevant management departments of the school to attach importance to the development of the hidden curriculum, optimize the construction of the existing explicit curriculum, and

<sup>4</sup> Translated by Xie Zongxian et al. Rosovsky, *American Campus Culture* [M]. Shandong Shandong People's Publishing House, 1996. P82.

strengthen the construction of the humanistic environment of the campus, and so on. At the same time, it also puts forward the requirements for the first-line teachers to clearly establish the awareness of hidden curriculum construction and actively develop hidden curriculum. It is hoped that this paper can “throw a brick to attract jade” and provide a superficial reference for the construction of hidden curriculum in other art and design universities.

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