

Exploration on Students Work Based on the Concept of Holistic Education

---A Case Study of Yunnan University of Finance and Economics

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Abstract—Holistic education, or whole person education, in colleges and universities emphasizes on the harmonious development of students' professional and general study, ability and personality, and of individuals and groups. Students-affairs has become a powerful grasp for whole person education in university due to its working principle and mode, and therefore plays an effective role in promoting the practice of whole person education concept in the education in colleges and universities. However, the implementation of holistic education as well as the further development of students work is still faced with opportunities and challenges at the same time, under this circumstance, this paper discusses the effective methods in student affairs under the concept of holistic education in colleges and universities with the case study of Yunnan University of Finance and Economics.

Keywords—holistic education; students work; Communist Youth League; study case

I. INTRODUCTION

Holistic education is not a new concept, nor an education mode totally introduced from abroad, on the contrary, it oriented from ancient China, and has developed up to now. Chinese education always attaches importance to moral education, as is mentioned in the ancient literature, as well as the great educator named Zhu Xi in Southern Song dynasty, education should has a primary target of understanding the ethics, and paying attention to the development of personal cultivation and humanity. Even when the ideas and methods of education change according to the social and economics evolution, whole person education concept has been emphasized by educators in our country in all periods. Mr. Cai Yuanpei, a former President of Peking University, said that education is to help people by allowing them to develop their abilities and to complete their own personality.

Inheriting the ancient concept of education, and driven by the trend abroad, the idea of whole person education which is valued more and more in China, is experiencing the development opportunity, but also faced with misunderstanding and challenges. The Communist Youth League (CYL) in Yunnan University of Finance and Economics, which act as the department of students work, has

been committed to the work of idea shaping and grow-up services for the university students, through three major projects known as ELEGANCE, LOVE, and INSIGHT. With these projects, CYL becomes an important grasp in the process that develops from ideal to reality, and from theory to practice in holistic education. The environment, which attaches great importance to the ideas of the CYL, in turn provides the university students work with fertile soil for its development. Similar to the holistic education, which faces growing challenges, the CYL is also experiencing difficulties. Meanwhile, similar obstacles and misunderstanding also became the adverse factors in the work of students work. Therefore, healthy development of holistic education provides a suitable environment for the students work, and the orderly work of the CYL in students work in the universities will in turn impact positively to the development of whole person education. Furthermore, effective practice of the students work which promote the further implementation of whole person education concept, will be at the same time motivate the performance of the CYL itself. As a result, considering that the concept of holistic education performs mainly as the background, the Communist Youth League in colleges and universities should explores its method of development based on the understanding of the theories of holistic education.

II. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

With a view of holistic education, the significance of education is to cultivate a complete person, rather than to specially emphasize on moral, artistic, physical or intellectual education while ignoring the output of knowledge, as is in the understanding of the opponents. Holistic education is to develop a complete and harmonious personality, which not only emphasizes the moral and spiritual ascension, but also embodied in the full development of individual knowledge and skills. At the same time, it not only pays attention to personal development, but also puts forward the idea of coordinating development between individuals and groups, individuals and society, as well as men and the nature [1]. And as a holistic-educated person, one should not only master rich fund of knowledge and professional skills, but also meet the demand of healthy body, perfect personality, elegant interest

and great mind [2]. To sum up, holistic education encourages interaction and integration of knowledge from different disciplines and fields.

A. Conceptual Advantage Brings Development Opportunity

As Einstein said, professional education or knowledge output can only make person a useful tool for the society, but can't make them complete persons in harmonious development. Unlike the concept of knowledge output under instrumentalism inclination, holistic education mainly emphasizes on people, and this concept of education would not allow the teaching to make people become machines [3]. In the concept of holistic education, the purpose of education includes not only to cultivate applied talents for the development of society, but also to explore students' potential. This kind of education is trying to make people gain the abilities of self-awareness and self-innovation, thus to further improve the harmonious development of a person. On one hand, similar to the educational concept of comprehensive development, which was raised in the eighty's last century in China, whole person education also aims to develop students' various abilities in intelligence, sports, art and so on. On the other hand, holistic education also focuses on improving the students' cognitive, behavioral and creative ability, and the adaptation to the development of groups, society and nature [4], and then makes the students to achieve the harmony of the body, mind and soul. The advantages of holistic education embody the value of implementation of the concept, and provide opportunities for the further development of the ideas. Its advantages mainly refer to the following several aspects.

- The implementation of holistic education is conducive to the balance between professional and general education. As is told by the experience of Capitalism Society in high-speed development periods, that excessive focus on professional education while overlooking general education mode, would eventually lead to the consequence that the students would inevitably become machines and tools in social and economic development and therefore the student's own personality could not be improved, either the potential of students themselves could be developed. However, on the other hand, if the professional knowledge is abandoned, merely general education will prevent the students to master specific knowledge, and this also has disadvantages against the personal growth and social development by inadequately exploring the potential of the students. However, holistic education focuses on both specific and general education, and conducive to maintain a balance of them.
- The implementation of holistic education is conducive to the balance between ability and personality. Holistic education affirms that the process of education should contain the transmission of knowledge and skills to master, and that the importance of materials and the actual operations for the human progress and social development. Meanwhile, holistic education emphasizes that education should pay attention to the comprehensive development of personality and growth

in intellectual level, the idea asks the educators to avoid to underestimate the importance of personality when cultivating the students' ability. Focusing on ability and personality, holistic education makes progress of coordinating development.

- The implementation of holistic education is conducive to the balance between individual and the group. Holistic education not only focus on the cultivation of the individuals, but casts more emphasis on groups. It encourages students to realize themselves, at the same time it stressed the harmonious development between individuals and groups, people and society, as well as human and nature by emphasizing the ability of understanding and communicating, the accomplishment of mutual understanding and trust.

Compared with the specific education, holistic education tends to make the students reach an organic unity and coordinating development among body, mind, and spirit, and to cultivate persons with morality, knowledge, health, and so on. Nowadays in the world, where the excessive bloom of professional education has already caused repeated problems in both campus and society, holistic education has been drawing more and more attention, and therefore facing favorable opportunity.

B. Misunderstandings Produces Difficulty

Under the present background that higher education is defined as a popular one, holistic education appears to be lack of power, and even too emotional and soft, especially compared with the professional education which is always highly considered as instrumental education. This comparison makes the idea of holistic education a short in strength during the process of implementing, and thus difficulties rose. These obstacles has made holistic concept of education to stay in theoretical stage for a long time, and hard to practice, and less effective. The problem is that people who misunderstand holistic education, including educators and students who have a tendency of professional education concept, underestimate or over expect the value and function of whole person education, these two extremes of thinking tendency are theory of uselessness for the former, and theory of omnipotence for the latter. In the first case, people take whole person education as general education, which focuses on cultivating the students' perceptual cognition, while paying insufficient attention to rational cognition. Someone even put the whole person education to the opposite side of knowledge transmission, and force themselves to choose between the two, so-called rational education and emotional education, and then the rational one always wins out when these persons deliberately ignore the goals and functions of whole person education. Meanwhile, there are also many teachers who are engaged in professional research think of that the driving force on students' academic achievements of whole person education is not big enough to consider, so it would be better to focus on professional study and professional knowledge transmission, and to train the students to become social screws. In the second case, however, people expect to use holistic

education to solve all the problems of the students, they take holistic education as a universal solution to all problems outside the field of professional knowledge. For example, they wish holistic education to play an efficient role when students are not eloquent, when they hold bad living habits, and when the sense of responsibility is not strong, etc., in the hope of that holistic education will become a new efficient tool, as a panacea for solving all the problems [5-8]. To a large extent, these two extreme errors of wrong definition hindered the healthy development of the holistic education.

The long term stagnant of the theoretical system does harm to its practice and development, and this, further raises the problems that no one is willing to handle, no one is willing to teach and that no one is willing to listen [6].

III. HOLISTIC EDUCATION EMBODIED IN THE STUDENTS' WORK

Since 2012, the Communist Youth League (CYL) in Yunnan University of Finance and Economics (YNUFE) has been promoting the method of educating via culture. They put forwards three major projects known as ELEGANCE, LOVE, and INSIGHT, and utilize them as the main working method in promoting the comprehensive development of young students in the university. For many years, YNUFE always practice the educational concept of ELEGANCE, LOVE, and INSIGHT throughout the steps and details of the work, this highlights the university's motto, and unites the ascension of the university spirit and the construction of campus culture with the young students' daily education.

A. Project of ELEGANCE

The project of ELEGANCE in YNUFE is a series of activities for the purpose of promoting the construction of campus culture by advocating the idea of conducting a positive, healthy, lively and elegant campus culture. It internalizes the function of university education and promotes the construction of self-shaping mechanism in young students, by focusing on comprehensive quality and potential exploration adapt to the progress of time. In the campus of YNUFE, the CYL practices the project mainly through the culture and art performance, student associations and youth forums. The project of ELEGANCE emphasizes the organic combination of cultural construction and self shaping, and promotes students' personality shaping by organizing campus activities such as aesthetic standards promoting, cognitive training, and emotional intelligence cultivating.

B. Project of LOVE

In the project of LOVE, volunteer work, which promotes the students to build their personality as well as responsibility, is considered to be an important carrier to mobilize the students' moral education development. The project aims at a harmonious construction which consists of body, mind, and spirit. Promoting the students to become intelligent, virtuous, healthy and harmonious persons, encouraging them to form a healthy, optimistic and loving outlook towards society, and making them to establish personal identity, are also considered

the most important targets of the project of LOVE. In YNUFE, LOVE is practiced mainly through various types of volunteer work long-term and short-term.

C. Project of INSIGHT

The focus of the project of INSIGHT is to guide the young students improving themselves in the process of practice. Through this process of seeing, learning, and doing, experience accumulates, knowledge increases and then students are educated. This project tends to build a platform for the students, makes it possible for the youth to enrich and perfect the college life by practicing and experiencing outside the classrooms. The project also allows the students to walk out the classrooms and even the school gate, and encourages them to step into the groups of people, the society and nature. In this way, university students could gradually and more easily realize their value, and know about their own responsibility, as well as adapt themselves to the groups, the society and nature and make coordinating development.

The three major projects of ELEGANCE, LOVE, and INSIGHT have been highly regarded by both teachers and students. The projects are praised for their vivid interpretation of the function of cultural education for the university, and their effectiveness in practicing the quality education, as well as the powerful embodiment of whole person education in college education.

IV. IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS

Firstly, as a college educator, one should clear understand that holistic education is different from anti-intellectualism. Only under the premise that the teachers have a clear identification of holistic education, could the idea come into practice, and the students being educated build the confidence. True interpretation for holistic education should be like this, professional stamens + general petals = whole person flower. Holistic education is actually a comprehensive cultivating model which consists of the improvement in humanistic quality, social responsibility, life skills, scientific literacy and the ability to get along with nature [5]. Holistic education also contains knowledge transfer, so the holistic educator in the first place should not stand in the opposite of knowledge transfer, on the contrary, they should try to promote the cross and fusion of different types of knowledge. Also, the leagues who work for the students affairs in colleges and universities should not stand on the opposite to professional education, nor to the professional teachers. The university can achieve the target of cultivating college students only when professional education, ideology education and practical education come to an organic unity. Education policy makers, therefore, should pay more attention to the practical significance towards whole person education patterns made by the students in the university. By doing this, the leaders could coordinate the relationship of campus culture, students' quality cultivation and professional knowledge transfer.

Secondly, whole person educators should accurately identify the meaning and function. They should not exaggerate the role of the mode in education, nor could they hold the

negative opinion that holistic education is of no use when facing to the difficulties in implementing the ideas. On the contrary, educators should be steady enough and build up confidence on the basics of knowing what can be done by this mode of education and what cannot. In the students work, I would give some specific suggestions as follows. First, general education and ideological education could be utilized to lead the youth and promote them to establish their personality. Second, by campus cultural construction and educational mode of practicing, students work in the university could build a second classroom for the youth to enhance the professional skills and make a comprehensive development. Third, the university should be committed to training the faculty. After all, advanced educational concept, mature educators are directly related to the students' growth and development, as a result, a stable and excellent team, is a guarantee to the implementation of the whole person education. Therefore, the key points of the university's development must contain the cultivation of the faculty.

Teacher's internal concept of education and the actual behavior in teaching are the determinants of the success or failure in education. Along with the development of society, the university education is more and more multi-functional. In this process, the effective work of students affairs requires that teacher committed to students work should pay attention to the harmonious development of himself as a teacher in university on the first place. On the other hand, however, they are required not to stop trying to penetrate the idea of whole person education to professional teachers, and encourage the professional teachers to implement the concept into specific work. In this way, the harmonious development of the college students' professional and general knowledge, ability and personality, individuals and groups could come into reality.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have helped me during the writing of this thesis. I gratefully acknowledge the help of my colleagues Miss Rao Huang and Miss Liu Xixi. I do appreciate their patience, encouragement, and professional instructions during my thesis writing.

Also, I would like to thank Mr. Wang Ruichen who kindly gave me a hand when I was doing the translation

Last but not the least, my gratitude also extends to my family who have been assisting, supporting and caring for me all of my life.

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