

Ways to Improve Effective Communication between College Counselors and Students in the New Media Environment*

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Abstract—With the advancement of science and technology and the rapid development of new media, the changes in the field of media have led to changes in information acquisition and interpersonal communication. College counselors, as direct managers of college students, the communication mode between them and students has changed in the new media environment. College counselors need to strengthen the communication with students to strengthen ideological and political education for students. Nowadays, traditional models are being affected, and new approaches are still being sought and explored. Based on the arrival of the new media era, this paper considers feasible ways to achieve effective communication between college counselors and students and achieve the goal of ideological and political education.

Keywords—new media; college counselors; college students; effective communication

I. INTRODUCTION

The ever-changing technologies have brought changes to the media. The rapid rise of new media has brought a great impact on traditional media, and has also changed the ways that people access information and communicate with others. This has also changed the means and methods for college counselors to carry out ideological and political education for students. At the moment, college counselors are facing the challenge of how to effectively communicate with students. College students in the new era like new things, pursue personalized expression, and have strong curiosity. New media has become their favorite communication medium. This requires college counselors to further grasp the behavioral characteristics of students, grasp the characteristics of new media, respond to changes in the times, change traditional communication patterns, and find new approaches for communication.

II. ANALYSIS OF NEW MEDIA AS A MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION

Nowadays, with the development of new media, we have entered an information era, the information index has increased a lot, and the means of communication are being innovated continuously. Although there is currently no clear definition of new media, the new media is the “fifth media” that has emerged along with mobile Internet, digital technology and smart phones. The communication methods brought by the new media are characterized by richness, diversity, convenience, and containing large amount of information, which also brings changes to the traditional communication mode.

A. The Communication Has Broken through Space Constraints

The interpersonal communication ways brought by the new media have broken through the limitations of space. In the traditional communication mode in the past, college counselors and students generally communicate with each other by writing letters, talking face-to-face, etc. The traditional mode of communication has certain spatial limitations. The communication between the counselor and the student is generally carried out in the office, classroom, consulting room or on the scene of the evening party, the game, etc., along with specific space attributes, subject to the venue constraints. There are also time limits. New media enables counselors and students to communicate instantly via WeChat, Weibo, or various apps, regardless of the location.

B. Superposition of Information Transmission Methods

In the new media environment, people do not communicate through a single information transmission method, that is, people do not use only words to communicate. In the process of expressing emotions and transmitting information, people superimpose sound, text, images, colors and other factors, and use expression packs, videos, animations, and even games in communication, making communication more interesting, diverse, and easy to be accepted.

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C. Expansion of Scope of Communication

The Internet has expanded people's communication networks. Different from the traditional narrow communication network which is mainly constituted by relatives and friends, in the new media environment, people are no longer limited to the communication with acquaintances or people who are in the same time and space with them, they can communicate with others regardless the space and time. People can communicate with others they have never seen before through online media, and the communication can be more extensive.

III. THE RISE OF NEW MEDIA HAS CAUSED CHANGES IN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COLLEGE COUNSELORS AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

“As of December 2017, the number of mobile Internet users in China reached 753 million, and the proportion of mobile Internet users to Internet users has increased from 95.1% in 2016 to 97.5%.”¹ These data show that mobile Internet has become the main field of instant messaging and communication for college students. The rise of new media has brought about new changes in the communication between counselors and students.

A. Positive Changes

1) *It is more convenient to communicate:* The dissemination of information through new media is easy, timely, and efficient, breaking the inherent patterns of traditional media. College counselors can take advantage of these characteristics of new media to enhance the communication with college students and improve the effectiveness of communication. People are always interested in what has happened recently, and are interested in the things happening around them. College counselors should make good use of this, use the new media to spread positive and healthy ideological information to college students and help them establish correct values.

2) *More equal status:* As an important force in the ideological and political education in colleges and universities, college counselors must adhere to the correct position and insist on the utterance. But the traditional way of ideological education is too rigid and simple. Using the mode of indoctrination usually gets half the results with double the effort. Moreover, under the influence of traditional culture, there are differences in the status of teachers and students. The differences are quite subtle. Many university counselors often have a "parental" mentality when communicating with students. This hidden sense of status difference can arouse students' rebellious feelings and make the communication not smooth. When communicating through the new media, this difference in status can be eliminated through a variety of chat software and online social communities, so that the status of

university counselors and students can become equal. This makes it easier for students to consult counselors, and they will no longer be embarrassed and anxious.

3) *The interaction is more in-depth:* In the information exchange of the new media communication system, the interaction between college counselors and students is diverse. Counselors and students not only interact with each other on publicly published news, announcements, events, but also interact in their circles of friends, commenting on more private information, such as the perception of certain events, the sharing of delicious foods or fun things. The interactive dimension is diverse and involves a wealth of content. This enables counselors and students to build a sense of identity and trust by making them understand the affairs and opinions of each other. The more college counselors know about students, the more hierarchical and targeted the information dissemination and communication will be, and the better the communication effect will be. This is conducive to the counselors to deepen the understanding of the students, is conducive to clarifying the problems of students, so that counselors can make corresponding solutions and the ideological and political education can be better carried out.

B. Negative Changes

1) *The sense of reality gradually disappears:* The vast amount of different information brought by the new media makes it easy for students to feel at a loss. Limited by the lack of understanding of the media, college students are often too convinced of the information and rumors on the Internet, feeling indistinct about the boundary between reality and the virtual world, trapped in the so-called "media reality" understanding, and their understanding of the real world is biased.

In addition, in the network, people appear as "invisible persons", and they feel less awkward when communicating with strangers. College students often feel free and happy when they are in the "person-machine-person" communication mode. They love to communicate with people through the virtual network, which reduces their interaction with others in real life. In the long run, they will feel it difficult to get along with people in reality. The popularity of "homeboy and homegirl" among students will result in students' reducing interaction with the outside world, causing students to generate negative emotions such as depression, and they will spend more time on the Internet. They will become more and more indifferent for the people in real life, and this will even cause students to form "network psychological barriers", which will lead to greater psychological stress and physical and mental health problems.

2) *Values are more diverse:* In the Internetage, "everyone has a microphone". The discourse power of traditional media is declining. The rapid development of the Internet and the overly free dissemination of information have promoted the formation of a complex and diverse information environment. Various opinions with different values are flooding the Internet. This will inevitably have an impact on college

¹ In March 2018, China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) released the 41st "Statistical Report on China's Internet Development Status" in Beijing.

students, making their values being challenged. These bad information, non-mainstream voices are mixed with the correct information published by the educators, which will make the college students confused, and even make the students resist the correct information and opinions of the mainstream. This is not conducive to the communication between the counselors and the students, and also adds difficulty to the counselors' work.

IV. IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COLLEGE COUNSELORS AND STUDENTS

Faced with the changes brought about by new media, college counselors must keep up with the times and think about ways to improve the effectiveness of communication with students.

A. *Improve the Effectiveness of Communication Information*

Whether the effective communication can be established depends on the effectiveness of the information delivered in the communication. The effectiveness of the information depends on two important factors:

1) *The accuracy of information transmission:* By acquiring information, people can increase certainty about some things and reduce errors. The more precise and transparent the information is, the more the recipients can understand about the information. College counselors should follow this principle when transmitting information to students, making the information simple and clear, and have no ambiguity.

2) *Timely feedback:* Effective communication is a dynamic two-way behavior. For the two parties of the communication, one is to send the information and the other gives feedback. The effectiveness of communication is based on the cycles of the complete understanding of the information by the subject and object. The new media as a carrier, unlike traditional media, the interaction through it is too convenient, making feedback too easy. However, the feedback is too complex and trivial. This makes it difficult for counselors to sort out the useful feedback. College counselors must be able to master the valuable information from students' various feedback, grasp the core content, and understand the trend.

B. *Improve the Effectiveness of Communication Channels*

1) *Actively build communication platforms:* The rapid development of the Internet and the popularity of smart phones have brought new requirements to college counselors. Faced with the obstreperous network, college counselors who are instructors and guides should not lose their voice on the new media platforms. In order to communicate with students in a timely, convenient and effective manner, and to master the network resources for communication, counselors should make full use of new media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, forums, etc., build communication platforms, enrich communication methods, and pay attention to the interaction

with students. In this process, attention needs to be paid to two points:

The first is to get close to the life of students. When using new media to communicate with students, college counselors should forwardly get close to students' actual life, master students' communication habits, make good use of the new media platforms, and change the past situation that it was difficult for university counselors to fully communicate with every student. Counselors can use a variety of social media to integrate into the students and understand their thoughts. Counselors can use the network language that is easy for students to accept and approachable expression to convey information and increase interaction, thus creating a new communication space for teachers and students.

The second is to make the communication interesting and attract students' attention. When counselors guide students by exerting subtle influences on them, they need to increase the attractiveness of the information they transmit, and abandon the past rigid way, making students easily accept and love to accept.

2) *Make good use of opinion leaders among students:* Opinion leaders play an important role in disseminating information. They are good at interpreting various phenomena in society, have their own opinions, and generally have the ability to influence others. One-way infusion communication will only be rejected and contradicted by students. Only the persons who can make well-founded interpretations of the information on the basis of truly understanding the actual situation can be welcomed by the students and become opinion leaders. This is a shortcut that counselors can consider in order to make effective communication. But this requires the full mastery of the students' characteristics and full familiarity with the new media.

C. *Improve the Effectiveness of Communication Skills*

1) *Strengthening media literacy education:* At present, although the new media is developing rapidly, the media literacy education in many universities is still insufficient. For students, when facing the new media in which there is a huge amount of information, if they just accept all, it will be difficult for them to screen and judge various information. In order to improve students' ability to judge and discern, improve the quality of information expression and communication, and enhance students' awareness of the rational use of the Internet, it is relatively simple and efficient to set up relevant courses on media literacy.

At the same time, counselors also need to improve their own media literacy. In order to better guide college students to conduct self-improvement and self-development, counselors must pay attention to the ongoing changes in the carrier. Strengthening the cognition, use and master of new media is very necessary for educators. This can be achieved through special training and learning.

2) *Improve the ability to guide public opinion:* In the process of using new media to improve the effectiveness of communication, the guidance of public opinion is a very

important part, and it is a test for the personal abilities of college counselors. This requires college counselors to accurately master the scale of public opinion guidance, to find common ground in thinking and understanding, and to keep sensitive, predictive and forward-looking. Counselors must be able to identify possible problems from a large amount of scattered information, intervene early, resolve students' worries, and guide students by exerting subtle influences on them.

3) *Strengthen team work capability*: In daily work, in the face of a large number of students, it is not advisable for the counselors to carry out the work alone. Centering on college counselors, a team that integrates school leaders, professional teachers, and student cadres and can achieve effective communication should be established, and a multilateral, multilevel communication matrix should be built in order to better gather positive energy and create a good communication atmosphere.

V. CONCLUSION

The development of new media is unstoppable, and this new form of communication will change the traditional mode of communication. College counselors must follow the trend of the times, update their knowledge, meet the actual needs of students, and constantly improve their professional ability and ability to use new media to improve the effectiveness of communication.

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