

Research in the Implication of Youth's Intrinsic Characteristics on Civic Education of Colleges and Universities

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Abstract

The intrinsic characteristics of the youth are manifested in the unity of these three aspects: the naturalness of “dramatical change”, the practicality of “progressive improvement” and the sociality of “increasing maturity”. Given these particular characteristics, colleges and universities, in the process of civic education, are demanded to establish “human-oriented” concepts of education, namely, respect college students and properly cope with natural essences of their dramatically change, and to develop their awareness of independence, their spirit of exploration and their ability of practice, promoting their gradual improvements in practice. Moreover, it is required to help to identify undergraduates’ roles and reasonable goals for their life, comprehend skills in production and living, grasp social norms, leading them, with increasing social maturity, to be social members qualified for social requirements in a smooth way.

Key words: Youth; Intrinsic characteristic; Civic education of colleges and universities

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INTRODUCTION

College students, the core group among the youth, are one of the most important cultivated objects of civic education. So colleges and universities must take into

consideration the youth intrinsic characteristics when reaching the task of civic education, which fulfills the practical requirements of conducting civic education effectively and the demands of students’ being promoted socialized and developing in all aspects.

1. UNIQUE INTRINSIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE YOUTH

Youth refers to a group of people of an age as well as a contemporary stage in life. Its relation with human nature is special, distinguished from but also closely related to each other. On one hand, as human beings of an age, the youth manifests natural attribute, social attribute and practical attribute. But these attributes are not unique to them. On the other hand, youth indicates a specified stage of life at which the particular features entailed in the youth differentiate themselves from people of another age. Besides, this feature of particularity has the overall manifestation of dramatical change, thus promoting their spirit of exploration and gradual improvements.

1.1 The Naturalness of Dramatic Change

Human natural feature refers to the synthesis of all the attributes of human as a living natural life dominated by the law of nature, which mainly involves such attributes as physiological needs, psychological needs and restraints in the law of natural genetics and the law of life. For this aspect, compared to the ordinaries, the youth’s “dramatical change” happens in a natural way, often in the form of physiological mutation and psychological mutation.

1.1.1 Physiological Mutation of the Youth

The youth experience increasingly dramatic changes in all aspects including the physical posture, body function, neurological or endocrine system. With the strengthening of bone and muscle, the increase in height and weight, both sides of the sexes have also remarkably recognized the differences in secondary sexual characteristics.

Moreover, these changes can be found as follows: The sexual organs begin to turn mature; body functions, tissues and organs are rapidly maturing; the athletic ability reaches to its point of peak and the youth presents energetic and vibrant external performance.

1.1.2 Psychological Mutation of the Youth

Following the tremendous physiological changes comes psychological mutation featuring strong self-awareness and pursuit for independence. This is because the youth's well-developed brain draws them to the highest point of intellectual level; specifically, they have acquired quick minds and significantly improved abilities of memorizing, imagining and comprehending. At the same time, their self-awareness begins to awake, coupled with gradual awareness of sex and publicized temperament. The mixture of their consciousness and emotion is in a "booming period". Noticeably, all these described changes the youth recognizes at this stage are beyond teenagers, adults and the old in aspects of speed and quality. That is also why youth natural changes are viewed unique.

2. THE PRACTICALITY OF PROGRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT

The feature of practicality is unique to human beings. It is a physical activity with great initiatives based on human consciousness. In terms of practicality, the youth possesses the features of progressive exploring and gradually improving relative to the ordinaries, which features are embodied in the extensibility of the practical range, the self-consciousness of practical awareness and the perfection of practical ability.

1.2.1 Extensibility of Practical Range

After human steps into the stage of youth, dramatic change in their naturalness causes the rapid widening of the practical activities. The aging youth gradually becomes physiologically mature, making it possible to exercise activities which were subjected to physical functional limitations as teenagers and to extend the scope of the production practice. Additionally, owing to the gradual psychological maturity, the youth's self-consciousness and awareness of independence are greatly fostered, so they are eager to get rid of the bondage of family and school to become an independent individual. This kind of psychological need makes their practice more socialized rather than the sole family and school, beginning to explore their own independent practical world.

1.2.2 Self-Consciousness of Practical Awareness

Along with the expanding practical scope, the youth's practical awareness shifts into being self-conscious from being spontaneous. Meanwhile, with more experiences of independent practical activities instead of being led by family or school members as teenagers, the youth's practical activities are of greater spontaneity. And also the

rapidly extended depth and breath of scope of practical activities enable them to acquire developed abilities of abstract thinking and inductive thinking, which can help quickly grasp the nature of things through analysis of the phenomenon.

1.2.3 Perfection of Practical Ability

Practical ability of the youth can be improved significantly by summing up the past experiences. In other words, they begin to actively comprehend and transform the world instead of passive adaption to the world as teenagers. At the same time, they are transforming their own cognitive ability and practical ability. Compared to adults, however, the youth presents immature and not enough seasoned because of limited cognition and experience together with the dynamic, sudden and random variability entailed in their practical ability. For this reason, the practical results are instable though notably improved.

1.3 The Increasingly Mature Sociality

Sociality refers to the sum of all social relationships among humans as social existences. Relative to the ordinaries, the sociality of the youth shows increasing maturity demonstrated as follows,

1.3.1 Increasing Diversification of Social Roles

The ongoing social practices progressively integrate social factors into the naturalness of the youth and make them the dominant force to control youth behavior in the place of the physiological law. Thus, during the process of constant learning and practice, young people have developed more complicated social roles, combined with extensive efforts to positively explore their life, tackle the changes in themselves in the complicated social environment and reinforce their own roles as adults.

1.3.2 Increasing Social Needs

Compared with the teenagers' simple physiological needs in aspects of material, existence, safety and pleasure, social needs of the youth have been largely cultivated by the increasing changes in their social activity, social relationship and social roles. Those renewed needs involve political needs, development for cultural needs, social communication and contradiction remission. Though they are not as stable and reasonable as those of adults, they serve as an inner agent to drive the youth socialized and to help create more colorful life with sheer passions for the social practice.

1.3.3 Progressive Elevation of Social Status

The youth presents the feature of "heterochrony" in the course of their development; namely, their consciousness is not consistent with their behaviors in terms of the happening time. On one hand, the youth in developing self-awareness, intelligence and social cognition is eager for social life and freedom of being dependent teenagers. On the other hand, it would take a long time for them to be a qualified social member. Thus, here comes out the conflict between their prematurity in physiology

and psychology and their independent socialization. But this conflict would be mildened when they take more obligations when changing into the dominant, subjective and authorized roles from the subordinate, objective and marginalized ones as teenagers.

1.3.4 Progressive Enhance in the Ability to Tackle Social Relations

When entering the stage of youth, young people begin to recognize the changes in their social relations, from simpleness to sophistication, instability to stability; for instance, their simple social roles as kids, students and classmates are transferred into complicated ones as employees and colleagues. This can be explained by the accumulation of their experiences in dealing with sophisticated social relations. Under the guidance of the recognition of social roles and behavior codes, they gradually grasp the key point about how to get along well with others and acquire the developed abilities for socializing.

To sum up, the intrinsic characteristic of the youth is an inseparable unity of those three aspects discussed above. Different ways of combining them would generate changes and developments in the youth. Therefore, it is imperative for colleges and universities to choose the best way of combination on the basis of the youth's intrinsic characteristics, thus making it more effective to carry out civic education.

2. THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF YOUTH'S INTRINSIC CHARACTERISTICS ON CIVIC EDUCATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The unique nature of youth determines their's own characteristics intrinsically. Among the youth, college students are the core group changing dramatically. Marxist dialectical materialism emphasizes the specified way for the specified problem. Therefore, it is a must to take into consideration the particularity of the development of things, that is, the youth intrinsic characteristics, when civic education for college students is carried out.

2.1 Respecting and Actively Responding to the Naturally Dramatic Change of College Students

Only through the basis of students' physiological and psychological changes and their needs can we promote civic education and enhance its effectiveness. Respecting and actively responding to the rapid natural change of college students demand a "people-oriented" attitude be established in the practice of civic education.

At the stage when students undergo natural change, their physiological and psychological needs will also change correspondently. Whether the needs of college students are fulfilled is a criteria to evaluate civic

education of colleges and universities. So only when those needs are met, can college students be developed in all aspects and can they recognize and accept the activities in civic education. For this reason, we must adhere to the "people-oriented" scientific principle, respecting, understanding and caring college students. To be specific, respect for others is the basic need of human and so is true of respecting college students as the premise of civil education of universities. Both the educator and the educated should always respect mutually. Then, understanding college students is of great significance. Colleges must pay attention to humanistic care for college students with needed mutual understanding. Mutual Understanding requires putting oneself in the others' shoes, so it can stimulate emotional exchange of both sides through carefully listening to each other, thus making them spiritually close to enhanced mutual trust. Next, taking care of the college students is an important part of the civic education for universities to overcome the difficulties. Educators should be concerned about the ideological changes and mood swings of students, adjust their methods accordingly and communicate with the educated in various fields, multi-level, multi-angle to comprehensively understand them. And then being tolerant to college students means allowing their thoughts to repeat in a certain period of time. Some scholars likened the youth to "a stormy period", "a dangerous period", or "a tense period" due to the dramatical physical and psychological change of college students. It is no doubt that there will be many contradictions at this stage, resulting in the repeated thought, the emotional instability and the frequent resistance emotion, so it is necessary to carefully observe and patiently instruct students with the permission of the contradictions between students' physiological maturity and social psychological maturity.

2.2 Promoting and Improving Students' Practical Ability

Promoting and improving college students' practical ability gives full play to the function of cultivation and development in civic education. During the educational process, more attention should be paid to strengthening college students' awareness of practice, cultivating their spirit of exploration, developing their practical ability and improving their subjective initiative.

Firstly, enhance the practical self-consciousness. Subjective initiative is about their understanding of their own abilities and status, as well as acknowledgment of the value of social practice. In the civic education of universities, much importance should be attached to strengthening the practice of independent consciousness of college students. The development of students' practical ability can help improve the subjective initiative of students. Students should be guided to identify their role as subject status and to recognize their own rights and responsibility. And coupled with their own significance to

the society and value object, they also should establish a comprehensive understanding of their own missions and obligations as social members. Naturally, college students are contributed to their scientific judgment and objective choice of correct value. Secondly, cultivate the spirit of exploration. Subject spirit, a person's psychological tendency of initiatively transforming the nature and the society, consists of self-esteem, self-empowerment, the spirit of hard working, optimism and enterprising, exploring, continuously pioneering and innovating, solidarity and team working as well as the spirit of revitalizing our country as national tasks. Subject spirit is therefore viewed as the intrinsic agent for human beings to take initiatives. Lastly, develop the practical abilities. The practical ability refers to the intrinsic energy entailed in human beings to perceive and transform the world. And to develop the youth practical ability is to develop their capability of learning, selecting, regulating, adapting and innovating. This development offers a chance to improve the youth practical attribute. Therefore, in the process of civil education for college students, their practical consciousness determines the overall situation as the role of guidance; the students' spirit of exploration is the internal driving force to facilitate the youth' practical perfection, and the practical ability provides a realistic possibility for the ultimate perfection of their practical attribute.

2.3 Guiding and Promoting the Socialized Maturity of College Students

Socialization, the intrinsic nature of the youth, determines young people's ultimate orientation of development. Grasping their orientation of development means mastering their future, namely, the future of our country in that youth is the hope of our country. Consequently, with "improving and promoting the maturity of their socializing" as the core task, colleges and universities must guide the college students into the mature socializing so as to develop their social properties compliant with national requirements. This is also an important embodiment for colleges and universities to fulfill their functions of guiding and guaranteeing.

Youth is a time full of contradictions in self-development. In the process of socialization of college students, there will appear an opposition among their consciousness, ways of selection, sense of independence and their immaturity, plasticity, restriction as objects; accordingly students would inevitably encounter contradictions and conflicts in the process of socialization.

So it is vital to put the civic education in its role of guidance helping students overcome difficulties in the transition period and recognize their own socialization smoothly. First of all, civic education of colleges and universities should utilize the power of family, school, peer group, mass media as well as social practices and other means to focus on strengthening college students' ability of learning and perceiving their own social roles, training their ability to identify their roles and adapt the changes, developing scientific concept of demand, and establishing initiatively a rational life goal and an organic unity of individual needs and social needs. Next, if we can comprehensively analyze the gradual characteristic college students develop, guide them to understand correctly individual social status, encourage them to grasp living skills to meet the challenge for marching into the society, they would create a greater social value and make preparations for realizing their social status. Thirdly, strengthen the education of social norm. Social norm is a collective term of life, ethics, laws and regulations and other social rules and it is also the universalized behavior code to keep the society in order. Moreover, universities should offer students a sound education system used to learn moral and legal norms and to establish a better sense in these two aspects. Meanwhile, they can develop a self-conscious habit of obeying social norms and self-controlled behavior with a better communication with others. In this way, additionally, college students can handle a variety of complex social relations well, promoting their way of being socially mature.

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