

An Interpretation of the Ideological and Political Construction of College Courses From the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics*

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With the continuous strengthening of ideological and political construction of college courses at present, the humanistic function of college course is gradually becoming clear. To achieve the goal of “establishing morality and cultivating talents”, how to make use of the humanistic function of college courses has become an urgent problem to be solved in the construction of college courses. Reception aesthetics takes readers as the center and focuses on the effect of works in readers’ minds. From the perspective of reception aesthetics, this essay tries to interpret the ideological and political construction of a college course as a work, with teachers as authors and students as readers. Besides, taking College English Course as an example, it puts forward the basic strategy of implementing the ideological and political construction of college courses with proper teaching methods.

Keywords: reception aesthetics, ideological and political construction of college courses, teachers, students, teaching method

General Introduction of the Ideological and Political Construction of College Courses in China

The importance of ideological and political education in Chinese university education is closely related to the purpose of running a university and the significance of its existence. Higher education institutions are “The most important part of the country”, and the cultivation of talents in higher education institutions is not only related to the passing on of knowledge and skills. The first chapter of the university says: “The way of the university, in the clear moral, in the people-friendly, in the best”. Thus, it is the fundamental aim of university education to cultivate talents with noble sentiments and to put the interests of the nation first.

The research on “Curriculum ideology and politics” in colleges and universities in our country started from the National Conference on ideological rectification in December 2016. At present, all domestic scholars agree that the orientation of ideological and political course is a hidden course embedded in the teaching process of all professional courses and general courses. The integration of “Ideological and political course” and “Curriculum ideological and political course” has also been widely recognized.

This paper will interpret the construction of ideological and political course from the perspective of “Reception aesthetics”. Based on the practice and reflection of the teaching front line, aiming at the difficult

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details in the ideological and political construction in the classroom, this paper focuses on the discussion of how to adopt the perspective of “Reception aesthetics” in the actual classroom practice and use the corresponding teaching methods to solve specific problems.

Relative Principles of Reception Aesthetics

The theory of “Reception aesthetics” was proposed by German philosopher Hans Robert Jausz and is based on Hans-georg Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics. Hans-georg Gadamer attaches great importance to the historicity of his works. He believes that his works are not eternal and unchanging objects placed opposite the subject of cognition, but are in fact the process of revealing meaning in an open-ended future-oriented understanding, which belongs to effective history. “A work is fundamentally unfinished because it requires an interpreter” (Jausz, 1987, p. 143), and the reader’s understanding is crucial to its existence.

Inspired by Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jausz believes that the reader’s reading is the ultimate and most important part of a work’s existence, and that the meaning of a work can only be revealed through the reader’s reading. Different readers have different understandings of the same work. The process of interaction between the reader and the work is the process of the work being accepted. In Jausz’s reception aesthetics, “Horizon of expectation” is the core concept, which refers to the reader’s intentional expectation of the work before reading, which has a relatively certain range; readers often use it as a frame of reference to understand and evaluate works. The study of the dominant common horizon of expectation in a certain historical period, that is, the horizon of public expectation, is the main task of reception aesthetics. The research on public horizon mainly starts from two aspects of “Vertical reception” and “Horizontal reception”. The so-called “Vertical acceptance” refers to the acceptance of the same work by readers of different times. “Horizontal acceptance” refers to the acceptance of the same works by readers of the same age. In order to evaluate a work, both vertical acceptance and horizontal acceptance must be considered (Jausz, 1987).

Appreciation of the Ideological and Political Construction of the Curriculum From the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics

If the ideological and political course is regarded as a literary work, the teacher is the author of the work and the students are the readers. The process of teacher’s preparation and teaching is the process of author’s writing, and the process of students’ listening is the process of readers’ reading and accepting the works. Only paying attention to the teacher (the author) to the ideological and political course (works) the preaching, but not considering the student (the reader) to the ideological and political course absorption degree (the reading acceptance condition), fundamentally, it does not finish this work (ideological and political course construction). Because the ideological and political course (work) is not invariable, the student (reader) has the difference to its understanding and the judgment. Only by seriously considering the process of students’ acceptance, paying attention to the problems in the process of acceptance, and dealing with them can we successfully complete the ideological and political course construction.

Students have formed the traditional ideological and political curriculum of the past impression, that is, the corresponding “Horizon of expectations”. The majority of people in today’s society view the ideological and political curriculum, that is, “Public horizon of expectations”. The absorption of ideological and political courses in different periods is “Vertical acceptance”, and the absorption of ideological and political courses in the same

period is “Horizontal acceptance”. The difficult problem of ideological and political course is how to make students really accept the content of ideological and political course, that is, how to make the “Reader” accept the “Works” from the heart.

From the perspective of “Reception aesthetics”, the ideological and political construction of curriculum is to design and create a work of art. Putting the educational and entertaining functions of the curriculum (works of art—RRB) into the students’ listening (equivalent to readers’ reading), we can see: How to make students naturally accept the teacher’s ideological and political education in the learning process is the course of ideological and political construction to face the key problem, which is also a difficult problem. From the perspective of reception aesthetics, how much vitality, effect, and success of the course ideological and political work depends on how much ideological and political content the students (readers) really listen to, accept, and absorb. In the students’ mind, the traditional ideological and political education is mostly dull and boring, which forms the readers’ original “Horizon of expectation”. In order to successfully construct the ideological and political course and solve the ideological and political problems, it is necessary to improve the students’ “Horizon of expectation”, open up the “Aesthetic distance”, and really appreciate (read) the ideological education (works), the ideological and political elements to absorb (accept) into the heart that it is right and good, in the future, in accordance with the direction it points to go.

Implementation Strategy

The ideological and political construction of the curriculum needs not only theoretical guidance, but also certain implementation strategies. Ideological and political construction is very clear, but it is not achieved overnight; during the period there will be a variety of problems. It is not a simple operation to achieve the perfect integration of “Curriculum” and “Ideology and politics” in teaching practice. First of all, the objects of education in colleges and universities are all grown-up students, with basic cultural knowledge, in the formation of three views, personality publicity, for a variety of ideas, views of the instinctive spirit of skepticism and criticism; it is difficult to rely on the classroom to make it change with a few straightforward words. Secondly, the ubiquitous modern network media also make the fast-food culture of entertainment circle widely spread in the university campus, for students to form a serious and noble state of mind which will also have a certain negative impact. These are the real stumbling blocks of ideological and political construction.

From the perspective of reception aesthetics, the key to the ideological and political construction of the curriculum is to understand the students’ original “Horizon of expectation” and the differences of “Horizontal acceptance” among different individuals, and to make use of appropriate and diverse teaching methods, from three aspects of teaching content, teaching process, and effect evaluation; it creates conditions for students to “Accept” (absorb) “Works” (ideological and political course), and finally opens up “Aesthetic distance”.

Expanding Teaching Materials at the Stage of Preparing

In today’s society, the network resources are extremely rich. Teachers in the stage of lesson preparation, according to the content of the textbook, text theme, add a variety of materials. From the perspective of reception aesthetics, teachers can improve students’ “Horizon of expectation” as a guiding principle, and choose ideological and political material that follows the theme of the times, transmits positive energy, fits the campus life, and is easy to resonate with from the study of various big network media. Multiple teachers using the same set of teaching materials can set up task groups to fully discuss the selection and use of materials, and on how to properly

integrate the ideological and political part into the courseware and teaching plan (to avoid singing high-key, improve the “Horizon of expectation” of students, open up the “Aesthetic distance”) to launch a brainstorming analysis and discussion, to expand ideas, to understand the “Horizon of expectation” of students in the minds of many teachers, to learn from each other, and to improve the level of ideological and political construction.

Adopting a Variety of Teaching Methods at the Stage of Teaching

In the specific teaching process, the teacher can focus on the ideological and political construction in each unit teaching plan introduction stage or text explanation stage, in the topic introduction or text explanation process, appropriate insertion of ideological and political content; it not only attracts the students’ interest in the unit topic, but also educates the students in the process of democratic discussion.

Taking Unit 2 of College English textbook *New Horizons College English Reading and Writing Course Book II* as an example, this paper introduces the train of thought of ideological and political construction of the course in detail, in the introduction part of the class based on “Communicative teaching method” design to discuss the following questions: First, who is your favorite sports star? Why do you like him/her? On the surface, this part of the ideological and political development is not difficult, because the students will quickly name their favorite sports stars, such as Tian Liang, Sun Yingsha, et al., and much of their admiration for sports stars comes from the athletic exploits of these athletes. The pictures of the Chinese champions’ tear in their eyes when the national anthem was played at the Olympic Games were inserted into the courseware, which naturally aroused the students’ patriotic mentality of seeing the good and thinking of imitating.

But the potential difficulty in this part of the ideological and political development is that many students who are not interested in sports like these sports stars because they watch their entertainment activities, for example, many students like Tian Liang because they saw *Where Are We Going, Dad?* and think that being a star can make a lot of money and lead a colorful life. Many students have this “Horizon of expectation”, if allowed to develop, students may slip into the money worship and entertainment first quagmire. In view of this situation, the teacher can use “Picture teaching method”, borrow the rich resources on the internet, and introduce the athlete’s daily training intensity and the physical damage seriously; details of the entertainment show are explored with the help of a “Guided learning approach”, in which the children are asked to choose the most qualified carer from their five dads, who give Tian Liang the highest number of votes for the day, instead of voting for the other four. Leading students to explore the deeper causes of their own situations and situations, Tian Liang’s strong physique and steadfast attitude of valor and hard work as a long-time athlete gave them the greatest sense of security. With authentic pictures and videos and earnest classroom discussions, students are led to realize that it is never money that can earn them respect, but rather a great personality. In view of the students’ specific psychological state, a variety of teaching methods are integrated to promote the students’ (readers’) “Horizon of expectation”, which will be conducive to the students’ “Acceptance” of ideological and political content (works).

Analyzing Data at the Stage of Evaluating

In the semester after the completion of teaching activities, teachers can see the students from the attendance, homework, tests in the course of ideological and political construction in the concrete effect on students. The change of students’ attendance rate, the change of homework times, and the change of scores in the test questions related to ideological and political education can reflect the effect of ideological and political education in a quantitative way.

Conclusion

The ideological and political construction of university curriculum has profound necessity and practical significance. First of all, teachers in the implementation process of their own professional quality of teachers and the construction of teacher ethics will be greatly improved, so that the “Person” in the “Moral tree” from “Students” to “Teachers and students”; it expands the intention and denotation of “Setting up morality and cultivating people” in university education. Secondly, the ideological and political education is concerned about the students’ spiritual world; the ideological and political construction of the curriculum is to “People-oriented” and pays attention to the dual development of individual skills and soul, which is of great significance to the national personnel training. From the perspective of “Reception aesthetics”, it can be a way to try.

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