Original Paper

Educating Students in Better Campus Environment in the Vision of Human - Environment System

Yi Pan[1*] & Xu Li[2]

[1] Secretarial Office, Chongqing Students' Federation, Chongqing, China

[2] School of Public Policy and Administration, Chongqing University, Chongqing, China

[*] Yi Pan, Secretarial Office, Chongqing Students' Federation, Chongqing, China

Abstract

College is a major venue to shape high-calibre talents, and campus environment plays a critical part in this regard. The author, in the perspective of Human - Environment System, gauges the connotation of campus environment and how it affects the shaping of college students, and studies how to enhance campus culture with scientific outlook to send high-calibre graduates to the country.

Keywords

campus environment, Human - Environment System, educational function

1. Introduction

Human and environment create each other. For talents, a premium part of the social population, their growth links more closely with environment. The growth of talents includes the shaping and development of their quality. The quality of talents is categorized into innate genetic quality and acquired quality, both of which are inseparable from the environment either in formation or development. Environment, for growing talents, is a provider of material nurture and spiritual wealth, space to grow, and target to practise. School is a major venue to students' overall strength. Johann Amos Comennius, the founder of the modern teaching theory system, said in his masterpiece Magna Didactica (The Great Teaching Theory), "The school itself should be a pleasant place: clean and bright classroom, decorated with maps, charts and pictures of great persons, plus open space for games and walks, and gardens for a tour, which makes students feel happy when they come to school." School environment, therefore, plays an important part in shaping talents. Compared with other kinds of schoolyard environment, campus environment is even more central to shaping talents, whose importance can be analyzed from three aspects: how it is possible, why it is necessary, and why it is a

must. First, college students show agile thinking, strong desire to pursue knowledge, wide-ranging interests, and good shapeability, sensitive to environment. Compared with other kinds of schoolyard environment, campus environment has better supporting facilities, larger space, better but necessary learning and living conditions, otherwise making college students more dependent on campus environment. Normally, larger supporting space has more positive impact on college students. Second, college life usually means the last stage of education for academic credentials before entering society, a critical stage toward individual socialization, and the assembly before rolling out from production line. Better campus environment, therefore, is in a position to create favourable conditions for the said stage. Third, college students, a valuable source of talents, symbolize the hope of our nation, and the future of our country(People's Daily,2004). College is a major cradle to shape high-calibre talents, whose environment has great impact on the growth of college students, be it plus or minus.

2. Connotation of Campus Environment

To perceive campus environment, it is advised to understand the definition of schoolyard and environment beforehand. In Modern Chinese Dictionary, schoolyard generally refers to the ground within a school(Chinese Academy of Social Sciences,2005), while environment refers to: surrounding places;surrounding situation and condition. Campus environment, therefore, refers to any place, situation and condition on the campus, which can be perceived better from the three aspects below. First, the scope of campus environment refers within institutions of higher learning. Second, campus environment includes both material and spiritual elements, for instance, place, situation, and condition. Third, any environment has a centre, namely, who is circled. College students are central to campus environment. Better campus environment refers to the utilization, rebuilding and creation of place, situation and condition within the campus, centering on the growth and development of college students.

To perceive campus environment accurately, it is advised to separate it from school environment. School environment, different from family, community, employer, etc, refers to school as one of the external social environment affecting the growth of talents. Campus environment mainly refers to external environment to assist educational activities in school, playing an indirect role in shaping college students. Rather than explicit course, campus environment constitutes the hidden course of college education, aiming to help college students go healthy and positive in personality and psychology, enhance capabilities in interpersonal communication and social practice, and uphold virtues.

School environment can be categorized from different angles. In nature, school environment includes material environment (natural environment, cultural landscape, architecture, sculpture, etc) and spiritual environment (culture, system, interpersonal relations, etc). In the role of education, school environment can be divided into direct educational environment and indirect educational environment. Direct educational environment, manifested in sculpture, warning signs, celebrity maxims, system and

2

norms, etc, expresses to college students in a direct manner the hope and requirements to become talents, while indirect educational environment, manifested in architectural style and layout of natural landscape, imperceptibly cultivates the aesthetic taste of college students and enhance their personality and psychology. From the perspective of visibility and hearability, Yang Danni(2002) divides school environment into three types: tangible and unhearable school environment and its extension; hearable and intangible campus broadcast; and unhearable and intangible campus system and non-system culture. Its first type includes three aspects: design of campus building, color and overall layout; campus sculpture and greenery; paintings and famous sayings on campus wall.

3. Perceiving the Relationship between Campus Environment and the Growth of College Students in the Vision of Human - Environment System

Wang Tongxun (1985) pointed out, in his General Talents Theory, that human connects and interacts with things in a certain time and space, forming Human - Environment systems one after another. Therefore, studying the external elements affecting the growth of talents can be conducted in the vision of Human - Environment system which is divided by Wang into four sub-systems: Human/Times; Human/Land; Human/Object; Human/Human. Ye Zhonghai (1990) elaborated on this relationship in his Study of Common Talents, that in Human - Environment relations in general, on the one hand, talents, more obviously playing a dominant role, are given full play in objective environment which is otherwise the target for talents to understand, utilize, transform and maintain; on the other hand, from external objective environment, talents absorb material and energy, accept information, process them in a special way, change them into self-potential, release energy under special time/space conditions, and affects the objective environment outside. We may also in a dynamic manner perceive campus environment as such a 4-D system.

3.1 Human/Times

Campus environment is a reminder of time-honoured history and spirit of the times. College spirit, culture, architecture, layout and style are essence in the evolution of a college in a long term, instilling/absorbing elements of the times. First, it can guide/channel college students to revere their college, take initiative to accept education, and develop in an all-round way as scheduled. Second, it enhances college students' sense to take pride of the college and make the college proud of themselves, mobilizes college students' initiative, and take actions to gain credit for the college. Third, the history of a college sees the growth of students. An old building or a period tree usually brings many beautiful memories, in particular, the story of a noted alumnus/alumna in pursuit of knowledge on campus sets a powerful example.

3.2 Human/Land

Time-honoured colleges are normally located in environmentally beautiful places, to pursue harmony and unity of human and nature, human and society. The environment herein refers to natural environment and social environment. on the one hand, beautiful natural environment on campus is

3

conducive to shape students' values, aesthetic consciousness, sense of harmonious coexistence between human and nature, and love of nature they love to protect, which is the ecological education for college students. For instance, either Xiamen University facing blue sea, or Wuhan University sitting on the green Luojia Mountain boasts one of the most beautiful campus in China. For instance, in the design of natural landscape, plant is also en educator, including pure lotus, upright bamboo and pine, and resilient plum flower. In such environment, either roaming, morning reading, thinking, or observing, perceiving and feeling with the change of nature, it is wholesome to nourish and uplift character and spirit. On the other hand, campus environment, an integral part of social environment, must be in harmony and unity with other social environment, including the social theme of the era and local social environment. As the last stage of education for academic credentials, college must be compatible with the society, rather than becoming a monastery circled by high walls and separated from the society. In the meantime, college shall not be 100% the same with the society. College shall filter out negative elements in the society, purify campus environment, to maintain its sacredness and solemnity. Moreover, campus environment shall not only show the natural and social characteristics of the area, but also enhance the sense of identity by students coming from other areas. Considering students normally coming from different provinces across the country, we hold that campus environment shall demonstrate diversity, such as canteen menu, layout of dormitory, in order that students from different ethnic groups and regions can enhance their sense of identity to the college, and adapt themselves to a new living environment as early as possible.

3.3 Human/Object

Campus environment is the making of a major venue in shaping college students. Planning and design of campus, internal structure of teaching buildings, number and types of library collection, greenery and pool on campus, etc constitute the basic conditions. Without these material conditions, shaping college students should merely be making bricks without straw. The yardstick of whether material conditions are adequate, highly-qualified, rationally allocated is to see if they meet the needs of shaping college students into talents.

3.4 Human/Human

The human/human relations in campus environment include the interpersonal relations among students, among staff and students, among administrators, service providers, staff and students. Harmonious interpersonal relationship is conducive to college students forming healthy personality, psychological and moral qualities. Administrators safeguard, taking into account the legitimate interest of staff and students, create conditions for them to become talents, solve their difficulties in reality, enable them to be dedicated to teaching and learning wholeheartedly. Logistics providers open a window with heart for service receivers, namely students, teaching them how to respect labour and labourers. Staff shall be dedicated and committed to their profession, treat students with love, spread knowledge and dispel misgivings on the small podium, set a example of academic model, and educate students both in words and in deeds. Students learn how to communicate with schoolmates and staff, draw strong points from

4

others, enhance their own overall strength with the help and guidance of others, and form an atmosphere of mutual help and common progress.

4. Basic Path of Enhancing Campus Environment in the Vision of Human - Environment System

Seeing from the 4-D system of campus environment, we hold that campus environment plays an important role in shaping college students: First, providence of necessary material conditions for learning, practice and living for college students. Second, educating college students in the hidden curriculum by campus environment. The betterment of campus environment enables college students to become talents, in which we shall adhere to the following paths:

4.1 Putting People First

The 4-D relations of Human - Environment Relations centre around human, likewise, the betterment of campus environment shall also be centred on human, herein referring to college students whose physical and mental development is central to a better campus environment. To that end, in planning and designing campus, we need to consider if function areas are appropriate, if supporting facilities of canteen and playing ground are adequate, if the seating and illumination in classroom is conducive to human functions; in procuring collections and experimental equipment, it shall be taken into account if the number and types can meet the number of students in disciplinary and interdisciplinary development; it is essential to give regular instructions and training to faculty and staff, help them forge a sense of putting students first and take the shaping of students as the first and foremost thing in teaching and related work.

4.2 Inclusive Coordination

In general, the path of inclusive coordination means balancing the 4-D relations, namely, history and the times, natural environment and social environment, relationship among all supporting facilities, and interpersonal relationship. To maximize the function of education by campus environment which constitutes multi-dimensional relationship, it is essential to form synergy and coordinate the said relationships. Barrel Effect is telling that the capacity of a barrel is decided by the lowest wooden piece. Rather than barrel effect, the coordination in campus environment is appropriately more of fingers whose either long or short fingers can coordinate and complete multiple tasks. Take the coordination of history and the times as an example, due to larger enrollment scale, many colleges have undergone reconstruction and expansion. In terms of planning and design, it is essential to underline the integration of new buildings and old landscape, attaching importance not only to the protection and repair of historical buildings, but also to the unity of history and today in new buildings and landscape. This enables a college to become a vivid historical museum recording its own development and social progress.

4.3 Sustainable Development

In the betterment of campus environment, redundant construction shall be abandoned, considering the long-term and sustainable development. Only by adhering to the path of sustainable development can

5

we take a lead in shaping talents in line with social development and characteristics of students, and give full play to all elements in campus environment in a long term, save money, use more human resources and material in shaping college students.

4.4 Underlining Highlights

It is neither advised to adopt one mode for all the betterment of campus environment, nor to 100% copy the practice of outstanding universities in this regard, due to the uniqueness of each college in history, interdisciplinary background, region, etc. Campus environment is otherwise the best carrier and reminder of each uniqueness. To integrate history, tradition, talents training concept, etc into a better campus environment, and forge a brand image, it is absolutely essential for each college to have a set if its own system of MI (Methodology Identification), BI (Behaviour Identification), and VI (Visual Identification). More importantly, due to its natural attributes, talents are never rolled out from production line, whose scarcity and creativity are hardly brought by a standardized production line.

References

Dani Yang. (2002). Implicit Curriculum and Quality Education (I.) - Tangible and Silent Campus Environment and Its Extension. *China Vocational and Technical Education*, *2002*(21), 52-53+55.

Modern Chinese Dictionary. (2005). The Commercial Press, Dictionary Editing Office, Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

The CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving the Ideological and Political Education of College Students. (2014). People's Daily, 2004-10-15. http://doi.org/10.28655/n.cnki.nrmrb.2004.005557

Wang Tongxun. (1985). *Talent Learning General Theory*. Tianjin People's Publishing House.

Ye Zhonghai. (1990). *General Talents*. Fudan University Press.