

A Probe into the Theoretical Issues of Constructing Synergy Strategies of Fostering Virtue through Education in Colleges and Universities in the New Era

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Keywords: Foster Virtue through Education; Synergy Strategies; Theoretical Basis; Practical Significance; Value Target

Abstract: In the new era, constructing synergy strategies of fostering virtue through education in colleges and universities contains rich connotations. To explore the theoretical issues of synergy strategies of fostering virtue through education in colleges and universities, it is necessary to proceed from the theoretical basis, practical significance and value target to form a complete, scientific and systematic understanding of the construction of synergy strategies, so as to lay the foundation and premise for the effective implementation.

As the fundamental task of education, fostering virtue through education is a pursuit of value and a systematic practice. Marx and Engels believe that social life, in essence, is practical, and anything mysterious that leads to mysticism in theory can be reasonably solved in human practice and its understanding[1]. Fostering virtue through education is not only practical, but also needs many forces work together to achieve maximum benefits. In consideration of the problems existing in education process, it is necessary for colleges and universities to explore how to construct the synergy strategies of fostering virtue through education and to grasp the inherent mechanism of its operation, so as to improve the effectiveness from the perspective of collaborative education.

1. The Theoretical Basis of the Construction of Synergy Strategies

Fransois Perroux, a French scholar, emphasizes in his book *the New Concept of Development* that “Conflict and cooperation are interwoven together to promote social development, while new integration and coordination have become the foundation of today. Cooperation, coordination, mutual assistance and harmony are increasingly regarded as an awakening of the soul of society.”[2] Cultivating morality in colleges and universities is not a one-sided process. It requires to integrate the various elements of the system to build a coordinated mechanism of co-operation and synergetics is the main theoretical support. Synergy, also known as collaboration, cooperation and harmony, refers to the coordination of multiple individuals or resources to achieve a goal in a coordinated manner. However, synergy is not the same as “cooperation” in ordinary sense. It is more inclined to coordinate the relationship between the elements within the system and between the system and the external environment in the process of dynamic interaction. It creates a harmonious and mutually supportive environment to make all kinds of elements form a joint force to achieve common goals. Synergetics has a long history, and was formally put forward by the famous German physicist, Hermann Haken, in 1976 to study the common characteristics and synergy mechanism of different things. Its main concepts and contents include order parameter, fast variable and slow variable, synergy effect, servo principle and self-organization principle. Nonlinear, complex and open systems are the focal points of synergetics research. Synergy theory lays emphasis on the study of the law of the transformation from disorder to order in a self-organizing way under the synergistic effect of external parameters and internal subsystems, and establishes a complete mathematical model and processing scheme. This theory believes the macro-structure of things is relatively stable, and many subsystems it contains act in accordance with certain ways and principles to move orderly. Although the competition among the elements within the system or among the systems is eternal, compared with competition, synergy is the focus that we should pay attention to. Competition is the basic premise and condition of synergy. On the one hand, competition creates conditions far away from the external environment for the development of the system and promotes the self-organizing evolution of the system. On the other hand, competition

can make the energy of the internal subsystems rise and fall, but to a certain extent, it also promotes the coordinated development of the internal sub-elements of the system and realizes the orderly movement of the macro-structure of the system. The stable development of the system is the result of competition and coordination among subsystems or systems. When the external control parameters reach a certain value, the movement of subsystems or systems will change from disorder to order, and this orderly independent movement will become the main determinant of the development direction of the system, so as to overcome and reduce the power of competition to the greatest extent, and make all subsystems move in the same direction to form a joint force. Synergetics has universality since its scope of research ranges from micro to macro and it covers all kinds of systems in nature and human society, and abstracts the synergy rules among different disciplines. It proposes a method to promote the benign development of complex, open and nonlinear systems from a unified point of view. Over the past decade, synergy theory has been developed and widely used in various fields, which provides a theoretical reference and valuable experience for the construction of synergy strategies of university moral education and cultivation of people.

2. The Practical Significance of the Construction of Synergy Strategies

There is a strong agreement between synergetics and the moral cultivation in colleges and universities. Firstly, fostering virtue through education in colleges and universities is a systematic work which contains many elements internally and mutual cooperation and competition exist among subsystems. According to synergetics, it is necessary for us to exert external control over the moral cultivation in colleges and universities, drive various educational subjects to move in the same direction, integrate all kinds of resources, and promote the transformation of disorder and competition into orderly independent movement, so as to build a more stable synergic system of fostering virtue through education. Secondly, the work of fostering virtue through education in colleges and universities is not only theoretical, but also practical. The subsystems or elements within the system are mainly the people with strong dynamic initiative and they realize the order motion to enhance the effectiveness of moral education. Therefore, the combination of synergetics and the moral cultivation has an inherent possibility. Besides, the construction of synergy strategies also contains lots of practical significance for solving the existing problems in the process of building up morality in colleges and universities.

2.1 Meeting the Needs of Times

President Xi Jinping pointed out at the congress celebrating the 40th anniversary of reform and opening up: “Only by following the historical trend, responding positively and seeking change actively, can we keep pace with the times.”[3] The pace of China's opening to the outside world has been expanding in the past 40 years since the reform and opening-up, which requires us to deeply grasp the basic trend of international and domestic development, implement the strategic position of giving priority to the development of education, comply with the requirements of the times, and actively promote the development of educational modernization. In learning from the educational advantages of other countries in the world, we can easily find that the emphasis on moral education, the exploration of ideas and the study of models in western countries have been consistent in history. Especially since modern times, the competition among countries has become increasingly fierce. Western countries focus on personnel training and the improvement of educational strength. They take various forms to promote the construction of institutions of higher learning and enhance the comprehensive competitiveness of the country. In 2016, China began to implement the strategy of building “two-first-class” universities. This strategy is an important measure to enhance the comprehensive strength of higher education and international competitiveness, an inevitable choice for building a strong higher education country and realizing the strategy of constructing a powerful country in human resource, as well as a solid support for achieving the goal of “two hundred years” and the great rejuvenation of Chinese nation. The primary task of two-first-class construction is to train talents. Therefore, through integrating classic resources, optimizing the educational model and

improving the educational effect to promote the development of college students' political awareness, ideology and morality, ability and quality in an all-round way is not only the need of implementing the strategy of developing the country through science and education and reinvigorating the country through human resource development, but also the need of meeting the needs of the times and enhancing international competitiveness.

2.2 Maintaining the Security of Ideology

From the nature, ideology decides the direction of fostering virtue through education. Generally speaking, the mainstream ideology of college students shows a positive and upward trend at present. However, the students are in the stage of active thinking, great curiosity and strong acceptance ability. With the development of economic globalization, political democratization, cultural pluralism and information networking, they are more vulnerable to the impact and erosion of multiple culture and values. Without correctly and timely guidance, the value judgment and choice of college students may easily fall into misunderstanding, and even have some vague cognition and wrong views on key issues. In addition, with the increasing autonomy of college students, some of them are self-centered, overly concerned about personal interests and immediate interests, and lack of social responsibility, which results in serious challenges to the security of the ideological field. College students are the talent resources and reserve forces for the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The buttons of life should be fastened from the beginning[4]. As the gathering place of students, colleges and universities are also the main position for us to maintain ideological security. The construction of synergy strategies of fostering virtue through education is conducive to uniting various forces from all relevant departments inside and outside schools to build up the security line for the cultivation of the mainstream ideology of college students. It guides students to establish firm beliefs and common ideals and unifies the mainstream ideology of college students with the guiding ideology of the state and society to guide the development direction of the social mainstream ideology, and eliminate the security threats in the ideological field brought by backward ideas in traditional culture and decadent ideas in western culture.

2.3 Improving the Efficiency of Fostering Virtue through Education

In the new era, colleges and universities fully implement the Party's educational policy. They carry out the principle of cultivating people with moral integrity into classroom teaching, infiltrate it into campus culture and extend it into students' life, in order to constantly improve the cultural level, ideological awareness and moral quality of college students. Fostering virtue through education has achieved a long-term development. However, there are still many colleges and universities whose practice is confined to the classroom of ideological and political education, staying at the theoretical level and lacking practical guidance. Then, constructing the synergy strategies of fostering virtue through education in colleges and universities can adjust the imbalance and inconsistency. By paying more attention to and meeting the various needs of college students, it can optimize the quality structure of students, and promote their comprehensive and balanced development. Therefore, introducing synergetics into the system of fostering virtue through education in colleges and universities is the inevitable choice to promote the interaction of multi-subjects in the system. Only by making the multi-subjects coordinate and promote each other, can we maximize the use of various educational resources, promote the transformation of subsystems from disorderly movement to orderly movement, crack the the existing phenomena of fragmentation, isolation and lack of practical guidance, and further improve the effectiveness and pertinence of the work.

3. The Value Target of the Construction of Synergy Strategies

The construction of synergy strategies of fostering virtue through education in colleges and universities is not to simply add all kinds of subjects and resources, but to integrate various forces and implement the moral education better. Therefore, the construction must focus on the pursuit of value at a higher level and strive to achieve greater goals.

3.1 Establishing the Educational Concept of “Centering on Students’ All-round Development and Healthy Growth”

To construct synergy strategies, we must insist on “centering on students’ all-round development and healthy growth”, which is the starting point and destination of all educational work in the new era. The core of educational idea lies in respecting and understanding students, as well as tapping students’ potential and inspiring their minds. The construction of synergy strategies is ultimately to improve students’ effectiveness and efficiency. In the process of implementation, we must fully consider the particularity of every student, change to the educational mode of realizing the parallel of theoretical teaching and practical teaching, paying equal attention to psychological guidance and behavioral guidance, and care about the growth needs of every student. It requires us to strengthen the education consciousness, service consciousness and management consciousness of each educational subject, and truly achieve education for students, service for students, management for students, so as to establish the educational concept of “centering on students’ all-round development and healthy growth” in the minds of all kinds of educational subjects.

3.2 Establishing the Working Concept of “Three-aspect Education”

The working concept of “three-aspect education” embodies not only the idea of cooperative development, but also the guiding ideology and principle of comprehensive and systematic education. In the dimension of participants, all members need cultivate students, that is to say, teams (including six parts of Ideological and political work team: party and government cadres, Communist Youth League cadres, ideological and political education teachers, philosophy and social sciences teachers, counselors, psychological counseling teachers; professional course teachers; administrative service personnel; parents; and relevant social education departments) participate in fostering virtue through education should cooperate with each other and work in the same direction. In the dimension of time and space, the whole process of educating students should be carried out in different stages of learning, according to their different characteristics and development laws. On the basis of following and implementing educational policies, different educational themes should be set up at different stages of students’ development. In the dimension of resources, to achieve all-round education, we need to make full use of various educational carriers to complement each other and make concerted efforts. “It is required to promote the interaction and interplay of educational practice activities in different fields, types and levels, and to form a dynamic balanced relationship of multi-directional interaction and a virtuous circle of educational structure. It integrates the interests of different fields and educators, takes into account the special requirements of different types and levels, generates relatively integrated and unified value pursuit and practice norms, and forms accommodation effect to realize the integration of objectives, resources, strategies, evaluation and other elements on the basis of complementation, interaction and synthesis.”[5]

3.3 Establishing an Interlocking Responsibility System

Under the guidance of synergetics, colleges and universities should deepen the adjustment of team’s self-power-and-responsibility synergy system, take synergy theory as the guidance, innovate the team’s planning, training and development system, assign responsibility by power, consolidate power by responsibility, and promote the healthy and coordinated development of the education team. The sustained power of fostering virtue through education and its development can be ensured by the construction of mature team systems. The key factors in the construction of responsibility system are to grasp the self-nature and clarify the responsibility and authority. First of all, we should recognize the spontaneity and initiative of each educational subject, and correctly understand the target consistency of educational subject’s elements and the convergence of development path. Secondly, We need strengthen the ranking team to form a joint force guarantee. We should focus on the universality and professionalism of the team. From the concreteness of work division to the clarification of the responsibilities, we need constantly optimize the staffing of the organizational structure at all levels, and form a responsibility assessment system in different

categories to implement in accordance with the principles of genuine thinking, high quality and strong ability.

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