



Research on the Path of Integrating Letters into Moral Education in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: As a cultural medium that carries emotions and values, letters have the moral education functions of implicit infiltration, continuous dialogue, and subject co construction, providing a new path for moral education in universities. This article focuses on the research of the path of integrating letters into moral education in universities, and systematically explores it from three dimensions: theoretical logic, value implications, and innovative paths. Firstly, clarify the connotation definition, theoretical support, and operational framework of letter based moral education; Secondly, analyze the compatibility and response mechanism of letter based moral education with the educational goals of universities and the growth needs of college students; Finally, it is proposed to expand the application of letters in moral education in universities, deepen the understanding of the spirit of letters among educational objects, innovate the means of applying letters in moral education in universities, and provide a sustainable, in-depth, and promotable practical paradigm for moral education in universities, to assist in the implementation of the fundamental task of cultivating morality and talents.

Keywords: letter based moral education; Moral education in universities; Emotional education; Innovation in Moral Education

1. Introduction

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China clearly stated the fundamental task of implementing moral education and talent cultivation. As the core link of talent cultivation, moral education in universities carries the important mission of value guidance, personality shaping, and behavioral norms. However, current moral education in universities still faces the structural dilemma of "high investment, low emotion, and weak identification" in practice. Although traditional classroom indoctrination, themed education, and online promotion have a wide coverage, there are obvious shortcomings in emotional infiltration, individual differences, and sustained influence. In this context, the traditional medium of letters has re entered the perspective of educational researchers. Letters not only have cultural, emotional, and private characteristics, but also possess educational features of delayed expression, deep reflection, and bidirectional construction, which can effectively compensate for the shortcomings of fast-paced and low emotional education in modern university moral education.

2. Theoretical logic of integrating letters into moral education in universities

In the moral education system of universities, theoretical construction is the precursor to practical innovation. As a traditional and emotionally charged medium, the function of letters in moral education has not yet been systematically theorized. This chapter aims to clarify the basic connotation, theoretical support, and operational logic of letter based moral education from the perspectives of multiple disciplines such as education, psychology, and communication. It constructs a theoretical framework with explanatory and guiding power, providing a solid foundation for the exploration of subsequent practical paths.

2.1 Definition of the Connotation of Moral Education through Letters

Letter based moral education is not simply letter writing education, but a form of moral education that uses letters as a medium, emotions as a bond, and value guidance as the core. Its essence lies in achieving emotional interaction and value transmission between educational subjects through non face to face written communication. Compared to the "explicit" indoctrination of traditional moral education, letter based moral education emphasizes more on "implicit" infiltration, with unique attributes such as privacy, sustainability, and reflection. This kind of interaction is not simply written education, but refers to the moral education form in which the educational subject uses paper or digital notes as a medium to achieve value transmission, emotional resonance, and behavioral guidance through the delayed interaction of "writing sending reading responding" in a comprehensive experience of privacy, aesthetics, and narrative. At the value level, letter based moral

education has both instrumental value and ontological value. As a tool, it can enhance the affinity and infectivity of moral education; As an ontology, it is itself a cultural practice that carries the functions of moral narrative, emotional expression, and identity recognition. Different from instant media such as WeChat and short videos, letters rely on handwritten traces and mailing waiting, creating a "slow" and "far" educational psychological distance, providing a temporal and spatial gap for reflection and imagination. The moral education of letters does not pursue single persuasion, but is committed to gradually completing the complete moral generation chain of "emotional stimulation cognitive reconstruction intention formation behavioral externalization" in the text production of "back and forth multiple times" for the educated. Therefore, rediscovering the educational value of letters is not only a supplement to traditional moral education methods, but also a return to the ontology of moral education concepts.

2.2 Theoretical support for letter based moral education

The rationality of letter based moral education does not come out of thin air, but is built on the cross support of multiple theories. The theory of emotional education holds that emotions are the foundation of moral cognition, and letters become catalysts for moral internalization by stimulating emotional resonance. Emphasizing the student-centered approach, letters provide an equal, private, and non judgmental space for dialogue, which helps students express themselves and educate themselves.

From the perspective of communication studies, letters, as a unique medium, have the characteristics of low timeliness and high participation, which encourage learners to be deeply involved in the process of information interpretation, thereby achieving higher levels of cognitive and emotional processing. Marx and Engels pointed out: "The production of ideas, concepts, and consciousness is initially directly intertwined with people's material activities, their material interactions, and the language of real life. Here, people's imagination, thinking, and spiritual interactions are still direct products of their material actions".[1]As an objective existence, letters not only clarify the enormous role of carrying information in the development of people and society, but also reveal that their extensive dissemination cannot be separated from the constraints of social factors such as politics, economy, and culture. Therefore, in conducting research on the moral education function and its effectiveness of letters, it is necessary to grasp the core element of letters as a special expression of social existence in different time periods, social environments, and cultural backgrounds. From the perspective that social existence determines social consciousness, combined with different fields of time and space, interpret the affirmation, encouragement, and promotion of the behavior of the recipient group in the letter, in order to reveal the correct ideological, political, and moral concepts implied in the reply, and guide the general public to explore and learn.

2.3 Logical framework for the implementation of letter based moral education

Traditional moral education often follows a linear logic of "teacher transmission student acceptance", while letter based moral education constructs a "resonant" educational mechanism. Its operational logic can be divided into three stages: the writing and expression stage, in which the educational subject completes emotional externalization and value expression through letters; In the reading response stage, the recipient achieves cognitive reconstruction and emotional feedback through interpretation and reply; During the continuous interaction phase, both parties gradually establish a trust relationship and value consensus through multiple rounds of correspondence. This mechanism breaks through the limitations of time and space, shifting moral education from instant preaching to delayed dialogue, and from public classrooms to private communication domains, achieving the de authority and re emotional influence of educational relationships. It emphasizes the generativity of the educational process, that is, letters are not the end of information, but the starting point of meaning. It is in this continuous cycle of "writing and responding" that the goals of moral education can naturally grow, rather than being imposed externally.

For example, the letter style education of the red gene follows a complete logical chain of "storage encoding unfolding guarantee expression": only the uniqueness of its handwriting and paper seals abstract symbols such as faith, sacrifice, and family country as tangible and authentic negatives, and only the closed narrative formed by its header, body text, and signature compresses the grand party history into individual life history, making the repeated keywords of "truth people sacrifice" instantly recognizable as spiritual QR codes. Scholar Jiang Feng has discussed the hidden red genes in Marx's letters from various aspects such as ideology, theory, and time, systematically elaborating on their logical connection with the Chinese red genes and demonstrating the inheritance and evolution process of the red genes.[2]When the reader touches the writing with voice and the writer replies across time and space, the mirror neuron is activated, and the red gene will produce emotional peak without semantic interpretation. The whole process from emotional resonance to value internalization to external action such as scientific research serving the country and grass-roots dedication will eventually transform the belief power sealed on paper into the spirit of the times, so that every new generation can find their own spiritual coordinates

between the lines of the words, and continue to translate the red gene into an inexhaustible driving force to promote Chinese path to modernization.

3. The value and significance of integrating letters into moral education in universities

The value of theory lies in responding to practice. Currently, moral education in universities is facing a structural dilemma of high investment but low emotion, high coverage but weak identification: classroom lectures, themed class meetings, and online tweets take turns, but students quickly slide behind the screen, value signals are diluted by algorithms, and educational traces are fleeting. At this point, the slow medium of letters provides the possibility of breaking through the impasse, reinstalling the dual decelerator of emotions and time for moral education, allowing grand propositions to slowly take root in the hearts of individuals.

3.1 Exploration of the Value and Connotation of Letters

Letters are not only conversations on paper, but also solidified emotions. Its cultural value is deeply embedded in titles, honorifics, and signatures, all of which convey traditional values of respect, sincerity, and benevolence in a symbolic way, allowing readers to naturally learn respect and humility in the order of etiquette. Its aesthetic value stems from the handwritten trajectory and paper texture: the intensity of ink, the turning point of the pen, and the pattern of the letterhead, activating the aesthetic experience through both visual and tactile channels, allowing beauty and goodness to shake hands and make peace in every inch. Its educational value is rooted in temporality, privacy, and narrative, using storytelling to transform abstract values into perceptible plots, enabling students to release emotions, search for meaning, and reconstruct cognition through self narration and listening to others. So, letters are no longer just tools, but have become the content of moral education itself: they are both carriers of information and goods of value; It not only carries ideas but also emotions, presenting a high degree of unity between instrumentality and ontology.

3.2 The high alignment between letter based moral education and the educational goals of universities

The ultimate coordinate of cultivating students in universities is to cultivate moral character, requiring moral education to cover all staff, run through the entire process, and permeate all aspects. And letter based moral education resonates with the goal in these three dimensions. At the level of all staff, it breaks the single subject of teachers and constructs a four-dimensional synergy of teacher guidance, student participation, parent support, and alumni feedback: teachers transform from moral authority to dialogue initiators, students transform from passive recipients to meaningful collaborators, and parents and alumni inject social experience and life wisdom into the letter, forming a "great ideological and political" synergy. At the whole process level, letters can be embedded in the four-year continuous line of enrollment adaptation, academic reflection, career orientation, and graduation gratitude, linking scattered activities into a growth chain and achieving a leap from fragmented moral education time and space to the whole cycle. On a comprehensive level, it naturally possesses cross scenario capabilities. Moral education can inspire professional ideals through academic communication, mental health can reduce defense through emotional relief letters, employment guidance can clarify career paths through industry mentors' letters, and family school collaboration can strengthen family ties through family traditions and letters. So, moral education is no longer limited to classrooms and screens, but quietly completes value transmission on letters, realizing the dialectical unity between schools, families, and society.

3.3 Emotional Empowerment Mechanism of Letter Moral Education

The emotional empowerment mechanism of letter based moral education first lies in the narrative healing power of writing itself. When students pick up their pens, their chaotic emotions are anchored word for word on the paper, and their emotions are transformed into text that can be examined and modified. Self expression becomes self organization, and meaning is quietly generated between the lines; Subsequently, the process of delivery and waiting deliberately extended the timeline of emotional brewing, and the delay gap allowed expectations and imagination to accumulate continuously. The moment of arrival of the reply thus formed an emotional peak, and the educational impression was amplified and prolonged between this release and release, quietly settling into a lasting psychological schema. Furthermore, the tactile sensation, unique ink color, and irreplicable handwriting of paper letters together create an embodied experience. When fingers touch the paper, the writer's body temperature and breath seem to travel through space, activating the reader's mirror neurons. Emotional resonance can occur without language translation, creating a tacit understanding between teachers, students, parents, and alumni. This kind of emotion is not a one-time consumption. Letters can be collected, read again, and circulated. Every revisit is a reignition of emotions. Emotions are accumulated and transmitted in a cycle, gradually transforming into a

sustainable emotional capital. This extends the moral education effect from current emotions to long-term immersion, truly realizing the value of being heartfelt and rooted.

4. Innovative Path of Integrating Letters into Moral Education in Colleges and Universities

Due to its historical, communicative, targeted, and interactive characteristics, letters play an important role in moral education in universities that cannot be ignored. For example, the evolution of the literary style of "Letters from the Warring States Period" not only restores the original appearance of the Warring States letter style and promotes the development of the letter style, but also highlights the historical characteristics of the letter style.[3] Integrating letter culture into moral education in universities not only helps to inherit excellent traditional Chinese culture, but also guides students to establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values unconsciously. This article will explore the innovative path of integrating letters into moral education in universities from three aspects: expanding the application of letters in moral education in universities, deepening the understanding of the spirit of letters by educational objects, and innovating the application methods of letters in moral education in universities.

4.1 Expand the application of letters in moral education in universities

In today's increasingly diverse and rich moral education system in universities, how to break through the limitations of education and find more emotional and cultural forms of education has become an urgent issue that needs to be addressed. As an emotional medium and value carrier that transcends time and space, letters have the characteristics of slow pace, deep thinking, and strong sense of ceremony, which are highly consistent with the educational logic of "moistening things silently" in moral education. Therefore, from the three dimensions of curriculum construction, platform building, and cultural creation, exploring how to systematically embed letter elements in moral education in universities, truly achieving the upgrade transition from tools to resources, from activities to courses, and from embellishment to normalcy, is of great significance for improving the effectiveness of moral education in universities.

Firstly, it is clear that letters are not only tools for transmitting information, but also carriers for emotional communication and ideological collision. Compared to instant messaging, letters have a stronger sense of ceremony, thoughtfulness, and emotional depth. In moral education, letters can stimulate students' empathy, critical thinking, and expression abilities. By writing and reading letters, students can reflect on themselves, understand others, and appreciate life in tranquility, thus achieving the shaping of their inner value. Secondly, universities should incorporate letter culture into their moral education curriculum system, offering elective courses such as "Letters and Life," "Homeland Sentiments in Letters," and "Selected Reading of Red Letters." By combining interdisciplinary perspectives such as history, literature, and philosophy, universities should systematically explore the moral education resources in letters. Finally, actively establish a platform for letter based moral education practice, such as setting up "letter stations", "spiritual mailboxes", etc., to encourage communication between teachers and students, and between students through letters. Regular themed activities such as "A Letter to Parents" and "A Letter to the Motherland" can be organized to allow students to experience the warmth and power of letters in real situations, enhancing the infectivity and effectiveness of moral education.

4.2 Deepen the understanding of the spirit of letters among educational subjects

If expanding the application solves the problem of letters entering the campus, then deepening understanding answers the proposition of letters entering the soul. By using three strategies of value guidance, situational experience, and self dialogue, students can not only see letters, but also gain insights into them; Not only using letters, but also believing in letters, ultimately transforming the spirit of letters into an internal scale and conscious pursuit of moral growth.

Firstly, moral education in universities should guide students to understand the contemporary value of the spirit of letters through various means. Through lectures, salons, book clubs, and other forms, writers, scholars, psychological counselors, and others can be invited to interpret the emotional logic and value connotations behind letters, helping students realize that letters are not only communication tools, but also a reflection of personality cultivation and a way to cultivate self-education and social responsibility. Secondly, universities can organize immersive letter writing experience activities, such as simulating wartime communication, retracing the red mail route, and sending handwritten letters to students, allowing them to write and read letters in specific historical or emotional contexts, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the emotional weight and historical thickness carried by letters. Finally, moral education in universities should encourage students to explore and record their growth through letters, providing personalized and process oriented educational tools for moral education work.

4.3 Application Methods of Innovative Letters in Moral Education in Colleges and Universities

To revitalize traditional letters in the media ecosystem dominated by big data, artificial intelligence, and short videos, a leapfrog innovation from “physical revival” to “chemical reconstruction” must be achieved. The moral education work in universities should not stop at displaying letters in a nostalgic way, but should actively embrace technology, connect with needs, explore how to use digital tools to extend the temporal and spatial dimensions of letters, rely on psychological mechanisms to amplify the healing function of letters, and create a new ecology of letter based moral education in universities through multiple collaborations such as school, campus, community, and military.

Firstly, universities can develop “digital letter” platforms or mini programs that integrate functions such as audio, video, handwriting recognition, and time capsules, encouraging students to write and save letters in multimedia form. For example, students can record a voice home letter or upload a scanned handwritten letter, setting a future year to send to themselves or others, enhancing the sense of ceremony and era of the letter. Secondly, universities can combine letter writing with mental health education, setting up “emotional mailboxes”, “spiritual tree holes”, etc., to encourage students to express their emotions and confide in their troubles through letters. Finally, universities can combine letter culture with social practice, volunteer service, rural revitalization, etc., to create a “letter+practice” integrated education project. For example, organizing a “Hand in Hand Letter Growth Program” between college students and rural primary and secondary school students, through one-on-one letter exchanges, not only provides emotional companionship and growth guidance for rural children, but also allows college students to understand responsibility and accountability through letters.

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