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Causes and Solutions in Construction of the Historical Conception of Senior High School Fine Art Students

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ABSTRACT

Artistic specialty students are relatively special in high school education of our country, fine art students is one of them. This article explains the reasons for the current problems to art students in the process of constructing the conception of history, combining with the actual conditions, it tentatively proposes corresponding solutions to promote the deepening development of the history teaching of art students and the construction of the conception of history, carry out the educational requirements of “strengthening moral education and cultivating people” in the teaching process.

1. Introduction

In a narrow sense, fine art student is one kind of the artistic specialty students (hereinafter referred as art student), mainly refer to the students who enter the university through the art examination which organized by each province or universities, and combined with the cultural scores of college entrance examinations. Due to various reasons, art students have some difficulties in the process of constructing the conception of history as a relatively unique group in senior high school education. History and art are both projections of society and the times. Finding the reasons that why art students have difficulties in the construction of historical conception is not only conducive to historical learning, but also contributive to inspire their artistic thinking. History as

a science, the impact of a mature and perfect frame of history on students is not only reflected in the current history learning, but also plays a decisive role in the cultivation of national identity and social responsibility.

2. A Probe into the Difficulties in Constructing the Historical Conception of Art Students

In addition to the historical knowledge itself, history acquisition nowadays, is more important about the cultivation of historical thinking and the progress that such thinking can create^[1]. In this process, the construction of historical conception is particularly important. For the group of art students, they have the same problems as the ordinary senior high school students in the construction of the conception of history. They have problems such as fragmentation of knowledge and confusion in the

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historical framework. However, they are different from the ordinary high school students. On the whole, we can start thinking from the following aspects.

First, the identity labels of art students weaken the motivation of them to study. Among the parents and students interviewed by the author through the phone, more than 97% concern that entering the university by taking the art test is a shortcut, although this may not be the case. This widespread “short-cut identification” makes students get a wrong psychological suggestion, “I don’t need to be too worry about the score, because this way does not need good grades” and similar thoughts. In a subtle way, they passively or actively labeled themselves as “art students”. This label lead to a certain connotation which means decompression and compensability in learning. As a result, students do not have enough psychological expectations for learning and think that the academic pressure they face is not heavy. At the same time, it is this identity label that has led to the deviance amplification of this group^[2]. The continuous shift and distraction of attention makes it difficult for them to show a good trend in the understanding and exploration of historical knowledge and the practical application of historical thinking in society^[3], and the development of emotional attitudes and values. It is even more unfavorable to the cultivation of the core qualities of the history discipline, which will undoubtedly adversely affect the construction of the historical conception of art students.

Second, the imbalance of the studying time between professional and cultural courses has created a fragmented feature in the construction of the historical conception of art students. Here, it is necessary to distinguish the fragmentation phenomenon that occurs in the process of constructing the historical conception of art students from the related problems that ordinary senior high school students have in history learning. For art students, they need to confronted with two “college entrance exams”, one is the art exam which happens around December each year, the other is the cultural College Entrance Exam with other ordinary senior high school students, what else, some art students will also take part for a few months for art exams organized by art universities. This led them to first need to devote a lot of time and energy to the study of art major courses, and history study inevitably showed discontinuous feature. To some extent, discontinuous studying will bring about the fragmentation of the conception of time and space, which will make the students lack a holistic conception of history and causality. Most of them present a fragmented state of knowledge, which makes impossible to explore the whole picture of

history. It is not easy to establish a complete and perfect historical conception, and it is hard to penetrate the teaching function of history through teaching. Students have stepped into the fragmented quagmire, ignoring the construction of the overall conception of history and the profound impact of history on life, which has been given very obvious feedback during the teaching process.

Finally, under the premise limited learning ability of students, the time of art test and College Entrance Examination determines the distribution of students’ energy to a certain extent. Art students need to take two steps to enter colleges and universities under the current education system in China. The first step is to pass the art major exam, if an art student does not get a certificate of qualification in any of these exams, then they can only compete with other ordinary senior high school students to pass the College Entrance Examination to enter the college. The second step is to continue to participate in the College Entrance Examination after successfully passing the art exam and getting a certificate. For art students, the College Entrance Examination has ended early if they does not get a satisfactory ranking or certificate in their art exams, this sequence of examinations has led them to need to allocate a lot of attention to the study of art majors from the beginning of senior high school. For personal history study, if students want to build a complete and mature conception of history, they must understand and respect the excellent cultural traditions of various countries, also, they must understand the development trend of China and the world, make an in-depth study of the five core qualities of high school history courses^[4], if the focus of art students is shifted completely or mostly to the art professional courses, then the construction of historical conception will inevitably appear the situation which is incomplete.

In addition, some universal factors that affect the construction of the historical conception of senior high school students also affect the art students. One of the important factors is the lack of sense of reality in the process of history teaching. As documented by the previous research on education, students have a very negative attitude toward history and find history instruction boring, dull, useless, and meaningless, one of the most important reasons why students dislike history has to do with the fact that they cannot see the connection between the remote past and their immediate experiences in the present^[5], this makes them easy to lose their direction and purpose in the process of history studying. Similarly, in the process of constructing the conception of history, a transitive feature will be presented, but the correct construction method should be structural^[6].

It is precisely because of the lack of sense of reality that students cannot resonate, which will weaken their establishment of historical outlook and historical identity.

We can see apparently that identify recognition what society made to art students, psychological conditions and professional learning time of their art major beyond different students all have varying degrees of influence on the construction of historical conception on art students, it also could make an influence on the embodiment of the value of discipline education. For art students, the content of the artwork itself can have a direct influence on society. The strong artistic appeal of the work can not only reflect the relevant context of the times, but also prompt people to pay attention to related issues, such as some paintings and sculptures about out-of-school children have promoted some people to join the “Hope Project” and other educational career^[7]. The educational value of senior high school history subject is to make students have a correct historical view in the learning process, so that they have ideal beliefs and social responsibility, and the ability to learn for life^[8]. The art major and history are intrinsically connected in terms of social responsibility. We can make full use of the conditions available in reality to explore ways to solve current problems of art students.

2. Measures to Improve the Construction of the Historical Conception of Art Students

In view of the reasons mentioned above, the author believes that it is possible to solve some difficulties of art students in the construction of historical conception from the following aspects.

First, the perception of their identity should be corrected. Stephen E. Barkan suggests that interaction with others shapes our perception of ourselves and affects our behavior^[9]. Only when students have a correct understanding of the difficulty of the exams and the social responsibility that the art major may assume in the future, can they reverse their psychological state and face up to the study of cultural courses. This not only helps the art students to build a perfect historical conception, but also helps to promote the development of learning enthusiasm.

Here, teachers and schools can actively use the existing student resources and introduce their learning experience and mental journey through the students who have entered the college in the past, so that the art students group can resonate emotionally. For art students, affected by the subtle influence of their own labels, they will be more agree with the real examples that belong to the art students group. These fresh examples can make them have a clearer cognition of difficulties in the future learning

process. A more concrete and specific understanding can stimulate their learning attitude towards a positive side.

At the same time, history teaching can also give full play to its guiding role. Through the active role played by art in the historical development process and its reflection and promotion of society, teachers can build expectations of students in the art major and social responsibility in a historical way, so that students can become mature in values and can have a more expectant attitude towards the majors which he has studied. Once history teaching is used to make students understand the conceptions of social responsibility and attachment to the country more concretely, their enthusiasm for learning will be greatly improved.

Second, In the process of history teaching, more attention should be paid to the use of historical materialism to help students improve their construction of historical conception. The five core literacy is not divided in the core literacy of the senior high school history discipline, there is a close logical relationship between them, of which the historical materialism is the basic theory and guiding ideology of learning and exploring history. The understanding of mankind in history is gradually deepened from the surface and inside. Only by using the scientific and objective standpoint and method of historical materialism can we have a comprehensive and objective understanding of history^[10].

A vision of history teaching and learning first and foremost necessitates an adequate explanation about one’s philosophy of history as a discipline in that epistemological and conceptual frameworks shape and color one’s approach to dealing with issues in history education^[11]. As an important part of Marxist philosophy, historical materialism has its overall consciousness, including its overall conception, and systematic thinking, which are advantages that other historical viewpoints do not have. This is precisely the charm of historical materialism^[12]. In their previous studies and lives, students have obtained certain unrecognized historical narratives from various channels such as the media and family. At the same time, students have a sense of identity as moderns, which affected their interpretation of historical issues^[13]. We need to use the historical materialism to help them distinguish between true and false, and stimulate their enthusiasm by colliding with their prior memories, so as to shape the correct historical conception^[14], therefore, in the process of constructing the historical view of art students, we should first cultivate the historical materialism in the mind of students, and on this basis, strengthen students’ basic understanding of knowledge. Only by having a holistic and overall understanding of history can students

be promoted the ability of history disciplines to build a more complete and mature framework of history.

Third, Pay attention to the construction of history course. We can start from the following four aspects. Teachers should build a historical course with clear themes and continuity. The ideal history course, should be organized around clearly defined themes, which are supported by concrete evidence and examples^[15]. In history teaching, the materials used in the classroom should also pay attention to exert their emotional role to evoke the emotional reactions of students under the premise that they are closely related to the theme, pictures or videos can be used to vividly display historical figures or buildings that originally existed only in their memories to increase resonance, for example^[16].

Create a challenging and competitive history learning atmosphere is necessary to their history study. Explore the way what values, culture and society are expressed by encouraging students to undertake challenging learning^[17]. Competitive history teaching can be carried out in a similar way to teaching games, but it is necessary to pay attention to whether the nature of such games is historical. The main purpose of the game should be to train students to think about history and its essence, and cultivate historical thinking, on this basis, the introduction of classroom competition elements can enhance the classroom participation of students^[18].

Teachers should also focus on the changes of academic conditions of students in different periods. Due to the individual differences in backgrounds, points of interest, and learning methods of different students, we also need to use meaningful rewards to respond to the competitive learning environment^[19], focusing on the cultivation of thinking rather than pure knowledge.

Connect the past with the present, enhance the sense of reality of history teaching, and make history teaching lively. As mentioned earlier, to a certain extent, the formation of the dilemma of the construction of historical conception of students should also be attributed to their inability to see the connection between the distant past and the present. History teaching should be related to the daily life of students, pay attention to the use of student identity, background and memory in the classroom, collide the memory and prior experience of students with classroom teaching, and promote history teaching to play its role in the practical dimension^[20]. The connection between history and life can enhance the interest of students in learning history and stimulate their motivation to learn^[21].

For teachers ourselves, we should pay more active attention to the frontier research of history and continue to learn and improve our own historical understanding.

James Robinson, the famous representative of the new history of the United States, believes that “history should not be regarded as a stagnant learning. It can only be developed by improving research methods, collecting, criticizing and melting new materials.”^[22] In the context of this increasingly complex society, the 19th century tradition of emphasizing the study of political history can no longer be used to interpret modern society, historians in modern times need to look at this changing society from multiple angles of politics, economy, culture, etc., and no aspect of this society should be ignored. This requires teachers to keep pace with the times and constantly update our own knowledge and cognition. The continuous expansion of teachers ‘historical thinking and the deepening of cognition are the key guarantees for the construction of students’ historical views.

In general, the difficulties encountered by art students in the process of constructing the conception of history are not unique to this group, and there are related problems among ordinary senior high school students. However, due to the different reasons for the two kind of students, we should explore the source of the problem in depth to take corrective measures and adopt a method suitable for the group of art students from a multi-dimensional perspective to help them construct a correct conception of history. This is also a manifestation of quality education in China that requires the effective design of the teaching process and the cultivation of understanding ability of students^[23].

3. Interaction between History Discipline and Art Major

The debate about whether history is an art or science continued until the 19th century, when history developed into an independent discipline, historical research became a better way to understand reality and a means for humans to understand themselves^[24].

As history teachers, we should be clear why history courses are taught. One of the most important purposes of this course is to improve students ‘understanding of society, develop the sense of responsibility and critical thinking of students, and enable students to enlarge their understanding of the increasingly interdependent social world and their place in it^[25]. By constructing a reasonable historical conception and historical framework for students, it can not only improve the reading ability to the society of our students, but also cultivate reasonable teaching methods as teachers themselves. In this process, teachers can have a deeper understanding of the fundamental issues related to history teaching^[26].

The teaching of history and in particular of national history has long always played a central role in shaping the historical consciousness and sense of national identity of successive generations^[27]. The past is constantly changing, and the continuous evolution of the purpose of historiography is a sign of its endlessness. Every new era will look for an understanding of where it was at the time, if there is no history, then the new era will simply not exist^[28]. As Marc Bloch said: “The charm of history first triggers people’s interest in history, and then inspires people to make a difference. Its role is always supreme.”^[29] Allan Nevins, the former chairman of the AHA (American Historical Association), once said: “... history as a teacher, a guide, and an inspirer has its own broader democratic functions.”^[30]

With the continuous expansion of the influence of Marxist historiography and the development of new historiography, the object of historical research has gradually moved down, and the relationship with society has become closer. Historiography can make people know from ancient to modern^[31], and art is also a mirror image of social development. Throughout the history of Chinese art, art works have always been a reflection of the social changes in the rise and fall of all the times^[32]. Just like art, history needs to focus on the big frame first, and then describe it in detail. For the students who are about to engage in the art career in the future, a mature historical views and historical thinking can not only implement the educational goals of China, it can also enhance the sense of social responsibility and national identity of art students, promote their perception of society, and then reflect the times and project society through their works. Education is the foundation. Therefore, we must have full patience with all the artistic specialty student represented by art students. We can help them build aims of future through change and cultivate the history learning methods of art students in senior high school by long-term efforts, social education, and family education.

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