

Received: September 29, 2017

Revision received: August 23, 2018

Accepted: August 28, 2018

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DOI 10.12738/estp.2018.6.241 • December 2018 • 18(6) • 3361-3367

Research Article

Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Teaching Reform of Western Cultural History for College Students*

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Abstract

The course of cultural history in colleges and universities is an important carrier of campus cultural education, which can not only enhance the cultural atmosphere and details of colleges and universities, but also enhance the level of cultural education of college students. On the basis of inheriting and carrying forward traditional Chinese culture, continuously deepening the study and understanding of western cultural history can promote the development of cultural education in colleges and universities. This paper analyzes the current situation of the teaching of western cultural history in colleges and universities, and finds that there are some problems, such as weak teachers, students' inadequate attention to the curriculum, and unreasonable curriculum teaching and setting. The teaching of western cultural history in colleges and universities can be reformed by increasing the number of teaching hours, setting up online courses, and strengthening the training of teachers. The two classes of Southwestern University of Finance and Economics are selected for comparative analysis, which shows that the performance of the classes with teaching reform is significantly higher than that without teaching reform, indicating that the teaching reform is successful and its effect is significant. The research results have great practical significance and guiding role in improving the teaching quality of western cultural history in colleges and universities.

Keywords

Western Cultural History • Teaching Reform

* This work has been supported by Education and Teaching Reform Project in Shaanxi Xueqian Normal University in 2015" Study on the Autonomous Learning and Innovation Ability of Liberal Arts Normal Students in the Age of Open Education" (Project No. 15JG 09ZB)

Planning teaching materials construction projects in Shaanxi Xueqian Normal University "Study on the Theory and Practice of Autonomous Learning in the Course of History of Western Culture (Project No. 16 JC08)

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Colleges and universities are the main body of cultural inheritance and innovation, and play an important role in demonstrating, disseminating and promoting social and cultural construction. Cultural education in colleges and universities is an important part of the cultural education in China. Cultural history course is an important carrier of campus cultural education. Improving the teaching quality of cultural history course can not only enhance the cultural atmosphere and details of colleges and universities, but also raise the cultural education level of college students, improve the breadth and depth of college students' culture, and enhance the overall quality of college students (Saito & Atencio, 2013).

At present, China is in an important period of social transformation and development. In the field of culture, there appears the fusion and collision between traditional Chinese culture and western culture. The accumulation of western cultural history has reached a high depth, which focuses on the diversity and freedom and will not confine students' ideas in a certain framework (Zucker, 2004). Compared with the western cultural history, Chinese cultural history pays more attention to the examination-oriented education, and students pay more attention to the content of the examination and less to the cultural history outside the examination. At present, the education of cultural history in some colleges and universities in China is transiting from specialization to popularization. In order to accelerate the teaching reform of cultural history, on the basis of inheriting and carrying forward traditional Chinese culture, we should constantly deepen the study and understanding of western cultural history, absorb advanced culture, and improve students' cultural quality, so as to better promote the development of the entire national culture (Jones, 2007).

Current Situation and Reform Measures of Western Cultural History Teaching in Colleges and Universities

Current situation of teaching

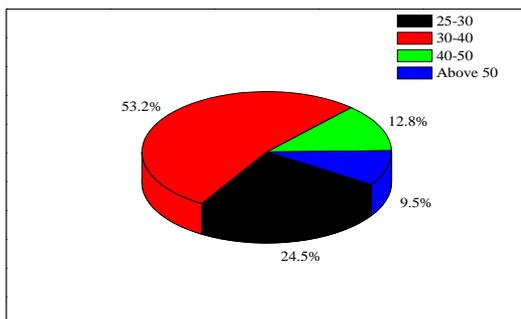


Figure 1. Age composition of teachers in western cultural history course.

Weak teachers: The teaching of western cultural history in colleges and universities covers history, religion, philosophy, art, education and many other fields. Therefore, in addition to the basic literature, history and philosophy, teachers should have knowledge and understanding of other fields, familiarizing themselves

with Chinese culture, as well as the knowledge of western culture. In the teaching process, there are very high requirements for the overall ability of teachers for the integration of Chinese and western culture (Osborne, Simon, Christodoulou, Howellrichardson & Richardson, 2013). Therefore, many teachers in colleges and universities are reluctant to undertake the teaching of western cultural history, and thus most of the teaching tasks fall on young teachers who have just entered the career, which causes that the overall teaching staff is generally younger, as shown in Figure 1. And young teachers' abilities in knowledge reserve, teaching experience, teaching methods and other aspects should be improved.

Students pay less attention to the course: For college students, specialized courses are the most important. Usually, the western cultural history is an elective course, which is dispensable to them. On the one hand, students do not know enough about the western cultural history, and on the other hand, students may spend more energy in learning the western cultural history, but the effect may not be very good (Hornberger& Skilton-Sylvester, 2000). Therefore, they have lower interest in learning the western culture history. In addition, from the students' access channel to western cultural knowledge, we can see that the proportion of classroom education in colleges and universities is not high, as shown in Figure 2. Even some students' acquisition of western cultural history is hearsay, which proves that students pay less attention to western cultural history.

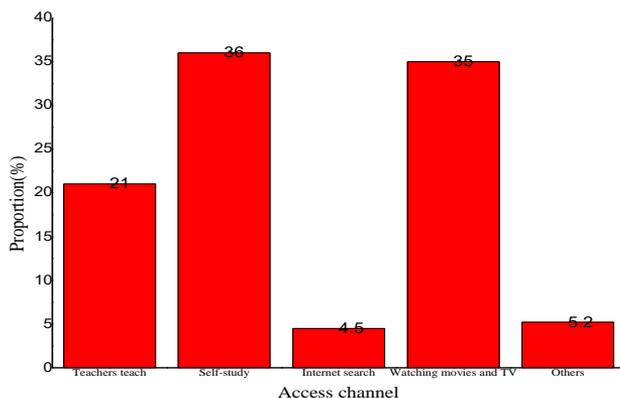


Figure 2. Access to Western Cultural Knowledge.

Unreasonable course teaching and setting Although many colleges and universities in China offer courses on western cultural history, such courses are usually offered for only one semester, with 2-3 class hours per week, and most of them are elective courses, with the teaching mode of joint class (Zuilkowski, 2015). Although the joint class teaching can save teaching cost, the teaching effect is not necessarily very good, which leads to students' failure of understanding the importance of the course.

Teaching reform measures of western cultural history in colleges and universities

Increase the number of teaching hours and hold small classes Western cultural history involves a wide range of disciplines, covering a lot of areas, so the in-depth study of western cultural history courses needs more time, and thus more teaching hours are required. At the same time, teaching in small classes can strengthen the

communication and interaction between teachers and students, and improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching (Oloruntoba, 2014).

Establish online courses At present, with the continuous development of Internet technology, online courses have become the trend of teaching development in colleges and universities. In the teaching reform, we can make full use of the universities' relatively perfect network of resources, integrate the pictures, information, and audio-visual materials on western cultural history, establish the online course of western cultural history, and strengthen the communication between teachers and students outside the classroom.

Strengthen the training of teachers: In order to constantly improve the teaching level of teachers in western cultural history, colleges and universities should increase the training of teachers. On the one hand, they should strengthen the training of teachers from the theoretical teaching to improve the theoretical level of teachers; on the other hand, they should create conditions to increase teachers' teaching practice and strengthen teachers' systematic training in practice (Raju, 2001).

Analysis on the Effectiveness of Teaching Reform of Western Cultural History in Colleges and Universities

In order to fully illustrate the effectiveness of the teaching reform of western cultural history in colleges and universities, this paper selects the western cultural history course of the Southwest University of Finance and Economics, and analyzes the test scores of different classes, with two freshmen classes selected as the research objects. Class A is the experimental class which has carried on the teaching reform, and Class B is the non-experimental class which has not carried on the teaching reform and serves as the reference group for the comparative analysis. The scores of the two classes in the course of western cultural history are shown in Figure 3.

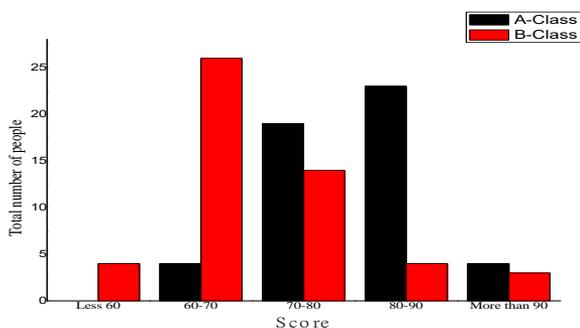


Figure 3. Statistical chart of western cultural history course results.

From the score distribution of the two classes in Figure 2, the number of students in Class A is obviously higher than that in Class B in the score section above 70, the number of students in Class B is obviously higher than that in Class A in the score section below 70, and there is no failure in Class A. It can be judged that the scores of Class A with the teaching reform are obviously higher than those of Class B.

The results are tested by SPSS software. The statistical analysis of test scores is shown in Table 1-3.

SPSS software is used to test the significance of the results. The statistical analysis of test scores is shown in Tables 1 to 3.

Table 1
Sample Statistics

	Mean	N	Standard deviation	Standard error of mean
Class A results	79.6578	53	6.9584	1.068547
Class B results	68.3539	53	11.0567	1.657492

Table 2
Sample Correlation Coefficient

	N	Correlation coefficient	Sig.
Class A results & Class B results	53	-0.087	0.514

Table 3
Sample Test

	Paired difference					t	df	Sig
	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error of mean	99 % confidence interval of difference				
				Lower limits	Upper limits			
Results	12.5874	14.0587	1.84756	6.54781	16.5843	6.4875	52	0.000

From Table 1, we can find that the mean score of Class A is 79.66, which is much higher than that of Class B, which is 68.35, and the standard error of mean of Class A is 1.07, which is also lower than that of Class B, which is 1.66, indicating that the score of Class A is better than that of Class B. It can be seen from Table 2 that the correlation coefficient is 0.087, which shows that the scores of two classes are not correlated, indicating that there is a significant difference between the scores of the two classes after the teaching reform in colleges and universities. The result of significant test in Table 3, i.e., $P=0.01$, shows that the score of Class A is significantly higher than that of Class B (James & Otsuka, 2009).

Through the above analysis, we can find that the test scores of western cultural histories have nothing to do with the class, but there is a significant relationship with the teaching reform. The scores of Class A with teaching reform are significantly better than those of Class B without teaching reform, which fully shows that the teaching reform of western cultural history course is very successful, with very significant results.

In order to further understand the effectiveness of the teaching reform, the questionnaires are distributed to students of Southwest University of Finance and Economics to have a thorough understanding of the relevant issues in the form of seminars. The students generally reflect the following situations:

In the reform of teaching content, teachers gradually use new media, network and other teaching methods to teach, students' interest in learning has been greatly enhanced, and they have a more intuitive knowledge and understanding of the teaching content. In the reform of teaching mode, the traditional feeding teaching method by teachers is no longer adopted, but the course is partly taught by teachers and partly carried out by students in the form of free discussion and exchange, which enables more interactions between teachers and students

and improves the learning effect (Ruitenber, 2014). In the curriculum assessment reform, the previous assessment mode is test scores + ordinary performance, but now it takes more flexible and diverse assessment methods, with appropriate trial teaching included in the ordinary performance, as well as more subjective questions in the examination, so as to give full play to students' thinking initiative and stimulate students' learning motivation and thinking ability.

Conclusions

This paper mainly analyzes the effectiveness of the current teaching reform of western cultural history in colleges and universities, and selects Southwest University of Finance and Economics as the research object for case analysis, with the main conclusions of the study as follows:

At present, there are some problems in the teaching of western cultural history in colleges and universities, such as weak teachers, students' inadequate attention to the course, and unreasonable course teaching and setting.

By increasing the number of teaching hours, setting up online courses and strengthening the training of teachers, colleges and universities can carry out the teaching reform of western cultural history. This paper selects two classes of Southwest University of Finance and Economics to make a comparative analysis, and finds that the scores of the class with teaching reform are significantly higher than that of the class without teaching reform, which shows that the teaching reform is successful and the effect is significant.

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