

# Change the Status Quo of Ecological Civilization Education in Colleges and Universities and Improve the Quality and Effectiveness of Ecological Civilization Education

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**Abstract:** *The non-systematization of ecological civilization education in colleges and universities has become a shortcoming restricting the construction of ecological civilization in China. The lack, absence and imperfection of legislative protection, curriculum provision, curriculum content, practices and moral education all directly or indirectly lead to incomplete ecological civilization moral education. Ecological civilization education underlies the construction of ecological civilization. As a main position for talent training, colleges and universities undertake a critical mission of cultivating future leaders, builders and qualified citizens of ecological civilization construction, so it is imperative to improve the quality and effectiveness of ecological civilization education in colleges and universities.*

**Keywords:** *colleges and universities, ecological civilization, education, quality*

## 1. Introduction

Since the Industrial Revolution, with the rapid development of human society and economy, the ecological environment has also suffered unprecedented destruction. Humans have to begin to reflect on the relationship between man and nature, and ecological civilization has thus been born. Under the new situation, the party and government pay more and more attention to the issue of ecological and environmental protection, and the construction of ecological civilization has gradually become one of the key points of the national development strategy. College students are the main force of new students in the construction of socialist cause. Colleges and universities are the cradle of cultivating and transporting talents for the society. Carrying out ecological civilization education in colleges and universities can improve college students' ecological literacy and help them establish a correct concept of ecological civilization. The construction of ecological civilization, as an important part of the overall plan for development in five areas and the four-pronged comprehensive strategy, has become the subject of socialist modernization in the new era. In the critical period when profound changes and transitions in world views, values, and ways of thinking are taking place, ecological civilization education is bound to play an irreplaceable role. Ecological civilization education is a process of popularizing and absorbing ecological concepts to change people's behavior and values. Currently, the lag of ecological civilization education is obviously inconsistent with the overall plan and implementation plan of ecological civilization construction. In particular, the non-systemization of the education has become a shortcoming restricting the construction of ecological civilization in China.

## 2. The lag and status quo of ecological civilization education in China's colleges and universities

### 2.1. Lag of the legislative protection of ecological civilization education

Due to lack of legislative protection, the ecological civilization education in China is divorced with the practice of ecological civilization construction. At present, the local rules and regulations of ecological civilization education have been promulgated in some areas, but lack of a long-term mechanism makes most of them become mere formalities and a flash in the pan. In view of the experience of legislative protection in overseas environmental education, environmental education

needs top-level design and overall planning[1]. All from the mechanism of ecological civilization education management to the content, goals and programs of education requires being clarified, implemented by force and promoted in legal form to ensure the implementation of ecological civilization education. Legislation for ecological civilization education has become an urgent problem to be solved.

### ***2.2. Non-systematization of the curriculum provision of ecological civilization education***

According to a survey on the status of ecological civilization education in non-garden colleges and non-ecological or - environmental majors across the country, ecological civilization education has not been included in the curriculum of compulsory courses in Chinese colleges and universities. The institutions that have offered such courses only categorize it into elective courses, and some even have never offered elective courses on ecological civilization due to problems in faculty. In addition, 26% of students in the institution offering elective courses on ecological civilization have never taken such courses. The fact that ecological civilization education has not yet been fully popularized in colleges and universities and there are no unified normative requirements for curriculum, course outlines, examination and evaluation makes colleges and universities as the educational leaders fail to undertake the responsibilities and obligations of the theoretical and practical education of ecological civilization[2]. Ecological civilization education is an educational system that integrates theories and practices involving the teaching of ecological knowledge, the shaping of values, and the transformation of culture and ethics, so it is impossible for us to fundamentally achieve the objective of ecological civilization education through single-dimension ecological education.

### ***2.3. Non-systematization of the curriculum content of ecological civilization education***

In colleges and universities, there are a few public compulsory courses involving in ecological civilization education. For example, only 12 pages in Section 5, Chapter 10 of "Introduction to Mao Zedong Thought and the Theoretical System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" summarize the concept and pattern of harmonious coexistence between man and nature and briefly expound the necessity and content of speeding up the reform of the ecological civilization system. Ecological civilization education is a systematic project, so education content should focus on the systematic construction of a knowledge system. The chapters in existing compulsory courses cannot impart comprehensive ecological knowledge, only playing a limited role in value guidance and cultural construction. The systematization of educational content is basic prerequisite for the implementation of ecological civilization education. Therefore, the implementation of complex ecological civilization education activities is based on the establishment of a professional education content system and the transformation of the existing structure and framework of the educational content.

### ***2.4. Absence of the practices of ecological civilization education***

Ecological civilization education depends on a combination of theory and practice, so the fragmentation of theoretical education will inevitably lead to the absence of practical education. Practical education embraces curriculum and non-curriculum practical education. The curriculum practice education of today's colleges and universities consists of several major modules such as dissertation, internship, innovation and entrepreneurship, but the practical education of ecological civilization has not been clearly listed, so there is no a corresponding evaluation system. In the non-curriculum practical education, the school culture construction activities of colleges and universities with the theme of environmental conservation have not become the mainstream of school culture. As a consequence, the practical education effect of ecological civilization education does not take a remarkable effect.

### ***2.5. The imperfection of ecological civilization moral education***

Knowledge teaching, ability training and moral education constitute the basic framework for talent training in the existing system of educational content in China. The moral education system pays more attention to ideological and political education centering politics and ideology, which are an integral part rather than all of moral education. Moral education is a complex systematic education project, and the content includes our love and responsibility to the country, society, others, ourselves and nature. For a long time, the moral education system in China only focuses on human life, with lacking cognitive and ethical education of life in nature. Additionally, China has not yet legislated against animal cruelty.

All above problems directly or indirectly led to indifference to and negligence of life in the natural world, and imperfection of the moral education of ecological civilization.

### **3. Several suggestions to improve the quality and effectiveness of ecological civilization education**

Ecological civilization education underlies the construction of ecological civilization. As a main front for talent training, colleges and universities undertake the critical mission of cultivating future leaders, builders and qualified citizens of ecological civilization construction[3]. If basic education is a prerequisite, then higher education is a guarantee to provide talents for ecological civilization construction. Training talents is the core element of the construction of ecological civilization, and how to train a group of people with comprehensive quality (including knowledge, abilities and emotions) of ecological civilization determines the quality and effectiveness of its construction.

#### ***3.1. Promote the legislation of ecological civilization education to ensure its orderly development***

Promoting the legislation of ecological civilization education is a necessary guarantee to ensure its effective implementation. According to the effective experience of developed countries in environmental education, it is necessary to legislate for environmental education first. The construction of ecological civilization in China needs legislation for ecological civilization education to ensure its full and effective implementation in the fields of basic, higher and universal education. Furthermore, it is important to incorporate ecological civilization education into the regular education system to improve the ecological civilization quality of all the people, and stipulate the objectives, content, implementation subjects, faculty training and social participation of ecological civilization education in legal form. Finally, other laws related to the construction of ecological civilization, like the "Animal Cruelty Law", should also be promoted.

#### ***3.2. Reasonably design the curriculum structure to standardize the content of ecological civilization education***

The leading and radiating role of colleges and universities in the construction of ecological civilization should be exerted to be a main position for the scientific research and personnel training of ecological civilization education. Colleges and universities should arrange the ecological civilization course as a public compulsory course for the whole school, and on this basis, combine the characteristics of various disciplines to encourage the offering of various interdisciplinary ecological civilization elective courses. Compulsory courses emphasize basic theoretical education, so the curriculum content focuses on the education of ecological world views, ecological values, ecological cultural views and ecological behavior. Emphasizing comprehensive quality education, elective courses attach more importance to the popularization or environmental science knowledge, the enlightenment of ecological protection awareness and the guidance of ecological protection behaviors.

#### ***3.3. Instill the concept of ecological civilization to realize the implicit educational function of non-classroom activities***

Non-classroom education activities in colleges and universities mainly include various types of school cultural construction activities, club activities, and innovative and entrepreneurial practice activities. It is necessary to instill ecological concept into students through a variety of non-classroom educational activities. The shaping of green culture and the creation of green campuses should be taken as subjects to organize various educational activities to ensure the thorough understanding of ecological civilization and influence the thoughts and behavior of the educated in a subtle way, so that dual changes in thoughts and behavior can be achieved.

#### ***3.4. Establish a practice base of ecological civilization education to carry out a variety of practical activities***

Colleges and universities should build a batch of internship and practice bases for students to carry out practical activities. Ecological experiments, data collection, and investigation and research can be conducted in scientific studies. Academic seminars and knowledge lectures about social hot issues related to environment can be organized in academic activities. Speech, knowledge and debate contests with the theme of environmental conservation should be held in cultural activities. Ecological

handicrafts, technological inventions and exhibitions should be exhibited in scientific and technological activities. The construction of the internship and practice bases and the holding of these activities can not only increase the environmental conservation-related knowledge and skills of the educated, but also change their attitude and influence their behavior.

### ***3.5. Carry out complete "Love" ecological moral education to improve the ideological and political education system***

"Love" is the foundation and red line of moral education and the core of ecological morality. It is not only the soul of a kind person but also the standard for testing people's morality and behavior. It is the core of moral education in addition to a key to open the door between us and society. Thus, education without "love" is not complete. The essence of love is kindness, and its content is to love the country, society, others, ourselves and nature, respectively corresponding to the education of responsibility, mission, communication, personality and life. Only by implementing the education embracing complete love can we cultivate people with sound minds. However, the moral education related to "love" in our existing education system is incomplete, especially lacking the education of creatures in nature, which results in disrespect for other kinds of lives.

## **4. Conclusion**

In real life, it is manifested in mankind's irresponsibility to nature and environment. It is essential to extend morality and love to nature, carry out the moral education of a complete "love", realize the unification of the essence of goodness, and carry forward the beauty of humanity, thereby correcting the values of the educated and cultivating them to be a person with sound spirit and personality.

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