

# Practice analysis and countermeasure of Thanksgiving education in colleges and universities

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## Abstract

Thanksgiving education plays a crucial role in the ideological, political, and moral development of university students. It is essential for fostering personal growth and nurturing a harmonious campus environment. While many universities have organized various themed activities centered around gratitude education, the focus has primarily been on cognitive aspects, with limited attention to practical implementation. This paper examines the existing issues in practical gratitude education and offers recommendations for effective implementation, serving as a valuable reference for colleges seeking to enhance their gratitude education programs.

## Keywords

Thanksgiving education; college students; countermeasures.

## 1. Introduction

Gratitude is a fundamental element of human morality and a key to happiness<sup>[1]</sup>. It forms the basis for societal harmony and community cohesion. Thanksgiving education, rooted in values such as love, respect, understanding, and responsibility, aims to cultivate gratitude consciousness, foster feelings of thankfulness, and develop the ability to express gratitude. Gratitude is a traditional virtue in Chinese culture, representing a fundamental life attitude. It should be a universal moral code for everyone in society<sup>[2-3]</sup>. Young people, in particular, should view gratitude not only as a response to their parents' upbringing but also as an expression of responsibility, self-reliance, self-esteem, and personal integrity.

In today's rapidly developing society, the pressure of economic competition has intensified. Foreign cultural influences, often promoting decadence and negative values, have permeated society, eroding the hearts of individuals. University students, during their time in college, are at a critical stage in shaping their moral beliefs, worldviews, and values. They possess open minds, readily accepting new ideas, but are also susceptible to external influences. Thanksgiving education represents a pivotal component of ideological and political education in colleges. Practical gratitude education provides a new platform for nurturing and elevating moral sentiments. Guiding college students to appreciate their parents and institutions is vital for reinforcing the core values of socialism in higher education.

## 2. The Current State of Thanksgiving Education in Colleges

### 2.1. Weak sense of gratitude education among college students.

**Inadequate Emphasis on Gratitude Education among College Students** Many of today's college students were born after the year 2000, often in single-child families where they receive undivided attention and affection from their parents and relatives. This unique upbringing can lead to a lack of understanding of gratitude. They may accept assistance or favors without expressing appreciation since they perceive such support as an entitlement. This decline in moral sentiment and the erosion of gratitude education is a concerning trend among college students<sup>[4]</sup>.

## 2.2. Few practical links in thanksgiving education

Limited Practical Application of Thanksgiving Education In most colleges, gratitude education is predominantly imparted through one-way communication from teachers to students. The emphasis is on teaching students to appreciate others and care for them, resulting in gratitude education remaining largely theoretical. Gratitude education primarily takes place in the classroom rather than through practical activities. While classroom education is effective for imparting theoretical knowledge about gratitude, it struggles to internalize these teachings and instill gratitude as a genuine emotion or behavior.

## 3. The reasons for the practice of thanksgiving education in Colleges

### 3.1. Most thanksgiving education emphasizes theory but not practice.

Reasons for the Challenges in Implementing Thanksgiving Education in Colleges 3.1 Emphasis on Theory Over Practice Colleges often prioritize theoretical education in gratitude programs, neglecting practical activities. This dichotomy between theory and practice often leads students to view gratitude education as dull and filled with empty slogans. Additionally, the outdated and stagnant content of gratitude education fails to resonate with the evolving needs of today's students. To bridge this gap, colleges should incorporate gratitude education into their long-term planning, making it more systematic and continuous.

### 3.2. Lack of new ideas and long-term effective mechanism in the practice of gratitude education.

Lack of Innovative Ideas and Sustainable Mechanisms Practical experiences are the most effective way to foster personality development. However, traditional gratitude education in colleges mainly focuses on theoretical indoctrination, providing students with vague and unhelpful information. Some sporadic activities, such as students making phone calls or writing letters on special occasions, fail to engage students effectively. A lack of a long-term mechanism for sustaining gratitude education inhibits its progress.

### 3.3. Lack of perfect assessment and evaluation system.

Absence of a Comprehensive Evaluation System The effectiveness of education relies on related evaluation systems. However, gratitude education in universities often lacks a proper evaluation system, leaving many students unsure about what gratitude truly means. Without a structured assessment and evaluation system, gratitude education remains an obligatory task rather than a means to cultivate gratitude and social responsibility.

Individual Differences in Gratitude Education Recipients Gratitude education should encompass society at large, but in the college context, students are the primary focus. Students come from diverse backgrounds, with varying economic statuses, family atmospheres, and access to educational resources. These differences influence their understanding and expression of gratitude. However, most school-based gratitude education programs do not sufficiently account for these individual differences, impeding the overall progress of gratitude education.

## 4. Analysis of the reasons for the practice of thanksgiving education in Colleges

Leverage New Media Platforms and Enhance Practical Activities In recent years, the rapid growth of new media has created significant opportunities for college education<sup>[5]</sup>. College students are highly adaptable to new media, making it an effective tool for promoting gratitude education. By utilizing platforms like blogs, WeChat, and major educational platforms, colleges can enhance the visibility of gratitude education. Engaging students through essay contests and

speech competitions related to expressions of love for parents can further nurture gratitude awareness and improve the efficacy of gratitude education. Thanksgiving education should transition from abstract concepts to tangible, action-oriented activities that allow students to experience and practice gratitude.

Establish a Comprehensive and Systematic Long-term Gratitude Education Mechanism Gratitude education should integrate family, school, and social education. Parents, as primary role models, play a crucial role in teaching children about gratitude. Strengthening family relationships and fostering a sense of family responsibility is essential. Schools can contribute to collective gratitude education through various activities that create a loving and supportive environment. These activities help cultivate a collective gratitude consciousness among students. By involving students in practical activities, fostering self-awareness, and addressing negative ideologies, schools can help students understand that gratitude is not a mere obligation but a moral imperative. Additionally, as government investment in higher education continues, students should recognize the state's support and reciprocate with practical actions. Effective collaboration between family, school, and society can establish a comprehensive and systematic long-term gratitude education mechanism.

Integrate Gratitude Education into the Comprehensive Evaluation System Gratitude education should have an accompanying evaluation system. By quantifying gratitude education and incorporating it into the daily lives of students, colleges can use the evaluation system to guide and motivate students to develop a sense of gratitude. The evaluation system can align students' self-discipline with gratitude, promoting its adoption as an inherent trait. Incorporating gratitude education into the comprehensive quality evaluation system helps cultivate students' gratitude consciousness effectively.

Address Individual Differences in Gratitude Education Practical gratitude education should account for the individual differences among students. Tailored approaches, such as responsibility education, life education, self-reliance education, and New Year education, should be applied to meet each student's unique needs. Special attention should be given to students with challenging family backgrounds and financial difficulties. Gratitude education should be integrated with other moral education programs to enhance students' sense of identity and promote their personal development.

In conclusion, gratitude education in colleges is an essential element of ideological, political, and moral development. To enhance its effectiveness, colleges must transition from theoretical indoctrination to practical activities, establish sustainable mechanisms, introduce evaluation systems, and address individual differences. By doing so, colleges can successfully instill gratitude values in their students and contribute to the overall development of a harmonious society.

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