Metaphors of Learning Chinese Students Live by

Can Xiong

Abstract

In Postman’s classic book The End of Education. Redefining the value of the school, he stated that “… definitions, questions, metaphors — … are three of the most potent elements with which human language constructs a world view” (Postman, 1996, p.175). The application of metaphor into education language provides us with a better understanding of the learning activity. This metaphorical language has significant values because of its rich and unique implications, which can better reflect the epistemological assumptions on learning. In this paper, embedded epistemological assumptions on the nature, the practice and the aims of learning are conveyed via metaphorical models. To present historical continuity, the paper mainly analyzes some conventionalized metaphorical structures of learning in Chinese culture from a diachronic perspective. Conceptualization of learning relates deeply to the conceptualization of understanding and knowing the cultural factors. Based on metaphorical expressions and proverbs, the cultural factors causing the changes are also discussed. Through the transition of student’s role in different periods, various metaphors of learning reveal the corresponding changes of learning approach, which provide a good reference for future education reform.

Keywords

metaphor; learning; conceptualization; student’s role; cultural factors

Full Text:

PDF

References


http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07908310600686751


http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139173865.013


http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139173865.027


http://dx.doi.org/10.1023/A:1016511131117

Concepts We Live By. Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish—a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. We will not use such representations, but only because we know so little about experiential bases of metaphors. By investigating marriage metaphors and food metaphors in current Chinese, we wish to address the following research questions: In the two conceptual metaphors, what are the prominent features in the source domain that are mapped to its target domain? What can mapping between the domains reveal about the conceptualization process? The study of metaphor has now become much more a matter of seeking empirical generalizations to explain the phenomena based on various kinds of converging evidence concerning conceptual and inferential structure. 1980. Metaphors We Live By. Chicago: Chicago University Press. The now-classic Metaphors We Live By changed our understanding of...
metaphor and its role in language and the mind. Metaphor, the authors explain, is a fundamental mechanism of mind, one that allows us to use what we know about our physical and social experience to provide understanding of countless other subjects. This paper will be devoted to the conception of students in Chinese tradition from the perspective of conceptual metaphors. Five major conceptual metaphors in Chinese Classics: STUDENTS ARE WOOD, STUDENTS ARE WATER, STUDENTS ARE METAL, STUDENTS ARE JADE and STUDENTS ARE EARTH, will be examined.