

The Practice of Ideological and Political Education in College English Listening and Speaking Courses within the Framework of Intelligent Learning

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Abstract: Under the dual contexts intelligent learning and ideological and political education, College English Listening and Speaking course, as an indispensable general course within the higher education system, undertakes a great responsibility to explore practical ways to integrate ideological and political elements into it. This paper delves into the challenges faced by College English Listening and Speaking courses in implementing ideological and political education within the smart education environment, while also exploring the prerequisites for effective implementation of such education. Furthermore, it tries to make full use of technology tools, combined with diverse teaching activities, to help the students establish political identity, cultivate patriotism, enhance cultural literacy, nurture the sense of legality, and promote moral integrity. Through these explorations and attempts, this paper aspires to help “foster virtue through education.”

1. Introduction

In May 2020, the Ministry of Education issued the Guiding Outline for the Construction of Ideological and Political Courses in Institutions of Higher Learning, which proposed that the construction of ideological and political courses should be comprehensively promoted in all universities and across all disciplines and majors, with each course assuming the responsibility of educating students.” In October of the same year, the Teaching Guidelines for Ideological and Political Education in University Foreign Language Courses (2020 Edition) noted that universities should make full use of information technology to actively create diverse teaching and learning environments, develop or utilize online open courses, offline courses, blended courses, virtual simulation courses, personalized courses, and other high-quality courses. The College English listening and speaking course is a general course in the higher education system, targeting students in various majors across the university, therefore, it is a long and arduous journey to integrate ideological and political education into this course. Teachers should make full use of modern information technology tools, combine diverse teaching activities, bring high-quality online resources into the classroom, so as to organically integrate ideological and political education into every step of the teaching process[1].

2. Prerequisites for Integrating Ideological and Political Education into English Listening and Speaking Courses within the Context of Intelligent Learning

Under the framework of intelligent learning, certain progress has been made in incorporating ideological and political education into college English listening and speaking courses. However, several challenges still exist. For instance, some teachers struggle to proficiently employ modern information technology in their teaching while the ideological and political elements embedded in some the teaching materials are scattered, which makes it lacks of systematicness and coherence. Furthermore, some students perceive ideological and political education as dull and unrelated to their English learning, resulting in low engagement, which hinders the development of positive learning attitudes and effective learning outcomes.

Therefore, to successfully implement smart ideological and political education in English listening and speaking courses, the aforementioned issues must be addressed. Firstly, universities should provide comprehensive training programs to enhance the information technology teaching capabilities of college English teachers, inspire teachers to embrace new concepts and deepen their theoretical understanding of intelligent teaching design. This will motivate them to actively and efficiently engage in smart teaching practices. Moreover, English teachers must continually deepen their analysis and comprehension of political policies, strengthening their theoretical learning so as to expand the content of textbooks, uncover potential ideological and political elements, and effectively guide students towards positive values. Lastly, teachers should have a profound understanding of contemporary college students' physical and mental characteristics, enrich classroom activities, combine high-quality online resources innovatively, and adopt effective evaluation mechanisms. Only then, the aim of nurturing the students can be achieved.

3. The Practice of Smart Teaching with Ideological and Political Education in English Listening and Speaking Courses

The English Listening and Speaking course is a basic course offered to non-English majors throughout the university. Since 2022, the teaching team has been building a smart classroom and a rich variety of teaching resources have been utilized since then. Students from all majors benefited from it, making it highly suitable for implementing ideological and political education practices within the smart classroom setting[2].

Before class, teachers, based on the unit theme, sort out and explore the ideological and political elements within the textbook content, search for related news, social hotspots, classic cases, etc., filter and select rich and high-quality online resources and materials, and publish relevant pre-class tasks on the teaching platform to enable students to gain preliminary understanding of the upcoming learning content and generate interest, while also sparking reflection on the learning materials. During the class, teachers attempt to utilize the teaching platform in conjunction with AI services and various social media to create various interesting and authentic communicative scenarios, design engaging and challenging group tasks to enhance students' diverse and comprehensive abilities. Furthermore, by integrating functions such as voting, questionnaires, and anonymous intra-group and inter-group evaluations provided by the teaching platform, evaluation and reflection are integrated throughout all stages of various teaching activities. Through self-reflection, peer-to-peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation, students achieve the internalization of knowledge and abilities.

The teaching team conscientiously studied the Guiding Outline for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in College Courses and the Teaching Guidelines for Ideological and Political Education in University Foreign Language Courses. Focusing on political identity, patriotism, cultural literacy, sense of legality, and moral integrity, the team dug deeply into the teaching materials and tried to set targeted ideological and political goals for the courses. They tried their utmost to

systematically impart education on the Chinese Dream, socialist core values, traditional Chinese culture, the rule of law, and mental health to students. By adopting a blended teaching model that integrates online and offline elements, the team seamlessly integrated ideological and political education into the entire process of English teaching design and practice.

3.1 Establish political identity

The Guiding Outline for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in University Courses advocates for the integration of thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era into teaching materials, classrooms, and students' minds. The Teaching Guidelines for Ideological and Political Education in University Foreign Language Courses holds that political identity encompasses Chinese socialism with Chinese characteristics, the Chinese Dream, ecological civilization, new development concepts, the overall national security concept, a community with a shared future for mankind, and other aspects. In the English listening and speaking textbooks, topics such as "Think green, live green", "Live with nature", and "Embrace the unknown" touch upon issues closely related to current affairs, including low-carbon living, natural disasters, marine pollution, and space exploration[3].

Taking the unit "Living with Nature" as an example, this unit focuses on the topic of "harmonious coexistence between humans and nature". Prior to class, the teacher assigns learning tasks through the teaching platform: students are instructed to browse the "Nature" section of the "Spread China" column on the Xuexi Qiangguo app, select pictures, short videos, news articles, etc., that show a harmonious relationship between human and nature and share these things on the teaching platform. By doing this, students first develop the ability to browse and collect information effectively. Meanwhile, they appreciate the beautiful scenery of the motherland's green mountains and clear waters, as well as the harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, gaining an awareness of the achievements made in ecological environment construction, thereby establish the concept of ecological civilization.

Taking "Think green, live green" as an example, the teacher requires the students to film a vlog named "I am a low-carbon superstar", recording the low-carbon lifestyle of themselves and their roommates throughout the day, and subsequently share it on social media platforms for promotion. In the listening section on white pollution of the ocean, teachers can play related videos and guide students to utilize various social media resources to search for and share shocking English news articles about the ocean. The students' determination to safeguard the ocean will be provoked, a global perspective will be broadened and a healthy outlook on ecological civilization will be fostered.

3.2 Cultivate patriotism

The Guide to Ideological and Political Education in College Foreign Language Teaching portrays the sentiment of patriotism and love for one's country as emphasizing value orientation in teaching content, fostering students' practice of socialist core values, patriotism, and a profound attachment to one's country and family. In the unit titled "Embrace the Unknown," a listening dialogue features an interview with an astronaut about their life in space. During the introduction, the teacher inquires about the English word for "astronaut," which leads naturally to the unique term "Taikonaut" used specifically for Chinese astronauts, instilling a sense of national confidence in students. Following this, the teacher presents photographs of renowned Chinese astronauts via PPT, prompting students to discuss their contributions to the nation's space program or share their space exploration stories. In this process, students learn about the perseverance and exploratory spirit displayed by astronauts in the face of difficulties and challenges. Subsequently, the teacher shows a video showcasing the rapid development of China's space industry, enabling students to perceive the country's escalating

technological prowess and growing international standing, thereby arousing their national pride and patriotic fervor[3].

3.3 Enhance cultural literacy

Teaching Guidelines for Ideological and Political Education in University Foreign Language Courses characterizes cultural literacy as the organization and construction of teaching content in college foreign language courses with a focus on three aspects: education of China's fine traditional culture, education of world's outstanding cultures, and education in cross-cultural communication and dissemination. Chinese traditional culture, being both profound and extensive, is an integral part of English language education. Integrating Chinese traditional culture into English teaching, objectively examining the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, and fostering cross-cultural critical thinking abilities are essential components of ideological and political education in English courses.

In the first listening segment of the "Person to Person" unit, there is a listening material related to body language. Teachers can leverage PPTs, videos, and other multimedia tools, coupled with specific cases, to elaborate on the meanings and usages of body language across cultures. By emphasizing the significance of cultural differences and the necessity of respecting cultural diversity, teachers can inspire students to develop a global perspective and cross-cultural communication skills[4].

In the "From the Past to the Future" unit, teachers can divide students into groups and use a lottery software to randomly assign each group a traditional festival from China, other countries, or even exotic ones like Mexico's Day of the Dead or Thailand's Monkey Buffet Festival. Students are tasked with researching related videos, images, crafting handmade items, or showcasing local artifacts via the internet and presenting their findings in the form of PPTs, covering the festival's origins, customs, and more. This activity fosters an appreciation and respect for the world's diverse cultures, enhances students' cross-cultural understanding and cultural transmission abilities, broadens their international horizons while reinforcing cultural self-confidence, and equips them with the ability to spread Chinese culture and tell China's stories in English.

3.4 Nurture the sense of legality

As the rule of law advances, laws are increasingly relevant to the vital interests of every citizen. College students, through various social media channels, can observe numerous legal cases that are closely tied to their own interests, thereby fostering a strong desire for legal knowledge. Although topics related to legal knowledge are relatively scarce in English listening and speaking textbooks, teachers can delve into relevant elements within unit materials and timely impart legal knowledge to students through classroom activities such as movie screenings, quizzes, mock trials, etc., thereby enhancing their legal awareness.

For instance, in the "Cars and Driving" unit, teachers can select some questions about traffic regulations from some driving license apps, and organize a contest on the teaching platform. In the "Smart life, better life?" unit, teachers can introduce cases of technology-related crimes from social media channels, such as cyberbullying, information leakage, online fraud, and privacy violations, prompting students to contemplate and discuss legal avenues to safeguard their own interests. By conducting mock trials and role-playing activities, teachers can create authentic scenarios that provide students with more opportunities to learn about legal knowledge and strengthen their awareness of the rule of law.

3.5 Improve moral integrity

The Guidelines emphasize the need to focus on cultivating students' professional ideals and ethics

in teaching, enhancing social responsibility, forging excellent character, and fostering noble moral sentiments. Teachers can intentionally cultivate students' professional ideals and ethics by integrating their physical and mental characteristics with their majors.

The unit titled "A Better Me" revolves around the theme of individual self-awareness. Prior to class, teachers screen relevant IBM personality test questions through various online channels and ask students to complete the tests promptly during the introduction. The students will have a heated discussion about the relationship between their personality and study or work. Subsequently, the teacher organizes a simulated job interview where students assume roles such as kindergarten teachers, sales representatives, accountants, interior designers, etc. They are required to post job advertisements, briefly introducing the nature of the organization, crucial company policies and regulations, job requirements, etc. Students participating in the interviews must, based on the job advertisements, present their strengths, weaknesses, and future plans. Although designed in a straightforward manner, this activity has a profound impact on students. It enables them to formulate preliminary plans for their professional aspirations, gain initial understanding of workplace rules, and stimulates their sense of responsibility and mission, laying a solid foundation for their future entry into society.

4. Conclusion

Against the backdrop of smart education, college English teachers must keep pace with the advancements in informatization, embrace and establish cutting-edge informatized teaching methodologies, and enhance their own informatized teaching competencies. By subtly integrating ideological and political education into both in-class and out-of-class, online and offline teaching activities, they can truly fulfill their role in guiding values and contribute to the fundamental mission of fostering virtue and cultivating talent in higher education institutions.

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