

Research on the Reform of Ideological and Political Education in English Cultural Courses from the Perspective of “Telling the Story of China”

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Abstract: Cultural courses for English majors bear the important task of cultivating students' cross-cultural communication competence and cultural attainment. The integration of ideological and political education into cultural courses can strengthen students' ideological and moral awareness, enhance cultural confidence, and improve international communication competence. This study focuses on the reform of ideological and political education in English cultural courses, taking “Telling the Story of China and Spreading the Voice of China” as the starting point to explore how to effectively integrate ideological and political elements into the curriculum so as to enhance students' international communication competence and cultural confidence. Through measures such as constructing the ideological and political content system, optimizing teaching design, and improving the evaluation mechanism, the research provides useful references for the ideological and political construction in relevant courses.

1. Introduction

In the context of the accelerating globalization and frequent international exchanges, telling the story of China and spreading the voice of China play a crucial role in spreading Chinese culture and shaping the national image. It can break down cultural barriers and misunderstandings among nations, providing an authentic, comprehensive, and in-depth view of China to the world. Due to the bias and false reports of Western media, some countries have misunderstandings and stereotypes about China. The external environment for China's development is so complex and intricate that it is urgent to strengthen the construction of international communication competence and build a new international communication pattern with distinctive Chinese characteristics. More support and recognition can be drawn to China all around the globe by actively presenting China's great achievements in economic development, social progress, cultural prosperity, and technological innovation, and demonstrating China's responsibility in shouldering responsibilities and promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind in international affairs to the world. Talents with profound cultural knowledge, proficient translation skills, and a good understanding of both domestic and international situation are in great demand. Therefore, improving students' international communication capabilities is a requirement for foreign language teaching in colleges

and universities. And students' international communication abilities should be cultivated from various aspects. Compared with other courses, English cultural courses have advantages in cultivating students patriotism, forming correct perception of the Chinese nation and history and promoting excellent traditional moral qualities. "Telling the story of China" is not only an important way to showcase China's image and spread China's voice to the world, but also an effective means to boost students' cultural confidence and national pride. By integrating "Telling the story of China" into the ideological and political teaching of English cultural courses, students can explore the connotations and values of Chinese culture and improve their language competence, so as to form correct worldviews and values, and strengthen their sense of responsibility and mission. It can also improve students' ability to tell Chinese stories and spread Chinese culture in English, so as to promote exchanges and mutual learning among different cultures, enhance the international influence of Chinese culture, and contribute to promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. It is the foundation for cultivating patriotic professional talents with an international perspective. Therefore, This paper delves deeply into the ideological and political teaching reform of the English cultural courses (with "Society and Culture of English-speaking Countries" and "Overview to Chinese Culture" as the main research subjects), and conducts in-depth research on the design of ideological and political education in cultural courses, with aims to improve the design, practical methods, and mechanisms of ideological and political education in cultural courses, promote the better integration of ideological and political elements into classroom teaching so as to enhance students' recognition of ideological and political education in courses, their ability to tell Chinese stories well in English and the effectiveness of ideological and political teaching in cultural courses.[1]

2. The Current Situation and Unresolved Issues in the Ideological and Political Education of the English Cultural Courses

The foreign language majors in colleges and universities are at the forefront of cultural exchanges. However, foreign language teaching in universities focuses more on the dissemination and exchange of Western culture and there is a deficiency in the in-depth exploration and systematic teaching of Chinese culture in foreign language teaching. Ideological and political education reform in English cultural courses should focus on cultivating students' morality by integrating ideological and political education throughout the entire teaching process. Therefore, a systematic research on the ideological and political teaching reform of English cultural courses from the perspective of "Telling the Story of China and Spreading the Voice of China" should be carried out, especially in the specific strategies and methods of teaching practice, and in further exploration and innovation. Cultural courses for English majors integrate language skills with professional knowledge to achieve the integration of foreign language majors and related disciplines. This series of courses can help students focus on a diverse knowledge base rather than on the language alone. However, due to the large amount of information, and severe shortage of class hours of these courses, some necessary teaching activities cannot be carried out in the classroom, and the integration of ideological and political education in the classroom is ineffective. Some teachers still follow the teacher-centered teaching mode, ignoring the initiative of learners and their ability to understand and analyze cultural phenomena, which results in students' deficiency in cross-cultural communication capacity. As cognitive subjects, students are always in a passive position as knowledge receivers throughout the entire teaching process. Students' initiative is ignored or even suppressed. This teaching model cultivates students who are mostly knowledge-based and imitative talents, lacking the spirit of independent innovation.[2]

There are many problems in the implementation of ideological and political education in English cultural courses, such as the lack of ability to explore the resources of ideological and political education in the curriculum; the lack of systematic contents of ideological and political education in cultural courses; the lack of flexibility and diversity in the teaching and implementation methods.

3. Strategies for the Construction of Ideological and Political Teaching Resources

Teachers should explore the ideological and political elements contained in the course, select appropriate teaching materials and carry out teaching design accordingly to provide strong theoretical support and guidance for the implementation of cultivating morality and cultural identity. In this way, ideological and political points can be thoroughly explored and profoundly delivered.

(1) Systematic implementation of ideological and political education in “Overview to Chinese Culture (Bilingual)”

Teachers should integrate ideological and political education with professional education, and use diverse teaching methods to provoke students’ critical thinking, improve their expression, and strengthen their cultural dissemination awareness. The content of the course encompasses the following five modules:

1) The module of cultivating patriotic sentiment

The tradition of patriotism is foundation of Chinese nation, the spiritual genes of the ideological and cultural identity of Chinese nation, as well as the root of the cultural self-confidence. The Chinese nation has been plagued by natural disasters and frequent wars in the past thousands of years. Why has the Chinese nation been able to survive and develop tenaciously through these vicissitudes and chaos? This contributes to the patriotism of righteous Chinese people in maintaining the unity of territory and Chinese nation for thousands of years.

2) The module of cultivating correct ethnic and historical views

The course requires students to understand the exchange and integration of various ethnic cultures in China, cultivate a sense of community with a shared future for the Chinese nation, establish correct national and historical views, so as to strengthen the sense of community for the Chinese nation and safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Students are inspired to cultivate correct views on ethnicity and history through explanation and group discussion about the role different ethnic groups play in promoting the development of Chinese culture by means of cultural collision, influence, absorption and integration.

3) The module of promoting excellent traditional moral qualities

The traditional Chinese virtues advocated by Confucius and the thought of naturalness and non-contention put forward by Laozi play a crucial role in Chinese culture. With the support of brilliant Chinese thoughts and profound Chinese philosophy, China has always been a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development and a defender of international order.

4) The module to enhance cultural confidence in ancient achievement

Ancient China has made brilliant and outstanding achievements in various fields, such as medicine, science and technology. Students can have a comprehensive understanding of the important achievements in ancient China, thereby enhancing national pride and building up cultural confidence.

5) The module of cultivating Chinese aesthetic style and orientation

Students can get an insight into Chinese aesthetic style and orientation, and into the vitality and the beauty of harmony in Chinese art from different dimensions. The ancient art incorporates exquisite craftsmanship and unique aesthetic concepts, reflecting the wisdom and creativity of the ancient Chinese people.

(2) Systematic implementation of ideological and political education in “Society and Culture of English-speaking Countries”

By conducting in-depth research on the ideological and political teaching design of English cultural courses, teachers can endow ideological and political education with deeper connotations. Teachers can introduce comparisons between China and the English-speaking countries and between the past and the present. Those comparisons and discussion will give rise to some conflicts in thoughts which provoke students' thinking. By thinking, discussing, comparing, summarizing, and analyzing, students develop the ability to discover, analyze, and solve problems, enhance their logical and critical thinking, and improve their cross-cultural communication competence. While designing the class activities, teachers should conduct in-depth research on the design concepts and implementation methods of ideological and political education in cultural courses, and integrate ideological and political elements into teaching activities. Emotional appeals are more likely to lead to the change in attitude than logical appeals, so teachers should follow and adhere to the principle of emotional resonance in teaching design. Only through conceptual conflicts, comparisons and collisions, can these ideas be internalized and integrated into students' values and ideology. Teachers should not only guide students in value and ideology, but also follow the principle of independent choice, respect students' independent thinking and the emotional characteristics, and guide them to make their own correct choices. In addition, by comparing China and the West, students can gain a more objective and in-depth understanding of Chinese culture.[3]

4. Measures for Ideological and Political Education Reform

(1) Building up an ideological and political content system and focusing on the integration of professional education and ideological and political education

Chinese culture covers various fields such as historical events, traditional customs and contemporary developments, demonstrating the wisdom and spirit of the Chinese nation. The ancient myths and legends showcase the unique imagination and creative spirit of the Chinese nation towards the origin of the world; the stories of the Hundred Schools of Thought contain profound philosophical reflections and moral principles; The stories of revolution and achievements in modern time demonstrate the indomitable spirit of struggle and great patriotism. By deeply exploring the teaching content of cultural courses in foreign language majors and combining it with teaching practice, teachers can find the focus of integrating ideological and political elements into professional education, and construct an ideological and political content system.

(2) Optimizing the teaching design of ideological and political education in cultural courses

Teachers should explore ideological and moral elements and integrate them into the teaching procedure, following the principle of emotional resonance. Ideological and moral elements are not only infused into discourse and texts, but also into the diverse teaching tasks, activities, and the teaching environment. The integration of ideological and political elements should be promoted before, during, and after class. The “reading-discussion-creation” mode can also be adopted in the design of teaching activities. In the reading section, teachers guide students to read the selected articles, and analyze the structure, language characteristics, and cultural connotations. By analyzing how these articles elaborate on the historical origins, customs and cultural significance, students can acquire the skills for vivid expression of Chinese stories. By inspiring and provoking students' deep thinking, students can internalize the knowledge they have learned and come up with innovative expression of Chinese culture. Focusing on the cognitive process of students and emphasizing their experiential and creative abilities, teachers guide students in cognitive and language construction. This teaching model aims to cultivate students' cognition and critical thinking, and improve their cognitive thinking.

(3) Innovating teaching methods and enhancing the language proficiency and the effect of ideological and moral education

In terms of teaching methods, innovative teaching methods should be adopted, such as case study, group discussion, project-based learning, etc., to stimulate students' interest and initiative in learning. Teachers should guide students to actively participate in classroom interaction, improve their language capacity and the effect of ideological and political moral education in practice. Students should be encouraged to carry out group projects in English, such as discussing about the unique culture of a certain region in China, comparing the cultural differences between China and the West. Through data and information collection, teamwork, brainstorming and group presentation, students' team cooperation and language skills can be improved, while their understanding and love for Chinese culture can be enhanced.

1) Situational teaching method

The situational teaching method can create a realistic language and cultural environment for students, which enables students to experience the charm of Chinese culture and improve their language competence. Teachers can use resources such as multimedia to display relevant pictures, videos, etc., to explore the historical background and significance of cultural phenomena. Students can engage in role-playing activities to improve their expression and cultural awareness. In addition to classroom teaching, activities such as traditional Chinese recitation competitions, poetry competitions, and speech competitions, should be held to engage students in introducing Chinese culture and telling Chinese stories.

2) Group cooperative learning

Group cooperative learning can cultivate students' teamwork and critical thinking. Teachers can divide students into groups and assign tasks of telling Chinese stories. In group discussion, students can analyze and discuss the collected information, and express their own views and opinions. Through such discussion, students can think about the problem from different perspectives, analyzing and solving the problem. Meanwhile, students can innovate some of the plots of the story and make the story comply with contemporary aesthetic requirements, thus delivering and demonstrating the charm of Chinese culture and spreading Chinese culture to the world. By presenting Chinese stories brilliantly, students improve their language proficiency and team collaboration. The teacher explains the key and difficult issues and the framework, integrating the points of ideological and political teaching into the content and inspiring students to think, explore, and comprehend on their own. Students engage in group discussions and air their opinions on designated topics. After the students have completed their presentation, the teacher provides feedback on the content of their presentation. The teacher's feedback mainly focuses on the organization and content of their presentation, the accuracy of the English expression, and the logic of viewpoints. In the evaluation process, it is important for teachers to give students positive affirmation and appreciation. This can easily motivate students to engage in more in-depth learning after class, and create a good teaching and learning atmosphere. When students engage in discussions, teachers can play the role of participants and participate in different group discussions. For groups with a weak discussion atmosphere, more encouragement and additional guidance should be given to encourage students to express their opinions actively and to facilitate the discussion. In this way, students expand their scope of learning and enhance their ability for independent innovation off the class, which can improve language competence, the effectiveness of ideological and political education, cognition and critical thinking.

(4) Developing training projects for improving students' listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation in telling Chinese stories

Emphasis should be attached to the cultivation of students' capacity to tell Chinese stories well in a foreign language, and their cross-cultural communication awareness. Teachers can conduct

project-based learning by organizing students to do in-depth research on specific themes. Students complete the planning, the composing, the writing, and the presenting of the Chinese story in groups. Specific training projects should be developed to improve students' capacity to tell Chinese stories from the perspectives of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation. The reform demonstrate the shift from a "teaching-centered" approach to a "learning-centered" one, effectively addressing the problem of the disconnection between knowledge delivery and practice, as well as the insufficient ability of students to tell Chinese stories in English.

(5) Improving the multiple-dimension evaluation system to evaluate the effectiveness of the reform

The evaluation system not only evaluates students' mastery of language, but also attach great importance to the evaluation of students' understanding of Chinese culture, and the improvement of students' ideological and moral awareness. A combination of self-evaluation, peer-evaluation, and teacher-evaluation is introduced to evaluate students' learning outcomes objectively. Through the comparative analysis of teaching practice effects, teaching feedback and data, teachers can evaluate the implementation effect of the ideological and political education. By monitoring the teaching effect of ideological and political education throughout the teaching process, teachers can locate the problems in teaching procedure, adjust the teaching design and content and, improve the teaching practice. The dimension of language performance focuses on students' ability to deliver Chinese stories appropriately, including the fluency, accuracy, pronunciation and intonation in oral expression, as well as the logic, coherence, and correctness in written expression. The dimension of ideological and political performance evaluates students' acceptance of Chinese culture and ideology, cultural confidence, and sense of social responsibility demonstrated during the learning process. Students have profound understanding of Chinese culture, hold the positive values, draw positive energy from Chinese stories, and transform them into their own behavioral norms. These are the indicators of internalization of the ideological and political elements.

Process evaluation runs through the entire teaching process, focusing on students' learning process and daily performance. In terms of classroom performance, teachers observe students' participation, performance and contributions in group activities, such as teamwork, communication ability, leadership, etc. The completion of homework is also an important aspect of process evaluation. Teachers assign homework, such as English writing, translation, and data collection analysis, and evaluate students' homework from the accuracy, completeness, innovation of content, and standardization of language expression. Students are encouraged to record and upload short videos about Chinese traditional culture on popular online platforms or Apps. Students are divided into several teams to complete micro videos about Chinese culture. Through team collaboration, team members can put their talents into full play, thereby improving their ability to summarize, innovate, etc. The assessment conducted at the end of the semester or course is mainly in the form of examination, which tests students' mastery of the knowledge and skills learned in this semester. By combining process evaluation with final examination, it is possible to avoid the limitations of a single evaluation method and reflect students' learning outcomes and progress comprehensively. Process evaluation can identify problems that students encounter during the learning process, providing a clue for teachers to adjust their teaching strategies. The final examination can evaluate the overall learning effectiveness of students, providing a quantitative feedback for their learning outcomes.

5. Conclusion

Through appropriate design of classroom activities and teaching content, ideological and political education and moral education can be better internalized into students' values and ideology.

The internalization and recognition are achieved through conflicts, comparisons, and collisions in concept and emotion. The ultimate goal is to improve the effect of ideological and political education in the classroom and to cultivate students' ability to spread Chinese culture to the world. Through two rounds of teaching practice, students have achieved significant improvement in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation, as well as in their understanding and dissemination of Chinese culture. Most students can write articles with rich content, accurate language expression and infectious plots, and can tell Chinese stories in fluent English with confidence. The teaching reform has cultivated students' international communication ability from multiple aspects. In terms of language proficiency, students' English listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation abilities have been comprehensively improved; In terms of ideological awareness, students' sense of identity and pride in Chinese culture has significantly increased. By guiding students to "tell the story of China and spread the voice of China" in foreign languages, the reform improves students' ideological and moral awareness, moral quality, and cultural awareness, so as to build up China's international communication capacity and cultural soft power, and cultivate international talents with patriotism, global vision and competitive capabilities.

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