

Research on the Reform and Practice of Ideological and Political Education in Cultural Courses for English Majors from the Perspective of Cultural Confidence

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Abstract:

The research focuses on the design of ideological and political education for cultural courses, with “Overview to Chinese Culture (Bilingual)” as the research subject, so as to optimize the design, the practice and the evaluation of ideological and political education in cultural courses, promote the better integration of ideological and political elements and professional education and enhance students' recognition of ideological and political education.

Keywords:

Ideological and Political Education, Cultural Courses, Reform and Practice

1. Introduction

The English major is a cutting-edge discipline in the fierce collision of Chinese and Western ideological, cultural, and discourse systems. The construction of ideological and political education in foreign language courses helps students establish correct values and tell good Chinese stories in foreign languages. It is the foundation for cultivating patriotic professional talents with an international perspective.

As a fundamental course of the translation major at Xi'an Fanyi University, “Overview of Chinese Culture (Bilingual)” is one of the main channels for providing ideological and political education to students, with its comprehensive introduction to various aspects of Chinese culture. It is a comprehensive course which can improve both Chinese cultural awareness and English language competence, with the aim to cultivate students' ability to introduce and promote Chinese culture in English. The course takes Introducing Chinese culture in English as textbook, which is rich in contents and varied in style, with wide range of themes and profound cultural connotations. Compared with other courses, it has advantages in cultivating students patriotism, forming correct perception of the Chinese nation and history and promoting excellent traditional moral qualities. Students can improve their ability to introduce Chinese culture to the world in cross-cultural communication and to

demonstrate the charm of Chinese culture. It is conducive to inheriting and innovating excellent traditional Chinese culture, boosting cultural confidence and national pride, and strengthening responsibility and sense of mission to spread Chinese culture to the world so as to enhance China's international influence.

2. The Current Situation and Unresolved Issues in the Ideological and Political Education of the Course

There are many problems in the implementation of ideological and political education in English cultural courses. Firstly, as for English teachers, the ability to explore the resources of ideological and political education in the curriculum and the awareness of the ideological and political education in the curriculum should to be further improved. Secondly, the content of ideological and political education in cultural courses is not systematic. Without a systematic and complete implementation system of ideological and political education, the effectiveness of ideological and political teaching is under expectation. Thirdly, the teaching and implementation methods of ideological and political education are not flexible and diversified enough. This paper 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, so as to promote the better integration of ideological and political elements into classroom teaching. The author puts forward the following suggestions to teaching reform on the ideological and political education of "Overview of Chinese Culture (Bilingual)" so as to enhance students' recognition and the effectiveness of ideological and political teaching in cultural courses.

3. Improvement of College English Teachers' Awareness of the Ideological and Political Education in Cultural Courses

English education should not only cultivates students' ability to think critically about Chinese and Western cultures, and enables them to communicate effectively in English, but also serves the people and socialism with Chinese characteristics. The course "Overview to Chinese Culture(Bilingual)" requires teachers to be proficient in both language teaching and traditional Chinese culture, which means they should be inter-disciplinary talents. Teachers should have strong professional skills and extensive knowledge of both Eastern and Western cultures, understand national policies, relevant laws and regulations, select appropriate teaching materials and carry out teaching design accordingly, which is also conducive to the improvement of teachers' professional competence and political cultivation. Teachers should communicate and exchange ideas with ideological and political course teachers, prepare lessons collectively, explore the connotation of ideological and political education in each unit by referring to related materials. Ideological and political course teachers should be invited to participate in the process of curriculum development and teaching design. Meanwhile, English teachers can also explore the ideological and political elements contained in the course from a professional perspective to provide strong theoretical support and guidance for the implementation of cultivating morality and cultural identity. Thus, a collaborative education mechanism can be established between ideological and political course teachers and English teachers. [1] By implementing collective lesson preparation and co-construction of teaching resources and research projects, ideological and political points can be thoroughly explored and profoundly delivered. Meanwhile, teachers can

improve their professional competence and awareness of the ideological and political education in cultural courses.

4. Systematic Implementation of Ideological and Political Education in Cultural Courses

Innovation should be made to classroom teaching design and thematic modular teaching should be carried out, that is, to classify chapters according to modules and explore relevant ideological and political embedding points.[2] The content of the course is divided into the following 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. It is the ideological source of the concepts of President Xi Jinping, such as “Patriotic sentiment”, “safeguarding unity”, etc. Through the teaching of the module of cultivating patriotism, the time-honored noble quality of Chinese civilization can be inherited and developed among the younger generation. This section is mainly reflected in Unit 3 “Chinese Characters” and Unit 4 “Chinese Festivals”.

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.

Unit 3 focuses on the evolution of Chinese Characters and Chinese calligraphy. Students will notice that despite the fact that Chinese Characters have gone through the changes of dynasties, invasions and technological challenges, it has enjoyed sound development in history. With passage of time, plenty of pictographic and ideographic characters died out in the world, while Chinese Characters, as the root of Chinese civilization and carrier of Chinese history, maintain the unique vitality and charm. Students were surprised by the wonderful arrangements for thousand of different shapes(characters) to fit in a small square. The students are encouraged to appreciate some masterpieces of Chinese calligraphy, exchange their ideas on the calligraphic style and reflect on the spirit of ancient calligraphers. In Unit 4, the Dragon Boat Festival is elaborated introduced. Historical figures such as Qu Yuan can evoke students' love for their country and patriotic enthusiasm. By discussing the splendid festival customs nurtured by Chinese civilization, students acquire the essence and influence of Chinese culture.

(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. This is mainly reflected in Unit 5 “Chinese Food”, Unit 8 “Chinese Crafts”, Unit 7 “Chinese Clothing” and Unit 9 “Layout and Hierarchy of Traditional Chinese Architecture”.

In this module, the specific contributions of various ethnic minorities to Chinese culture are systematically introduced from the perspectives of food, crafts, clothing, architecture, etc. The evolution of Chinese clothing and architecture is a concrete manifestation of communication and integration between ethnic groups, such as the fusion of Manchu and Han dress styles, the architectural integration among the Manchu, Han, Mongolian and Tibetan of the Forbidden City. Students can also sense the elegant lifestyle and aesthetic concepts of the Chinese people.

In “Chinese Food” and “Chinese Crafts”, students recognize the aspirations of all ethnic groups for a better life and the common aspiration of the Chinese nation as a whole. 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. Students can be organized into group to discuss their unique interesting food customs, the similarities and differences in their dieting habits, medicinal diet and food therapies, deepening their understanding of Chinese food culture. It shows the balance yin and yang, the same origin of medicine and food, as well as the stable and harmonious lifestyle and mentality of the Chinese people.

(3) The module of promoting excellent traditional moral qualities

The module is mainly reflected in Unit 1 “The Wisdom of Confucius” , Unit 2 “The Wisdom of Laozi” and Unit 10 Cultural Connotations of Traditional Chinese architecture. 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. Confucianism, with *Ren* (benevolence and love) and *Li* (rituals, proprieties, tradition, norms of social life, standards of conduct) as its core concepts, is the essence of traditional Chinese thinking. *Ren* develops from cultivating filial piety at home and giving love to everybody, to keeping social and political order in a country. Confucius maintains that filial piety consists of true feelings of love and reverence. By providing relevant materials for students to stimulate their emotional resonance, filial piety is internalized and integrated as part of their own values so as to achieve the effect of “entering the ear, brain, and heart”. Confucius’ quotes such as “Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself.” and “If you yourself desire rank and standing, help others get them. If you want to do everything successfully, help others to do so.” provide guidance for the Chinese people to get along with other people and nations, which is illustrated by the facts that peace and harmony have been pursued and inherited by the Chinese nation for more than 5000 years and there is no gene in the blood of the Chinese nation to invade others and seek hegemony. It is also demonstrated by the Belt and Road Initiative, which aims at promoting policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bond in the international community. 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. Cultural confidence in ancient

achievement can be discussed in great details in Unit 12 “Traditional Chinese Medicine” and “24 Solar Terms”.

(5) The module of cultivating Chinese aesthetic style and orientation

Aesthetic education fosters students’ ability to appreciate beauty and create beauty, which is beneficial to both college students’ life and the nation’s development. Students can get an insight into Chinese aesthetic style and orientation in Unit 9 “Layout and Hierarchy of Traditional Chinese Architecture”, Unit 11 “Peking Opera” and Unit 13 “Chinese Painting”. Students can hold group discussions by referring to pictures and video materials of specific art categories such as ancient Chinese architecture, sculpture, calligraphy, painting, music, opera, etc. They can sense the vitality and inner spirit of ancient Chinese art and the beauty of harmony in Chinese art. Students’ appreciation of the beauty can be improved by the concrete manifestations of Chinese aesthetic style, such as, philosophical thoughts on the material world expressed by Chinese painters through their paintings, axial symmetry and south-north orientation of the Forbidden City, the beauty and craftsmanship of traditional Chinese architecture, paintings emphasizing the importance of wholeness, the stylized singing and graceful movements of the characters in Peking Opera. Thus, students obtain a deeper understanding and comprehension of Chinese aesthetics from different dimensions. Apart from guiding students to understand the essence of Chinese aesthetics, teachers also encourage students to discuss their favorite art genres, painters, musicians, etc. , and discover the beauty of Chinese art in daily life. For example, ancient Chinese painting mainly takes the forms of landscape painting, flower and bird painting, figure painting, etc., emphasizing the expression of artistic conception, aesthetic connotations, emotional expression and pursuit of simplicity and naturalness in form. The sculpture art of ancient China mainly takes the forms of stone carving, wood carving, copper carving, etc. The works are exquisite and delicate, incorporating elements of religion, history, culture, etc., which had high artistic and historical value. The ancient Chinese architectural art incorporates exquisite craftsmanship and unique aesthetic concepts, reflecting the wisdom and creativity of the ancient Chinese people.

5. The Teaching and Implementation Methods of Ideological and Political Education

(1) 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 naturally integrate ideological and political elements into teaching activities. American experimental psychologist has demonstrated through experiments that “emotional appeals are more likely to lead to attitude change than logical appeals.” Therefore, in order to achieve an immersive effect of the ideological and political education, teachers should follow the principle of emotional resonance. Thus, the teaching design should adhere to the principles of emotional resonance. The ideas should be internalized and integrated into students’ values and ideology through conceptual conflicts, comparisons and collisions, thereby achieving their value identification. Teachers have to reform teaching forms, apply diverse teaching methods and adopt various methods suitable for students’ physical and mental characteristics. 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 conflicts, comparisons and collisions. In the process of

providing moral education and value guidance for students, as well as in the design of ideological and political education for cultural courses, it is necessary to consider what moral cognition can better promote their value identification, stimulate their moral emotions, and ultimately internalize into their moral behavior.

(2) Students should visit scenic spots, historical sites, cultural relics, museums, art galleries, art exhibitions, and engage in cultural and artistic practice on campus to appreciate the charm of Chinese art and build up cultural confidence. On-the-spot teaching enhance the effectiveness of ideological and political education in cultural courses. [3] To achieve the organic integration of ideological and political education with professional courses in practical activities, so that theoretical knowledge can be further understood and mastered by students through practice. Teachers should make use of various materials to facilitate the teaching. For example, in Unit 9 “Layout and Hierarchy of Traditional Chinese Architecture”, students can have a better understanding about the beauty and the exquisite craftsmanship of the Forbidden City with the assistance of video clips or three-dimensional books and picture books on the architectural style of the Forbidden City. 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 good Chinese stories.

(3) The course should be designed to enhance students’ self-learning ability, stimulate their interest in participating in classroom discussion actively, strengthen their knowledge mastery of Chinese society and 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. Through pre-class reading, classroom explanation and discussion, and post-class reflection, ideological and political elements are naturally integrated into every stage of students’ learning. 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 logical 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) Online platforms and Mooc should be utilized to facilitate students’ learning. Teachers share learning resources and video materials before class, explain and discuss key issues in class, and assign exercises and tests for students after class. After The teacher releases assignments and discussions, and uploads supplementary materials to allow students to supplement their learning in the unit. The teacher’s

post-class Q&A highlights the strong and weak points of students' assignments, allowing students to discover their own problems through participation in evaluation. This approach makes it easier for students to develop problem-solving and independent learning abilities.

(4) In terms of assignments, 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 to complete the task successfully, thereby improving their ability to summarize, innovate, etc.

6. Conclusions

Cultural courses are undoubtedly an excellent entry point for carrying out ideological and political education due to the course attributes. 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. Students should be equipped with the ability to tell good Chinese stories and spread the Chinese voice in English. Our time calls for patriotic talents with global vision.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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