

An Innovative Study on the Path of Integrating Curriculum Ideology and Politics in College English Teaching: Taking *An Overview of Chinese Culture* as an Example

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Abstract: With the rapid development of information technology and the Internet, people can easily and quickly obtain news and information from all over the world. As the state's requirements for the curriculum ideology and politics are being strengthened, it is necessary to adapt to the needs of the times and integrate ideology and politics into college English teaching. Integration of ideology and politics into teaching is a challenge faced by colleges and universities nowadays, which aims to make ideology and politics alive and well and more acceptable to contemporary college students. In view of this, this paper starts with the importance of the integration of ideology and politics into college English teaching, takes *An Overview of Chinese Culture* as an example, analyzes new approaches for integrating ideology and politics into the teaching process, and formulates the teaching design centered around these approaches, so as to promote the organic integration of ideology and politics with English teaching.

Keywords: College English; Curriculum ideology and politics; English teaching; Teaching innovation

Online publication: December 25, 2023

1. The importance of integrating curriculum ideology and politics into college English teaching

As socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new era, the state and society have put forward new requirements for the English learning and proficiency of the millennial generation of college students. As the main basic course of higher education institutions, college English carries the fundamental task of establishing morality and educating people, and shoulders the mission of “cultivating the roots, casting the soul, and educating new people” in the new era. The Guideline for the Construction of Ideology and Politics in Higher Education Courses issued by the Ministry of Education in 2020 emphasizes that the construction of courses on ideology and politics is an important task for comprehensively improving the quality of talent cultivation. President Xi Jinping has pointed out that it is necessary to insist on making moral education the central part of

teaching and educating people, and that ideological and political education should be carried out throughout the whole process of education, so as to align various curricula in the same direction as ideological and political theory courses. College English is a public basic course for non-English majors in institutions of higher education, which plays an important role in cultivating students' language ability and enhancing their humanistic qualities^[1]. In the context of the new liberal arts, the integration of course ideology and politics into college English teaching is in line with the fundamental requirements of the college moral education, ensuring that college English courses are aligned with ideology and politics and fostering a unity of explicit and implicit education. This, in turn, cultivates a synergistic effect, contributing to the construction of a comprehensive and all-round "Sanquan Education" pattern.

As a national symbol, language carries the important role of inheriting national culture and promoting cultural exchange. English is not merely a language but also a carrier and container of cultural information^[2]. Effectively narrating China's story in English has become a focal point, especially with the release of foreign language translations of Xi Jinping on Governance, which has pushed the language into the spotlight of ideological and political education. In view of the unique instrumental and humanistic nature of college English, teachers should explore the value content behind the language from the perspective of the discipline. In the teaching process, they should combine the method of thinking and the concept of value, deeply excavate the ideological and political elements of the course, and organically incorporate them into the course teaching, so as to achieve the effect of subtly educating people^[3].

This paper takes Chapter 11 Major Tourist Cities of *An Overview of Chinese Culture* (Revised Edition) published by Foreign Studies as an example. Through the introduction of China's major tourist cities, it analyzes and explores the traditional Chinese culture behind the cities and their tourism resources, and takes this as a bridge to organically connect with the elements of ideology and politics and explore new paths of integrating ideology and politics into the teaching of English at university so as to maximize the effectiveness of ideology and politics in the course, as well as improve and enrich the worldview, outlook on life, and values of college students.

2. The current situation of ideology and politics in college English teaching programs

2.1. Disconnect between the theory and practice of ideology and politics

In the process of integrating course ideology and politics, there is sometimes a disconnect between theory and practice. Even though the textbook covers some ideological and forward-looking topics, students tend to stay only at the theoretical level and lack critical thinking^[4]. Students' lack of in-depth understanding and practice of the ideological and political content in the curriculum not only prevents them from internalizing moral values and social responsibilities into their own code of conduct, but also causes them to mechanically memorize and listen to the relevant knowledge without truly comprehending the meaning behind it.

2.2. Monotonous content of ideological and political materials

At present, the content of course ideology and politics integrated into the university English program is still relatively single, mainly focusing on some traditional moral and ethical issues, such as honesty, friendliness socialist core values, and so on. Although these topics play a positive role in shaping students' good morals and values, the overly monotonous content setting is prone to fall into formalism, making it difficult to stimulate students' strong interest and deep thinking^[5]. The demand for comprehensive ability in modern society is getting increasingly higher, and foreign language courses are also shifting their focus to cultivating students' comprehensive literacy and application ability. In this context, students need to pay more attention

to contemporary society and major international issues, so that the course ideology and politics can align with students' real lives and challenges.

2.3. Neglect of the value of ideology and politics

As a foreign language course, college English aims to improve college students' English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Therefore, some teachers focus on enhancing students' language skills and vocabulary accumulation in the classroom, and pay less attention to the cultivation of students' humanistic qualities^[6]. Secondly, there are fewer class hours for college English, resulting in teachers only being able to explain book knowledge in the classroom, with little time to share the elements of ideology and politics with students. In addition, out of the pressure of employment, promotion, and examination, most non-English students prefer to master test-taking skills in an English classroom and ignore the cultivation of humanistic qualities. Therefore, in the classroom of college English, both teachers and students often neglect the value of course ideology and politics, resulting in an unsatisfactory ideology and politics effect.

3. Analysis and mining of ideological and political elements in *An Overview of Chinese Culture*

The book covers five parts: country profile; literature, religion, and art; education, science, and technology; folk customs; and tourism; it introduces the excellent traditional Chinese culture from all angles. Chapter 11 takes China's major tourist cities as the theme, and gives an introduction to the city profiles, tourism resources, and humanities of the eight major cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Xi'an. Recently, new types of tourism such as "Special Forces Tourism" and "24-Hour Challenge" have become popular among college students. While traditional tourist cities continue to experience sustained popularity, emerging food-oriented tourist cities like Zibo and Xuzhou are also steadily gaining prominence, presenting a blossoming phenomenon in the current situation of tourism in China. In view of this, students are more interested in this chapter, therefore, mining the elements of ideology and politics from students' point of interest can not only enable students to learn knowledge better but also internalize the elements of ideology and politics contained therein.

Through practical teaching, the following aspects can be the entry points for the integration of curriculum ideology and politics:

- (1) Cultural inheritance and protection: Tourist cities, as places that focus on Chinese history and culture, imply the inheritance and protection of traditional culture. Integrating traditional cultural elements into tourism products and services allows tourists to experience and understand China's unique cultural values. Touring famous monuments and visiting museums in the course of tourism can enable foreign tourists to understand history and culture, develop aesthetic ability, and enhance humanistic qualities.
- (2) Social harmony and inclusion: People from different cultural backgrounds and living customs in tourist cities visiting the same place need to be tolerant and understanding of each other, in order to promote mutual understanding and exchanges between different regions and cultural backgrounds as well as promote social inclusiveness and unity.
- (3) Sustainable development: Tourist cities should focus on sustainable development, emphasize the protection and management of the ecological environment and resources, and advocate the concepts of green and sustainable tourism. At the same time, combining with the concept of "double carbon," they should promote the green and low-carbon transformation of production mode and lifestyle, and accelerate the modernization of harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature.
- (4) Cultural self-confidence and national image: Tourist cities are the windows for China to demonstrate

its national honor and image and cultural self-confidence to the world. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the image and quality of tourist cities, strengthen foreign publicity and promotion, and seek common ground while reserving differences, so that international tourists can better understand and know China, and enhance national self-confidence.

To summarize, the elements of ideology and politics embedded in this chapter include both the promotion of traditional Chinese culture and environmental issues and global relations from an international perspective. In short, the learning process of college English courses is an opportunity to cultivate students' positive outlook on life and correct worldview. Incorporating curriculum ideology and politics can help students establish a correct worldview and life view by guiding them to think about and discuss important social, ethical, and moral issues, which has a positive impact on students' personal development and social progress ^[7].

4. New path of integrating curriculum ideology and politics into college English teaching

4.1. Exploring social hotspots and social issues

Utilizing social hotspots to tap into the curriculum ideology and politics can help students better understand and think about social issues, and cultivate their thinking ability and sense of social responsibility. With tourism as the topic, and students are mostly interested in the chapter as they travel during the weekend and vacation time. The exploration of the emerging tourist city of Zibo can be incorporated when discussing this topic, guiding students to analyze from various aspects. For example, students can explore the transformation of Zibo from an old industrial city into a popular tourist city, including how Zibo citizens and businesses, in the midst of welcoming tourists from across the country, manage to stay true to their original intention. This involves creating an environment that reassures tourists about the overall quality of the tourism experience. Encouraging students to engage in profound reflection, teachers can integrate China's sustainable development strategy, emphasizing innovation, coordination, green practices, openness, and sharing under the new development concept. This approach guides students to contemplate the relationship between mankind and nature, facilitating a deeper internalization of ideological and political theories.

4.2. Innovating the mode of ideology and politics with the help of self-media means

The millennial generation of college students was born in the Internet era, and they actively express themselves and share their views on the self-media platform. In the teaching of this chapter, students can make use of various self-media means for shooting short videos, making film sets, etc., to share what they experience on their own travels in the form of classroom presentations. This approach also allows students to experience the humanities, attractions, and customs of various places in the process of filming. Through self-media means, it can not only mobilize the enthusiasm of college students to participate in the course learning, but also allow them to experience the nature of the motherland, so as to establish national pride and enhance cultural self-confidence.

4.3. Innovative teaching methods using interactive teaching

Interactive teaching methods can be adopted, such as group discussions, debates, role-playing, etc., to guide students to think about the problem from multiple perspectives and encourage critical thinking and participation. Interactive teaching not only highlights the student's learning subjectivity, but it is also student-centered, effectively solving the problems brought about by cramming education. For example, when mentioning the city of Shanghai in this chapter, students can be inspired to think about how Shanghai has developed from an

ordinary port city to the economic center of the country, leading to the background of reform and opening-up. After explaining the textbook content, students can carry out a discussion on “China’s changes in my opinion” to cultivate students’ critical thinking skills.

4.4. Strengthening the faculty and improving the quality of teachers

In order to realize the goal of cultivating highly educated socialist successors and builders in colleges and universities, it is necessary to improve teachers’ teaching ability and moral education and ideological awareness. Teachers should not only focus on professional knowledge and skills, but also possess a scientific knowledge of ideological and political education and an unswerving sense of identity and pride in traditional Chinese culture^[8]. Teachers must realize that their role in teaching is not only to preach, teach, and solve problems, but also to undertake the important task of ideological and political education. To realize the effective integration of curriculum ideology and politics into college English teaching, it is necessary to enhance relevant teachers’ ability and awareness of curriculum ideology and politics construction. In addition to daily teaching, teachers should improve their own quality through various channels, such as engaging in the study of national development, participating in the school’s ideological and political education and sharing sessions, etc., to adhere to the principle of preaching, teaching, and solving problems as a teacher.

5. Conclusion

The construction of ideological and political education system plays a substantial role in promoting college English. The university English program and ideological and political education are mutually complementary, fostering each other’s growth and development, forming a strong synergy in enhancing the overall educational experience. Firstly, in terms of teaching methods, students’ critical thinking and participation can be stimulated through the introduction of relevant case studies, discussions, and other activities. This helps to cultivate their concern and sense of responsibility for society, the country, and the world. Secondly, in terms of curriculum design, some topics related to ideology and politics can be included in the teaching content to guide students to think and discuss deeply. At the same time, training of teachers should be carried out to improve their ideological and political literacy and educational capability, so that they can better guide students and convey correct values and ideological concepts. Lastly, in terms of student participation, students are encouraged to actively participate in ideological and political education activities, such as social practice and volunteering, etc., to cultivate students’ sense of social responsibility and civic awareness. Through continuous innovation, we can create a thoughtful and inspiring environment for university English education, cultivate students’ ideological and moral qualities and comprehensive abilities, and lay a solid foundation for them to become new-age youth with a sense of social responsibility and national mission.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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