

Research on the Reform and Practice of Blended Teaching in “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” Courses: Taking Communication University of Zhejiang as an Example

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Abstract: Taking Communication University of Zhejiang as an example, this paper summarizes the overview of the “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” course and analyzes the problems existing in the teaching of the course. It also explores the ideas and practical strategies of the teaching reform of the course and sums up the innovative results achieved, to provide a reference for relevant teachers.

Keywords: Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation course; Blended teaching; Teaching reform

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1. Introduction

“Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” is a national first-class undergraduate course in the general course of etiquette at Communication University of Zhejiang. Along with the development of Chinese etiquette and civilization, the course team, based on the national cultural construction project, provincial civilization construction, and the school’s talent cultivation goals, has formulated an exemplary blended teaching reform strategy. This strategy takes into account changes in the media environment, student characteristics, and social demands. Through several rounds of teaching reform and innovation, the course has been widely acclaimed both inside and outside the school, fulfilling the mission of “promoting etiquette and culture, and telling a good story of China,” and playing a leading exemplary role.

2. Overview of “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation”

“Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” belongs to the national first-class undergraduate courses. It is the first batch of humanistic literacy general courses at Communication University of Zhejiang and is a model course of course ideology and politics. It is also a dual-creation fusion course with a total of 32 credit hours. In 2015, the “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” course was first offered to on-campus students, cultivating composite media talents;

in 2019, the “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” course was available on the national teaching platform, for more than 550 national teaching platforms, promoting the optimization of traditional Chinese etiquette culture for more than 550 colleges and universities across the country. The teaching innovation of the “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” course has been carried out simultaneously in both online and offline dimensions, realizing the upgrading from the early stage of construction (2005–2009), the period of deepening reform (2010–2018) to the period of upgrading the digital teaching reform (2019 to the present), and the teaching results have radiated to more than 40 countries around the globe and more than 550 colleges and universities across the country.

3. Problems in the teaching of “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” courses

3.1. Problems in teaching content

The teaching content of the course “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” mainly includes literature, aesthetics, art, communication, etc. However, due to the limitations of the school hours and other factors, the teaching content at the early stage of the course construction is light on knowledge and heavy on operation; the teacher focuses on instructing students to master the correct ways of sitting, standing, walking, squatting, and applying makeup and dressing. However, the explanations of etiquette culture knowledge are insufficient, and the teaching content is not closely integrated with the students’ majors. This disconnect prevents students from properly understanding the connotations of etiquette culture, resulting in low learning interest ^[1].

3.2. Problems in the teaching process

At present, the mobile Internet is widely used, China has entered the era of media integration, but the teaching of the “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” course fails to combine with the front line of media integration promptly. The teaching methods, processes, and evaluations are outdated and backward, making it difficult to sustain students’ learning motivation. This hinders the cultivation of their ability to disseminate etiquette culture and stifles their consciousness and imagination in promoting it ^[2].

3.3. Problems in the curriculum nurturing

The “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” course contains many elements of political education, but in the process of integrating the relevant elements, teachers failed to give full consideration to the learning experience of students. There is a lack of creative transformation and development of knowledge of etiquette and cultural knowledge, failing to provide the required etiquette wisdom for the dissemination of advanced culture. Thus, the overall quality of teaching needs to be further improved ^[3].

4. The idea of teaching reform of “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” courses

Given the problems existing in the teaching of the “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” course, the course team established a student-centered, outcome-based education concept, proposing the principle of “inheritance, teaching, dissemination” and the innovative ideas of “educating people with etiquette and culture, and integrating the benefit of the people.” These efforts have led to significant teaching success ^[4].

4.1. Inheritance: Educating people by reasoning

The course team of “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” establishes the key to educating people with etiquette and adopts diversified teaching methods to improve the etiquette and cultural cultivation of students of various majors. Students can transmit the voice of China, pass on and optimize the traditional Chinese culture and socialist

core values, carry forward the etiquette culture of respecting others and humbling themselves, and become new-age media talents with a sense of the nation, the spirit of scientific exploration, cultural self-confidence, aesthetic literacy, and good professional ethics. They will become media talents of the new era with the spirit of nationalism, scientific exploration, cultural confidence, aesthetic literacy, and good professional ethics ^[5].

4.2. Teaching: Cultivating cultural essence

Taking culture as the foothold, the course “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” focuses on teaching etiquette and culture, life etiquette, family etiquette, image building, social etiquette, place etiquette, cross-cultural communication, etc. It also reshapes the often-overlooked cultural essence of etiquette, helping students master the rules of etiquette and communication in real life ^[6].

4.3. Communication: Benefiting people with virtue

Combined with the characteristics of the development of the times, the “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” course utilizes information technology to establish a multi-platform industry-academia cooperation pathway. It creates a unique CREATIVE multi-dimensional dissemination pathway that can be borrowed and shared by similar courses: course materials (Course), disciplinary competitions (Race), innovation and entrepreneurship (Entrepreneurship), public service announcement (Advertising), subject projects (Topic), international communication (International), catechism westbound (Video), and enterprise service (Enterprise).

5. Teaching reform strategies of “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” courses

5.1. Teaching content reform strategy

In carrying out teaching content reform, the teaching team takes the following measures. Firstly, the course mode is set. The course “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” adopts Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and Small Private Online Course (SPOC) synchronous teaching mode. The course team takes into full consideration the expectations and acceptance of the public learners of related knowledge, retains the characteristic contents of etiquette in the teaching content, and adds the contents of family etiquette, etiquette and culture, cross-cultural communication, etc., and removes the hierarchical concepts and the five ancient rites that are difficult to understand. In the SPOC elective subjects, when students study the contents related to image shaping and social etiquette, they can personalize their learning in the course mode according to their interests or specialties. Secondly, upgrading the digital teaching platform is imperative. In 2019, the course “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” was offered on the China University MOOC and Wisdom Tree platform. To adapt to the requirements of the development of the integrated media, the course team made an artificial intelligence (AI) knowledge map in 2022, which contains 269 knowledge points and 383 associated test questions. Using big data technology to portray students’ learning behavior, the effect of accurate teaching and learning can be achieved, effectively solving the problem of insufficient teaching resources and maintaining the update rate of teaching content at 10% per year ^[7]. At the same time, the course team participates in the Ministry of Education’s Industry-University Cooperation Collaborative Education Project “Chinese Traditional Etiquette Virtual Simulation Practice Resources Construction,” which cooperates with relevant enterprises, establishes virtual simulation practice teaching resources, and upgrades and transforms the digital platform to achieve the best teaching effect. Thirdly, one activity is carried out for one chapter. The SPOC class time is 32 hours, and the course team members design eight different values and corresponding offline learning activities for the teaching content of eight chapters, which include AI matching, on-site debates, group reporting, mutual evaluation of videos, case study analysis, etc., to expand the breadth and depth of learning, enhance students’ dialectical thinking and aesthetic ability, and improve

their participation in teaching and optimize the learning experience ^[8].

5.2. Teaching mode reform strategy

The course team of “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” establishes a student-centered concept, reforms the teaching mode, adopts a blended teaching mode combining three stages, five steps, and six degrees, and makes full use of the second and third classrooms to improve students’ multidimensional communication skills. Firstly, the teaching process is optimized and improved through the five-step progression plan. The course team of “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” makes use of the three stages before, during, and after class to optimize and perfect the offline teaching mode, improves the five teaching steps of introduction, explanation, practice, exploration, and evaluation, and introduces teaching methods such as flipped classroom, to achieve the “teacher-led, student-oriented” principle. Through the effective integration of the three stages and the five steps, the degree of teaching achievement, effectiveness, and expansion can be improved, and the degree of student activity can be enhanced, thus realizing the teaching goal of exhibiting cultivation, researching culture, and practicing etiquette ^[9]. Secondly, the teaching space is expanded. The “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” course team introduced a new generation of information technology, using multi-dimensional communication, industry-teaching integration, and other ways to expand the teaching space. The CREATIVE model—course materials (Course), disciplinary competitions (Race), innovation and entrepreneurship (Entrepreneurship), public service announcement (Advertising), subject projects (Topic), international communication (International), catechism westbound (Video), and enterprise service (Enterprise)—can make the course content reach a wider audience. In recent years, the course team of “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” has provided lectures and training on etiquette promotion for over 30 government departments, schools, and enterprises. This initiative has achieved the course’s goal of integrating teachers and students into society, effectively expanding the teaching space, and offering services to the broader community. Additionally, it has significantly improved the students’ communication skills.

5.3. Reform of ideology and politics of courses

The team of the “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” course reforms the ideology and politics of the course, the course does not mention the word “ideology and politics,” but reasonably integrates the excellent traditional Chinese etiquette and culture, and utilizes the three-focused and four-fused approach to teaching; of which the three-focused is the goal of the course teaching, which refers to the learning of etiquette, studying culture and displaying cultivation, and the four-fused refers to the absorption of foreign cultures, not forgetting the original intention, looking towards the future, and achieving the effect of educating people with etiquette. At the same time, in the teaching process, teachers and students collaborate to organize 550 cases of course politics, significantly enhancing students’ acceptance of the relevant content and aligning the learning experience with the characteristics of the multimedia era. This approach ultimately achieves an immersive educational effect. For example, when explaining family etiquette, teachers aim to enhance students’ sense of family by arranging practical assignments. Students are required to write letters following the traditional cultural format of family letters, tailored to their own family situations. This assignment fosters a deeper sense of family among students, significantly improving parent-child relationships and home-school interactions ^[10].

5.4. Teaching evaluation reform

The team of the course “Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation” reformed the traditional teaching evaluation method by integrating process evaluation and summative assessment. They implemented a comprehensive evaluation system featuring multi-dimensional feedback, using tasks as the driving point. This approach involved refining and adjusting the teaching evaluation scheme to create a closed-loop teaching process, thereby enhancing the

quality of teaching feedback and stimulating students' learning motivation. Firstly, a robust teaching evaluation model has been established that combines both process and summative assessments. In this model, process evaluation constitutes 70% of the overall evaluation and includes flipped classroom performance and online learning activities. Summative evaluation, which makes up the remaining 30%, covers final online assessments and offline video projects. Secondly, a diversified evaluation approach is employed. This approach involves multiple evaluation subjects, including platforms, teachers, and students, to ensure transparency in the evaluation process. The evaluation forms are varied, standards are clearly defined, and the proportions of different assessment results are adjusted to accurately reflect students' learning situations. Thirdly, teaching evaluation is continuously optimized. Real-time feedback is integrated into the evaluation system, focusing on students' memory, understanding, and application of low- and mid-order goals. Teachers use this feedback to make dynamic adjustments to teaching progress. Additionally, through stage-by-stage feedback, teachers assess students' higher-order skills such as creation, analysis, and evaluation. In summative evaluation, teachers focus on students' knowledge and abilities and adjust teaching management strategies and methods based on the results.

5.5. Teaching innovation achievements

Through the reform and practice of blended teaching, the "Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation" course has achieved many teaching innovations. There is an increasing trend of students choosing graduation works, graduation thesis, and graduation planning on etiquette and culture topics related to the content of this course. Over the past five years, students have achieved notable success in competitions, securing 7 national and 80 provincial awards in Class A competitions. In 2023, students participated in the inaugural provincial etiquette competition, winning 4 first prizes, 3 second prizes, and 3 third prizes, marking a significant breakthrough. Additionally, they have earned 10 national and 128 provincial awards in professional competitions. After the study of this course, students pay more attention to etiquette and participate more actively in various volunteer activities, public welfare, and Asian Games service activities, through the People's Daily and other official media reports. The course has been evaluated as a first-class undergraduate course at the national level, a first-class online undergraduate course at the provincial level, and one of the first humanistic literacy general education courses at the university level.

6. Conclusion

At present, there are many problems in the teaching of "Etiquette and Cultural Cultivation" courses in colleges and universities, for which it is necessary to establish a student-centered philosophy and actively carry out blended teaching reforms to enhance the effect of educating people.

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