

Study on the Teaching Reform of Integrating Moral Education into Course "Advanced English"

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Abstract

Starting with the exploration and elaboration of the relevant concepts of "curriculum ethical and political guidance", this study investigates how to integrate the concepts into the teaching of the course "Advanced English" by analyzing the teaching status and existing problems, and proposes that the moral education can be carried out from the four aspects of improving teachers' ethical literacy, refining ethical and political element, developing educational resources, and designing relevant teaching activities in order to integrate the training of language skills with moral guidance.

Keywords

Ethical and Political Guidance; Advanced English; Teaching Reform.

1. Introduction

China is increasingly moving towards the center of the world stage and taking on more responsibilities in the building of a community with a shared future for all mankind. Higher institutions shoulder the historical mission of cultivating international talents in the new era. Foreign language courses are the main way for college students to appreciate foreign culture and way of thinking, but sometimes students may get lost in the collision between Chinese and Western cultures. Therefore, while helping students learn to use language tools, foreign language teachers should also guide students to distinguish right from wrong, and to correctly analyze multiple ideologies. In addition to the training of students' comprehensive language skills and communicative competence, language teachers also need to guide students to establish positive world outlook, ethics and values, so as to cultivate their good moral character, patriotism, social responsibility and so on.

As a compulsory course for senior English majors, the content of "Advanced English" covers western language and culture, social life, customs, education system, political system, family relations, daily life and rituals. During the process of studying this course, students will naturally form a deeper understanding of western history and culture and inevitably, they will compare and contrast Chinese and western cultures, or even get confused. Therefore, in addition to imparting foreign language knowledge and improving students' various language skills in the "Advanced English" class, college English teachers also need to assume the responsibility of ethical and political guidance by integrating moral education into the teaching process, fully tapping the ethical and political elements in the course, to guide students towards an objective and inclusive attitude, so that the course can play its educational function more effectively.

2. Literature Review

Domestic scholars have explored the essential connotation of ethical and political education in foreign language courses. Chang Chenguang et al. (2021) holds that the implicit guidance of moral education in specialized courses is different from the explicit education of ideological and

political courses. Knowledge imparting should be combined with values shaping, just as ethical and moral guidance should be subtly integrated into every subject of teaching activities. Luo Lianggong (2021) believes that curriculum ethical and political guidance and education does not only refer to "ideological and political" education in a narrow sense, but should be applied to guarantee and serve the fundamental task of educating and cultivating talents in colleges and universities. Specifically, educated people in China should be Chinese people with morality and modern vision; educated talents should be equipped with critical thinking, social responsibility and leadership. In this sense, ethical and political guidance in college curriculum not only requires teachers to dig deep into the moral education elements contained in the teaching content, but also to fully implement the concept of all-staff, whole-process, and all-round education both inside and outside the classroom. As far as foreign language courses are concerned, it is also necessary to combine the guidance of values with the teaching of language knowledge and the cultivation of language proficiency (Xiao & Huang, 2020). Zhang Jingyuan and Wang Na (2020) explained this concept from the perspective of education, combining teaching content, ability training, teaching methods, instructing capacity and other dimensions. They believe that moral education in the foreign language courses is an integral part of teaching content, an important way to cultivate students' language ability, a new language teaching method, and a reflection of language teachers' ability to conduct education. Hu Jiehui (2021) adopts a top-down approach to interpret the connotation of moral education in foreign language courses from the perspective of macro-level education policy with theories on curriculum and discipline organization. At the same year, based on her own teaching practice, Wen Qiufang (2021:52) proposed that the ideology and moral education of foreign language courses should "be led by foreign language teachers, and effectively integrate the concept of morality education into all aspects of foreign language classroom, including foreign language teaching content, classroom management, evaluation system, teachers' oral guidance and behavior, etc. And teachers should be committed to playing an active role in shaping students correct global outlook, cognition and values".

To conclude, curriculum is the foundation and carrier of ethical and political guidance, as moral education is the core and soul of curriculum. Therefore, in the process of establishing "course ethics and politics", traditional ideological and political courses assume a core position of moral education, but which will by no means diminish the moral education elements embedded in various specialized courses. Only by combining the two systems of courses can the traditional classroom teaching be transformed from purely knowledge imparting into moral and ethical guidance and education, thereby promoting the integration and unity of disciplinary knowledge and humanistic literacy. Based on the previous discussion and studies, this paper will explore the function and approaches to the ethical and political guidance in the course "Advanced English" by exploring the following four aspects: improving teachers' ethical literacy, refining ethical and political element, developing educational resources, and designing relevant teaching activities.

3. Existing Problems

The existing problems are two-fold. As to teachers of foreign language courses, first, some have inadequate awareness of the importance of moral education in classroom teaching. Teaching objectives, teaching design, teaching activities, and assessment methods used to be based on students' basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation. Ethical and political guidance was unintentionally overlooked due to the competency-training nature of English courses. Secondly, most teachers of English language courses in colleges and universities failed to realize their responsibility for "course ethics and politics", since there are specific courses on this topic that are compulsory for students of all majors. Coupled with

limited class hours and packed content, teachers used to focus on teaching professional knowledge. As to students, most of the English majors have a strong interest in English language, western literature and culture, and western values, etc. If they do not receive correct guidance and education in the classroom of disciplined courses, they may easily form prejudice against the cultural differences between China and the West. Problems of unclear world outlook, incorrect values, distorted perspective on life, and even extreme individualism and the ignorance of our native culture are very likely to emerge. Ignoring the culture of mother tongue, especially the essence of traditional Chinese culture, leads to the phenomenon of "aphasia" of Chinese culture in language classrooms. Worse still, some students even lose their cultural identity and national confidence.

Foreign language majors in the new era should not only be the talents that are more prominent in language proficiency and cross-cultural communicative competency, but also place more emphasis on the cultivation of global vision, political sensitivity, cultural recognition, business ethics and critical thinking. Therefore, it is urgent to make better use of various professional courses to strengthen the ethical and political guidance and education of English majors. In essence, the moral education implies that while helping students learn to use language tools, foreign language teachers should also guide students to distinguish right from wrong and analyze western ideology rationally and critically.

4. Proposed Approaches

Based on the analysis of the existing problems, we can conclude that the course of "Advanced English" should conform to the requirements of the new era, integrate ethical and political education into it, and exert positive guidance on ways of thinking and values in addition to language teaching. The following part mainly covers how to subtly combine curriculum ideology with "Advanced English" from two major aspects: the updating of teachers' moral education concepts as well as teaching methods.

4.1. Improving Teachers' Ethical Literacy

As the front-line personnel of ethical and political education, English language teachers should educate themselves first, by improving their personal political awareness, professionalism, humanistic literacy, and language proficiency. Teachers of this course should exert correct guidance, led by example, and be dedicated to their careers in the daily work. Moreover, it is highly recommended to keep up with current domestic and global news, learn the basic principles of Marxism, promote socialist core values, and spread traditional Chinese culture inside and outside classroom. In addition, continuing to improve the English language proficiency will facilitate the use of accurate English to explain Chinese economy, politics and culture to students.

4.2. Refining Ethical and Political Element

Teachers of the "Advanced English" course should be familiar with the content of the textbook and be able to refine the corresponding ethical and political elements according to the theme of each unit in order to combine the elements with the language training and culture appreciation.

Taking the seventh unit of the "Advanced English 1" course for English majors in our school as an example. The title of this unit is "Beauty", but the message behind this topic may change from time to time, and vary from person to person. When preparing the lessons, teachers can consider setting up a discussion session in the lead-in link to guide students to think and discuss the understanding and interpretation of "beauty" from ancient times in China, as well as the definition to "what is beauty", and then lead to the finding of inner beauty such as virtues like kindness, integrity and friendliness. These virtues are exactly the basic requirements of the

socialist core values on the morality of citizens, and are also the essential qualities that contemporary college students should possess. This way of guidance and discussion can help students to think positively about their outlook on life and values before learning the language content of the passages.

4.3. Developing Educational Resources

"Advanced English" integrates language and stylistic knowledge, western culture, legal and historic information, and thus this course has rich teaching resources. Therefore, it could be combined with ethical and political resources to achieve dual moral education both inside and outside the classroom. In addition to digging deeply into the elements of ethical and political education in the textbooks, teachers also need to make full use of the Internet, books, newspapers, magazines, online resources, etc. to actively collect relevant resources, establish a database of ethical and political resources, and provide students with a broader learning platform. All resources can be used as the materials and tools of ethical and political education inside and outside the classroom, which not only enriches classroom teaching, but also expands extra-curricular learning resources.

4.4. Designing Relevant Teaching Activities

In the teaching process of "Advanced English", according to the teaching content of each session, teachers can use the teaching methods of cooperative language teaching or task-based learning to guide students to discuss the ethical and moral issues contained in the text by working in groups. A group leader can be chosen for each group. Under the facilitation of the group leader, the group members express their views according to the questions for discussion about moral literacy and ethical values designed by the teacher, so that they can learn professional knowledge, read articles and understand ethics by combining moral education with language training. During the discussion, teachers can guide students to think deeply through heuristic questions, so that students can understand the core socialist values in the discussion, establish a correct moral outlook, and be inspired to transform ethical and political concepts into practical actions.

5. Conclusion

According to the guiding principles in the "Outline", ideology and moral education in college curriculum are the demands of the new era, and it is also a key measure to implement the fundamental task of moral education in higher education. In the context of economic globalization and China's "Belt and Road Initiative", in response to the country's "going out" strategy, English majors need to be armed with solid basic English language skills and relevant cultural knowledge, humanistic literacy, patriotism and global vision. Therefore, Advanced English teaching should achieve the training goals from the aspects of professional knowledge, political standpoint and humanistic perspective. Only when all the courses of the English major have the same teaching goals and guide into the same direction, can talents who contribute to the cause of socialism be cultivated.

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