

Teaching Practice for Ideological and Political Education of College English based on Production-Oriented Approach

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Abstract. “Ideological and Political Education” is the focus of the reform of college English courses in the new era. This article uses Production-Oriented Approach (POA) as the theoretical basis to design classes and takes the College English course as a case to study how to integrate ideological and political elements into the “motivating, enabling and assessing” teaching procedures. It aims to achieve the organic integration of language learning and ideological education, which provides reference for ideological and political education in college English teaching.

Keywords: Production-Oriented Approach; College English; Ideological and Political Education.

1. Introduction

The implementation of curriculum-based ideological and political education has been carried out in higher education since the term “ideological and political education” was first proposed in 2014. *The Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Curriculum* issued by the Ministry of Education in 2020 points out that each curriculum should fulfill its role in nurturing students’ character and values, and by integrating the ideological and political education into the entire process of education, the full and all-round education are thus achieved[1]. College English, a compulsory course in the scientific and cultural foundation public tool module, should play a significant role in moral education and nurturing talents, aligning with other ideological and political courses to create a synergistic effect. To better fulfill its role, college English needs to further strengthen the ideological and political education by reforming in its teaching method and procedure.

2. The Connotation and Current Situation of Ideological and Political Education of College English

College English targets a wide range of students and usually lasts two years. Exploring the ideological and political elements of this course can help students develop correct worldviews, values, and life philosophies, and establish socialist core values. By studying, students can not only master general English knowledge and develop English language skills, but also, more importantly, learn Western culture with a critical perspective. They can fully appreciate the profoundness of Chinese traditional culture and enhance their cultural confidence, and thus students can introduce China to the world, promote Chinese culture, enhance cross-cultural communication awareness and competence, and improve their overall cultural literacy. Through critical discussions on cultural events, students can develop critical thinking skills and humanistic spirit, as well as enhance their political literacy and build moral character.

In the context of “curriculum-based ideological and political education”, some college English teaching has neglected the student-centered teaching philosophy, resulting in the undesirable situation of being “teacher-dominated, textbook-emphasized, and grades-oriented”. The exam-oriented approach has led to the problem of prioritizing skills over cultural literacy. Students often set their learning goals as passing the final exams, without being able to apply English effectively and lacking the ability to delve into complex issues or think critically. Furthermore, in international communication, students lack the ability to effectively disseminate culture, and they often feel

inadequate in language and are unable to demonstrate the profound cultural literacy and humanistic qualities that students from a great cultural nation should possess.

3. Production-Oriented Approach

In order to address the current situation of English teaching, which tends to prioritize language knowledge over communicative abilities and focuses more on input rather than output, this study aims to integrate production-oriented approach (POA) into curriculum-based ideological and political education. POA is based on the teaching principles of “learner-centeredness, learning-using integration, cultural exchange, and key abilities.” Its teaching hypotheses include “output-driven, input-enabling, selective learning, and learning stimulated by evaluation,” and it follows a theoretical framework of the teaching process as “motivating, enabling and assessing” [2].

This theory emphasizes the integration of learning and using, advocating for learning while using, using while learning, and combining learning with using. It also emphasizes breaking down the overall objectives derived from each teaching unit into smaller goals and closely linking the input and output within each small goal, effectively reducing the gap between learning and using. “Cultural exchange” advocates for dialogue, mutual respect, mutual understanding, and mutual learning among different civilizations. “Key abilities” can be categorized into four aspects: language proficiency, cultural character, thinking qualities, and learning abilities for college English learners[2]. The cultural character not only refers to understanding cultural phenomena, emotional attitudes, and values but also includes interpreting cultural traditions and social cultural phenomena reflected in discourse. It involves comparing and summarizing the cultural aspects reflected in discourse, forming one’s own cultural stance and attitude, and developing cultural identity and cultural discernment abilities. As a core competency, thinking qualities emphasize certain thinking qualities closely related to English, such as the ability to think and solve problems from different perspectives and the cultivation of critical thinking. “Key abilities” emphasizes that teachers should integrate the cultivation of core competency abilities into the selection of production-oriented learning content and the design of learning activities, allowing students to develop these abilities implicitly and gradually during the process of language learning.

Based on what have been discussed above, the teaching concept proposed by POA aligns with the ideological and political education concept in the curriculum. Both aim to achieve the educational goals of the curriculum and enhance students’ overall quality. Therefore, how to effectively apply POA to achieve a seamless integration of the course’s ideological and political education in foreign language teaching is of academic significance and practical value.

4. Teaching Design of Ideological and Political Education of College English Based on Production-Oriented Approach

This article takes *New Generation College English* series as an example and designs teaching based on teaching topics, output tasks, and teaching procedures. It follows the three stages of “motivating, enabling and assessing” to incorporate ideological and political elements into the teaching process. By providing effective input, students will acquire high-quality ideological and political output, thereby achieving the goal of ideological and political education.

4.1. Teaching Topics and Objectives

New Generation College English series have rich thematic content. 12 topics suitable for students’ needs are selected from the series, covering knowledge in areas such as society, history, politics, economy, technology, ethnicity, culture, literature, and art. For example, one selected topic is from *Unit 1 A New Journey in Life*. By studying and discussing campus life, students are guided to reflect on the double identity of being a college student and a soldier, as well as the challenges they face. This encourages them to face life’s challenges and uncertainties with a more positive mindset, fostering a sense of honor and mission. In summary, the selection of topics considers students’

identity, aims to enhance their scientific and humanistic literacy, promote personal growth, cultivate correct values, develop critical thinking skills, foster cultural confidence, and cultivate cross-cultural communication abilities.

4.2. Output Tasks

Based on students' needs analysis, the ideological and political elements in the textbooks are fully explored. The output task is set around the ideological and political theme, and students are required to complete the learning objectives through spoken or written output. For example, the task for *Unit 8 Culture and Tradition* is to introduce a certain traditional Chinese virtue such as filial piety or loyalty which is embodied in Confucius' sayings, and analyze the influence of these virtues on the Western world. To achieve the output task for each topic, the overall task is broken down into several sub-tasks that are relatively independent but interconnected. For example, to achieve the task of Unit 8, four sub-tasks are set, introducing Confucius and Confucianism, exploring the traditional Chinese virtues reflected in Confucius' sayings, analyzing the reasons for the inheritance and development of Chinese virtues, and examining their influence on the Western world. The ideological and political elements are integrated into each sub-task, serving the overall ideological and political teaching objectives.

4.3. Teaching Procedures

4.3.1. Motivating Phase

The motivating phase is based on the "output-driven hypothesis" of POA and its main purpose is to make students aware of the communicative value of output tasks in improving cultural literacy. It also aims to make students realize their language inadequacies, thereby motivating their learning enthusiasm. This phase lays the foundation for subsequent enabling phase[3]. In this phase, the unit tasks and relevant learning materials will be posted online before class. For example, in the topic of *Culture and Tradition*, the information about Confucius and his sayings will be posted online, helping students activate their prior knowledge. Students will be asked to answer several questions, such as "What Chinese virtues can be reflected in Confucius' sayings?" "How do these virtues influence our behavioral norms?" "What impact do these virtues have on the development of our country and on Western countries?" By thinking and attempting to answer these questions, students can develop a dialectical mindset towards Chinese virtues and deeply reflect on the impact of these virtues in light of their own experiences. At the same time, students will realize their weaknesses in languages, and thus their desire for learning is aroused. This creates a sense of hunger for learning and paves the way for the subsequent enabling phase.

4.3.2. Enabling Phase

The main task of this phase is to help students "clear the path when encountering mountains and build bridges when encountering water," providing targeted scaffolding for students to complete the tasks. POA states that the three indicators of effectiveness in the enabling phase are precision, progression, and diversity[4]. Precision means that enabling activities should align with the output goals, providing the necessary content, language, and discourse structure knowledge to achieve the goals. At the same time, they should address students' difficulties and fill in the gaps. Progression emphasizes that the activities should guide students to accomplish tasks in a progressive manner, focusing on developing both language and skills[2]. Diversity refers to designing various types of activities in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation, making teaching rich and colorful while improving learning efficiency.

In this phase, the difficulties students encounter when attempting to complete tasks will be first shown and the cultural and critical significance of the topic will be highlighted, following introducing the learning objectives of the unit. To achieve the objectives, especially the ideological and educational objectives, the down-to-earth ideological and political education in a way that students find enjoyable and engaging should be carried out, allowing students to experience the importance of spreading

Chinese culture and voicing for China in English. Therefore, in designing activities, a question-guided approach can be used to progressively lead students to understand, analyze and evaluate the topic, and apply what they have learned to introduce related topics. For example, in the topic of *Culture and Tradition*, by proposing the question “Why are Chinese people hardworking?”, students are guided to explore the answer by analyzing the text, which discusses the understanding of diligence from the perspectives of foreigners, ancient China and modern China. By exploration, students can understand the historical origins and influence of the virtue of diligence and experience the cultural differences between China and the West. By designing activities such as group discussions or guessing words from pictures, students can learn the relevant language. The knowledge on other traditional Chinese virtues such as filial piety and loyalty are introduced to students. The speeches given by President Xi Jinping or examples on promoting excellent Chinese virtues are also shared. By providing supplementary materials in a concise and vivid manner, students can experience freshness, engage in language use and application, and achieve the objectives of ideological and political education.

4.3.3. Assessing Phase

Output is the core of POA, and timely and effective evaluation of students’ output is particularly important. In this phase, Teacher-Student Collaborative Assessment (TSCA) proposed by Wen Qiufang, is used [5]. Before class, typical samples and evaluation focuses are selected. During class, under the guidance of the teacher, students are encouraged to carry out effective self-assessment and peer-assessment which can help reinforce what they learnt. While during the class, it is advisable to incorporate value-oriented questions related to the learning content. Instead of solely focusing on language proficiency or skills, the evaluation should also guide students in addressing evident value-oriented issues present in their texts. For example, in *Unit 1 A New Journey in Life*, if a student mention feeling confused or experiencing negative feelings, more targeted advice can be given to help students overcome their difficulties and develop positive attitudes towards life.

5. Summary

In the context of “curriculum-based ideological and political education”, College English course designed by POA is a new attempt with Chinese characteristics and is a feasible approach to holistic education. Guided by POA, we can delve into the ideological and political elements contained in the textbooks and effectively integrate them into various aspects of teaching. This integration aims to achieve an effective unity between ideological and political education and the English language knowledge system. In the process of integration, we should avoid turning the English class into a political class and prevent forced indoctrination, which may lead to students’ resistance to ideological and political education. Therefore, teachers need to enhance their awareness of integrating ideology and politics into the curriculum, explore effective teaching methods, and make ideological and political education an organic and indispensable part of the course.

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