

Study of Ideological-Political Education in Foreign Literature Curriculum Group

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Abstract: This paper discusses the construction of ideological-political education in foreign literature curriculum group with the intention of establishing a curriculum group to make the ideological-political education have a continuity and durability. The paper demonstrates the necessity of curriculum group ideological-political education and the current situation in foreign literature teaching. Further exploration is made into some fundamental issues concerned with the ideological-political educational construction in curriculum group, including its ideas and paths, then to realize the fundamental task of moral education in foreign literature curriculum group.

Keywords: Ideological-political education; Curriculum group; Foreign literature; Foster integrity and promote rounded development of people; Ideological-political element.

1. Introduction

In December 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities that “ideological and political work should be carried out through the whole process of education, to create a new situation for the development of China's higher education”. At the same time, it was pointed out that to offer ideological and political education for university students, it is necessary not only to strengthen and improve the ideological and political theory courses but also to make all kinds of courses go in the same direction and form a synergistic effect with them. It also put forward that “to run socialist universities with Chinese characteristics, it is necessary to foster integrity and promote rounded development of people, and to incorporate the fostering and practicing of the core values of socialism into the whole process of teaching”, which is a specific requirement for ideological and political education. Xi Jinping emphasized that “ideological and political work is primarily about serving the people, particularly students. Therefore, it is essential to focus on improving students' ideological level, political awareness, moral quality, and cultural literacy. It will help students become well-rounded individuals with both talent and strong moral character”. (1) This is a new beginning for ideological-political education.

In February 2017, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued opinions on strengthening and improving the ideological and political work of colleges and universities in the new situation. In May 2018, the content of Xi Jinping's speech at a symposium for teachers and students at Peking University deepened the ideological-political education further. The General Secretary's speeches at the National Education Conference in September 2018 and the symposium for teachers of ideological and political theory courses in May 2019 gave shape to the understanding of the ideological-political education. In 2020, the Ministry of Education on the issuance of *the Guideline for the Construction of Ideology and Politics in Higher Education* pointed out that comprehensively promoting the construction of the ideological-political education in colleges and

universities is a strategic initiative to thoroughly carry out General Secretary Xi Jinping's important exposition on education and the spirit of the National Education Conference, the strategic initiative to implement the fundamental task of cultivating morality and humanism. Colleges and universities must push forward the reform of education and teaching in depth, and comprehensively explore and make use of all kinds of curriculum resources, so as to give full play to the role of each course in teaching and thus improve the quality of talent cultivation in an all-round way(2). Therefore, how to effectively promote the construction of the ideological-political education in order to achieve the goal in the curriculum has become an important part of the teaching reform in colleges and universities.

A curriculum group is a course system with related or similar contents that are organically integrated through internal structure and level to form a deep connection and mutual cooperation. The foreign literature curriculum group gathers professional compulsory courses and elective courses, and there is a close logical connection within them, and the knowledge of the courses is interpenetrating. In the teaching of the corresponding courses, the teachers of the professional courses, in accordance with the characteristics of the course, find the corresponding point of the ideological-political education, excavate the educational elements, and emerge the objectives of the whole systematic course cluster into the respective courses, so as to make the ideological-political education have a continuity and durability.

2. The Necessity of The Construction of The Ideological-Political Education in The Foreign Literature Curriculum Group

In September 2020, the Ministry of Education issued *Further Improving the Construction of the Ideological-Political Educational Curriculum Group in Colleges and Universities with Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era as the Core Content*, and put forward a comprehensive guideline on strengthening the construction of the ideological-political educational

curriculum group in colleges and universities in terms of the types of courses, the scope of courses and credits, teaching materials, the use of teaching resources, and the support of teaching and research, etc., and proposes concrete initiatives and meticulous requirements for carrying out the construction. The construction and development of curriculum group should not be limited to the ideological and political major, but should be extended to all majors and fields, and the foreign literature course is no exception. The foreign literature course is one of the core courses for liberal arts majors in colleges and universities, and it is a literature course with a long time span and rich content. The teaching of foreign literature “requires the study of the works of writers in history and, on this basis, the analysis and summary of the process of literary development and its laws, the correct exposition of various literary contents, literary forms and artistic characteristics within a given historical period, the analysis of various literary trends, the process of the emergence, development and evolution of literary schools, the analysis of the historical inheritance of literature and the process of historical transformation, and the revealing of various factors of the times and social factors in the process of the emergence and development of literature”(3).

All-course education system, further formed into a “curriculum group” educating system is inevitable. The articulation between the courses is an indispensable part of the teaching link, especially the same professional courses need to give full play to their unique value of educating, and work together to create a curriculum group system, forming a teaching pattern of close and joint cooperation between the professional courses and the ideological and political courses. However, there is a certain degree of incoherence and inconsistency in the process of teaching ideological and political aspects in foreign literature, which means that the course can only achieve the combination of "points" but not the vertical and horizontal extension in all courses. Therefore, only by vigorously strengthening the construction of the ideological-political curriculum group of foreign literature in the classroom can we solve the problems that have existed in the past teaching. For example, overemphasizing language skills and neglecting the cultivation of moral and humanistic qualities; focusing on the study of the historical background of foreign literature and neglecting to guide students to make a wider range of critical analyses; and repeatedly refining the ideological-political elements, etc.. In order to improve the theoretical, systematic and operational construction of the ideological-political education of foreign literature, the systematic and operational outline of foreign literature curriculum group should be analyzed and sorted out in detail.

3. The Current Situation of Ideological-Political Education in Foreign Literature Curriculum Group

3.1. Low awareness of ideological-political education in curriculum group

“Ideological-political education” is the implementation of the main responsibility of teaching, and it is an important component of ideological and political work in colleges and universities. It is the inevitable requirement of adhering to the socialist characteristics of colleges and universities and the orientation of education. Only by exploring the value of each

course, perfecting the construction of the curriculum system, and implementing the core requirement of "teaching and educating" can we ensure the successful realization of the cultivation objectives of colleges and universities in the new era. “Ideological-political education” is an important channel for implementing socialist core values, and it is a necessary way to realize the leading role of ideological and political theory classes in other disciplines and courses, and to promote the organic unity of teaching and educating. It strengthens the shaping of students’ character, makes the classroom a carrier for guiding students to learn knowledge, refines their minds and develops their characters, fully embodies the educating function of classroom teaching, and maximizes the educational effect. As foreign literature courses mainly focus on explaining the contents of foreign literature, teachers take the textbooks as the starting point. Although they integrate the relevant ideological-political elements into teaching, they often feel that the integration is not perfect. The solidification and westernisation of teachers' knowledge structure often leads to the lack of traditional Chinese culture during the classroom teaching process.

3.2. Insufficient refinement of the ideological-political elements

In the classroom teaching of foreign literature, teachers focus their attention on the writers’ life, the background of the works, and the analysis and interpretation of the ideological connotation of the works, the writing technique, the character image, and so on. In the process of teaching they often have strong subjective claims, and some of them are filled with one-sidedness and superficiality, which ignores the ideological nature of the ideological-political education. The refinement of the ideological-political elements are also superficial, and there is even the phenomenon of “teaching ideology and politics for the sake of it”, which is detached from the teaching content. Students often feel "puzzled" and don't feel the significance of the mutual integration of the ideological-political and foreign literature, which makes their ideological-political education a bit difficult and lacking in affinity.

3.3. A systematic curriculum group has not yet been established

The ideological-political education of the foreign literature curriculum groups has not yet been systematized. Each course is currently independent, tapping into its own ideological-political elements. It results in a fragmentation of ideological resources, making it impossible to form a system. As a result, the students' education is not being improved layer by layer. Additionally, there is a lack of comprehensive ideological-political support for the courses, which should be diverse, progressive, and mutually supportive. Each course has its own approach, and sometimes the content overlaps, lacking an overall design. Besides that, the teaching content of each course is not always arranged in a logical order, which can lead to a shortage of coordination and articulation between them. It can be detrimental to the development of students’ skills and the completeness of their ideological-political education. “The top-level design and coordinated promotion of each course achieve the synergistic effect of ideological-political education in professional courses, and then the educational role will be get most developed.”(4) Currently, the construction for foreign literature-related majors no longer emphasizes the development of individual courses, instead it focuses on the connection and construction of

professional curriculum group to enhance the synergistic effect of educating students.

4. The Construction of Ideological-Political Educational Pathways in Foreign Literature Curriculum Group

4.1. Ideas for the construction of curriculum group

The foreign literature curriculum group aims to integrate the cultivation of ideology and politics into all aspects of teaching and learning, which is based on the advantages of the literature courses themselves. By comparative learning, the students re-conceptualize the scope and implications of foreign literature in the context of globalization, and further stimulates them to consider the relationship between language, identity, and the cultural identity of our country. Additionally, it cultivates cultural self-awareness in the practice of foreign literature criticism, thereby highlighting the cultural subjectivity of our country. Simultaneously, in accordance with the traits of modern college students, we will incorporate the ideological-political education into the entire program's teaching with a more practical manner. Today's college students possess a strong sense of esteem, but someone lacks a sense of social responsibility. They are proactive and open-minded, but may struggle with analytical and discriminatory skills. They are curious about the world, but they may not have fully developed their values or critical thinking skills. As a result, they may struggle to discern the true essence of things and can be susceptible to negative influences.

In order to develop the ideology of the foreign literature curriculum group, the main objective is to cultivate college students' ability "to discern, distinguish right from wrong, and make informed decisions. To navigate the profound and complex changes in the world, it is crucial to think critically, analyse effectively, and make informed decisions. It is especially important in the information age, where various trends of thought can be mutually agitating and social phenomena can be complicated and changeable. When faced with academic, emotional, and career choices, it is essential to make well-considered decisions. The key to success is to maintain a steady, self-sufficient, calm, confident, firm, and self-motivated attitude. It is important to establish a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values, which will naturally lead to making the right judgments in life".(5)

Furthermore, each course within the curriculum group should always center on the objectives of educating individuals, the methods of teaching, and the target beneficiary. It is crucial to implement the policy of educating individuals for the country and the Party into the specific process, break down the boundaries between courses and coordinate the relationship between courses in the curriculum group from a macroscopic point of view. This will lead to a teaching system for the ideological-political education that is complementary in content, progressive in level, optimized overall, and organized reasonably.

4.2. Construction pathway in the curriculum group

4.2.1. Extending the radiation range of ideological-political education

Currently, some foreign literature teaching still focus on

traditional classroom teaching. To address this, the curriculum group construction can combine practical classroom and online classroom, providing students with various educational modes to enhance their understanding and experience of ideological-political education, thereby to improve their emotional and practical experience.

In classroom teaching, literature courses are used to promote knowledge of foreign literature and provide in-depth interpretations and critical analyses of the foreign country's representative works of literature. This approach is conducive to the cultivation of basic language skills and the enrichment of professional knowledge of foreign languages. The teaching is dedicated to improving the understanding of foreign literature and cultures while fostering students' sense of family and country, research ability, innovative spirit, ethical cultivation, comprehensive cultural qualities, and ability for discursive thinking and cross-cultural communication. In the practical training classroom, teachers can conduct practical education in various forms that align with the curriculum group's overall objectives and teaching plan. For instance, guest interpreters are invited to deliver lectures in the classroom to help students understand and experience the specific methods and strategies of translation in real-life scenarios from the perspective of industry professionals. They may systematically introduce the choice and evolution of translation languages in different historical periods, enhancing students' practical experience and building their cultural self-confidence. In online classes, students are encouraged to participate in formal competitions, read widely, and make full use of online resources for all-round learning. Teachers can enhance students' humanistic qualities by setting up reflection questions and reading tasks. It allows students to study and analyse independently, share their reading experiences, and write reflective notes, thereby expanding the space and depth of their ideological-political education.

4.2.2. The cultivation of students' international perspective through the deep integration of Chinese and Western cultures

At present, many college students, commonly referred to as 'digital natives' are heavily influenced by the fast-paced culture of the Internet age. They are often impatient and reluctant to engage with classic literature. Therefore, we should first correct their misconception of literature. Literary classics embody human wisdom, while online fast food culture may only be popular for a while and does not have a long life. In building a ideological-political education curriculum group the focus is on reforming the teaching content to include more Chinese and Western literature classic expressions. It will enable English major to learn, familiarize themselves with, and master traditional Chinese culture, and promote it in their life. This will help overcome the long-existing phenomenon of the lack of mother-tongue culture in English majors. It enhances cross-cultural communication and improves the cultural self-confidence, social honour and shame among contemporary college students. It also addresses the shortcomings of English majors who has been influenced by western ideology, and demonstrates the spiritual mission of foreign language professionals in the new era to students.

4.2.3. Strengthening the leading role of ideological-political education in curriculum group

Professional and ideological-political courses share the same goal of educating individuals. To achieve this agreement, it is important to focus on the common ground between professional education and whole-person education. An all-

encompassing ideological education system should be constructed, with a curriculum that integrates core values education into every class. Therefore, the transition from “ideological and political theory courses” to “ideological-political courses” can only be achieved by integrating ideological-political education into the teaching design and process in an unobtrusive manner. The teaching of foreign literature is closely related to the dissemination of cultural and ideological content. By integrating foreign literature with the ideological-political education, students can critically examine Western culture, assimilate positive, progressive, civilized, and scientific aspects that are beneficial to their development, and then integrate them with traditional Chinese culture. Secondly, for the students themselves, literary literacy and curriculum politics are combined to educate them on current affairs and improve their political literacy in English. It helps them develop their ideological sentiment and responsibility simultaneously. Finally, by comparing Chinese and Western literature, students can enhance their self-awareness, improve their ideological awareness and sense of cultural identity, and gain a clear understanding of the excellence of Chinese culture.

4.2.4. Strengthening the overall objectives of the ideological-political education in curriculum group

The construction of curriculum group requires clear course objectives that encompass the cultivation of professional knowledge in foreign literature and the requirements of ideological-political education. It includes the cultivation of students’ socialist core values, the spirit of innovation, and the sense of social responsibility. Additionally, the teachers’ construction should also be strengthened. The ideological-political educational foreign literature curriculum group should establish a team of teachers with backgrounds in their own disciplines. The team will jointly explore the combination of the ideological-political elements with the professional courses in foreign literature. Teachers should conduct research on topics related to the ideological-political education. They should explore ways to integrate educated elements into the curriculum of the foreign literature major to promote their organic integration. Furthermore, it is recommended to establish a multidimensional evaluation system that includes the integration of ideological-political education and foreign literature expertise, students

participation, experience, and accessibility. Establishing a feedback mechanism for students to provide their opinions and suggestions. It will allow for timely adjustments and improvements to the course content, ultimately enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the ideological-political education within the curriculum group.

5. Conclusion

The goal of ideological-political education can be achieved by constructing an effective path in the curriculum group. The necessity of collaborative education between foreign literature curriculum group teaching and ideological-political education is clarified by analyzing their status quo and advantages. The foreign literature curriculum group’s construction programme is based on the goals and implementation route of the ideological-political education. In the future we will conduct thorough practical exploration to achieve continuous improvement. It is significant for cultivating students’ moral and cultural literacy and meeting society’s demand for talent.

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