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Constructing Course Chains of Integrated Values Education for Foreign Language Majors: Theories and Paths

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Abstract: The main goal of holding the framework of values education is remarkably the same around the world, though the core values may differ in different countries. By analyzing the theoretical basis of integrating values through the foreign language learning, this paper provides three paths to realize course chains, including constructing knowledge chains, constructing capability chains and collaboration of three classes to promote value cultivation. It also analyzes the requirements and difficulties for foreign languages teachers.

Keywords: Course Chains; Value Education; Foreign Language Majors; Theories; Paths.

1. Introduction

Values education is an alternative to pursue not only academic competence, but also social competence of students. It is constructed to respond to the problems of behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse, sexuality, teen pregnancy and the like. It challenges the trend of today's education, especially in secondary and tertiary levels, which merely fulfills the needs of labour market and brings about competition and individual achievement. Students in schools prefer to achieve academic competence for an employment opportunity only. Few wishes to achieve success academically and socially, whereas they have a life outside their school, workplace, and home, that is the life in the wider society. [2]

Among countries around the world, the main goal of holding the framework of values education is remarkably the same, that is to say, to produce future generations that are not only competent in academic achievement, but have good characters, behaviors and attitudes as well. But the core values may differ in different countries.

Apart from core values constructed by formal schools, students also bring their own values to schools. Therefore, as Halstead and Taylor states, "The role of school is two-fold: to build on and supplement the values children have already begun to develop by offering further exposure to a range of values that are current in society (such as equal opportunities and respect for diversity); and to help children to reflect on, make sense of and apply their own developing values". [3]

Integrating values through the English language learning, however, is not an easy task. Like science, for decades English language has been viewed as not having moral and ethical quality. It limits itself to the description of linguistics, skills, grammatical structures, and emphasizes cognitive and psychomotoric domains yet resists the affective one. Therefore, specific recommendations have been made to enable all subjects to be legitimate vehicles for moral and values teaching. King and Reiss stipulates that "all national curriculum subjects –including English language and other sciences–need to have contributions to developing the values of cultural diversity". That is to say, foreign language learning can be a potential space for developing social values and personal attitudes. [3]

At the request of "Great Ideology and Politics", foreign languages teachers in Chinese universities nationwide are actively studying and practicing the new educational concept of "Curriculum-Based Political and Virtuous Awareness". The existing researches on such education for foreign language majors are mainly focused on the "macro level" and the "micro level". The macro studies either involve defining the goal and connotation of such education for foreign language majors, or discussing its holistic implementation and pedagogy, while at the micro level, case studies of how to integrate ideological and political elements into a particular textbook or course are most common, in contrast, the research yields of the "medium level" linking individual courses and curriculum system are still rare, despite the important bonding role that the "medium" plays.

Meanwhile, most curriculum design for foreign language majors follow the three modules: basic courses, core courses and specific focused courses. These courses are separated and value education for students are very fragmented rather than integrated.

Therefore, "course chains" play a very important role in the linking device between individual courses and the overall curriculum system to jointly raise students' political and virtuous awareness. A "course chain" is defined as a group of courses which are chained up by shared topics, knowledge nodes or learning goals. The relationship between individual courses, course chains and curriculum system are that of "dot-line-plane". Chaining up individual courses is like connecting dots into a line, and connecting multiple lines, or course chains, can ultimately form a plane of integrated curriculum.

2. Paths to Realize Course Chains

1. Knowledge Chains

Oriented at specific purposes, knowledge chains aim to integrate separate courses so that they be become related and form a chain structure in a logic and progressive way. According to the contents of different courses, the construction of course chains can be further refined into cultural chains, translation chains, reading chains, etc., to achieve knowledge in the training of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation ability. The synergistic effect of values enables students to understand and identify with the

policies and ideas of governance think, care about the destiny of the country, practice Chinese theory in all walks of life, and spread core value.

Besides, courses at different grades should respond to each other and progress to achieve collaborative education. For example, for oral English classes for lower grades, on scene teaching method may be used to design various teaching activities, so that different chapters may be integrates appropriately.

For example, the teacher provides prescribed scenarios and task requirements before class, and arranges students work in groups to write their own dialogues. We may organize students to evaluate the performance content and oral performance, and combine relevant videos and pictures of General Secretary Xi Jinping's visits and inspections, supplementing the background knowledge on national governance topics and expanded diplomatic etiquette. For the Senior Interpretation Class, in the preparation stage, hot word searches and classifications may be conducted, and political, economic, art, educate, environmental protection and other sections are classified, and teachers and students cooperate to build audio and video materials in the interpreting skills training process with the core socialist values established at the same time. On the basis of understanding the core concepts of state governance, translation courses cover the current affairs literature to study the main translation strategies of a specific text and further understand Chinese characteristics of current affairs documents.

2. The capability chains

The capability chain is an important extension of the knowledge chain. It has important practical significance for the construction of the entire curriculum chain. Teachers should cultivate students' diverse abilities in the process of teaching and continuously deepen students' understanding of the ideas and contents of state governance and improve the effectiveness of foreign language learning.

Foreign language majors' students should first have language ability: including grammatical ability and discourse ability. In the process of cultivating their language ability, students extend from mastering key sentences to paragraphs. The understanding of entire chapter, as well as the translation strategies and research of current political documents, finally have prepared the students to express the core concepts of multilingual texts coherently both in terms of speaking and writing.

Foreign language majors should also have strong cross-cultural communication abilities. Cross-cultural competence mainly includes five dimensions: First, having cultural awareness for cross-cultural competence. Students should enhance their understanding of multilateral affairs, and understand exchanges and interactions between different civilizations. Second, students should have an overall understanding of different world culture and at the same time being able to explain China from a cross-cultural perspective. Third, students should have a solid language foundation and rich professional knowledge, showing professionalism in cross-cultural communication. Fourth, students should have an international perspective and practice the concept of openness and inclusiveness to promotes cross-cultural exchanges and cooperation; Fifth, students should have a global awareness and a deep understanding of global issues and events based on shared important values and concepts to promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

3.Collaboration of three classes to promote value cultivation

The implementation of the course chains is mainly through the collaboration and overall planning of the first classroom, second classroom and the third classroom.

The first class is the main channel of construction course chains, which aimed at cultivating students' language ability intercultural ability international communication skills and other diverse abilities. The second classroom refers to improving student ability through a series of extracurricular activities to develop students' comprehensive abilities, which include political education, cultural activities, and ability training practice. It is the main camp for value training. The third classroom uses network technology and resources to educate students on values. The three classes focus on cultivating what kind of people to cultivate, how to train people, for whom to train people. The three classes are interconnected, making the curriculum and practice a consistent one.

3. Requirements for Teachers

Teaching values through the English language learning unavoidably provides a challenge for English teachers. They are demanded to be innovative and creative, for values in the English language curriculum are not explicitly stated. The teachers need to explore the curriculum and develop their own lesson plans that integrate particular values. Integrating values into teaching and learning practice encompasses the achievements that are more than the curricular content. In this stance, English language teachers need to constantly explore new strategies and ideas to introduce values to their students.

This study thinks that the three classes should complement each other for a mutual aim. Teachers should implement content and language integration in first class teaching. Teachers should use discussion-based, experience-based, and online and offline hybrid methods. The second classroom connects the knowledge in the first classroom with extracurricular practice. The third classroom make good use of network resources to expand more learning channels to supplement the first and second classes.

As the connection points between course and curriculum system, course chains construction is a key part of the overall ideological and political construction layout of the curriculum. However, A single tree cannot make a forest. The entire value education need to follow the steps of chain, group and net to fulfill the systematic work. "Group" means the set of multiple course chains. Similar to the design idea of course chain, it can be based on the ideological and political elements of the courses as long as the ideological and political goals of the course or the ideological and political output of the course are consistent or similar. Different foreign languages colleges may organize foreign language professional teachers to work across majors, thereby enhancing the professionalism of the ideological and political construction of the curriculum. Course groups can further strengthen the connection between different course chains so that it can better serve the ideological and political planning of the entire professional curriculum.

And cross-connect multiple groups of ideological and political course can go further step by step to form an interconnected network, or even like" Chinese Culture series course, which can span the restrictions of departments and even universities. With the support of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, it can even undertakes the task of

becoming the “Big Ideological and Political Network”.

4. Conclusion

"The new concept of “Course Ideology and Politics” requires that students in various majors incorporate value-led elements into course teaching to create a collaborative education effect. But how to cultivate talents between professional courses?.

This paper believes that as far as foreign language majors are concerned, creating course chains is an effective means to support the ideological and political curriculum network for foreign languages majors. The courses for foreign language majors have the characteristics of integrating knowledge and value. By building the chains, groups and networks of the courses, it can realize the "1+1>2"Educational Effect, promoting a better education for students.

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