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A Study on the Teaching Mode of Advanced English Ideological and Political Education

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Abstract: Advanced English is a compulsory course for junior and senior English majors. Exploring the ideological and political elements hidden in the course could not only promote students' professional study but also give full play to the educational function of the course. In this paper, the author first introduces the feasibility and necessity of integrating ideological and political education into the teaching and learning of Advanced English. Then the author analyzes the obstacles hindering the implementation of ideological and political education in Advanced English. Finally, strategies on how to promote ideological and political education into the teaching and learning of Advanced English are proposed including enhancing teachers' awareness of ideological and political education; carefully selecting teaching content and reforming teaching mode and course assessment system.

Keywords: Advanced English; Ideological and political education; Teaching mode.

1. Introduction

In 2019, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in the symposium for teachers of ideological and political courses that curriculum system must be perfected to achieve the coordination of other courses and ideological and political courses. After the symposium, researches and constructions centering on curriculum ideological and political education have been widely carried out among colleges and universities. Ideological and political education aims to exert imperceptible impact on students' ideologies and behavior through integrating those elements such as theoretical knowledge, values and spirit advocated by ideological and political course into other courses. The teaching content of Advanced English contains rich western cultural values but the unbalanced input of western cultural values may certainly prevent students from establishing proper world view, life view and values. Thus, it is of great necessity for teachers of Advanced English to carry out curriculum ideological and political education to cultivate students' critical thinking ability so that they can build proper views and cultural confidence through identifying the corruptness hidden in western culture and appreciating fine traditional Chinese culture.

2. The Feasibility and Necessity of Advanced English Ideological and Political Education

There are two reasons why Advanced English ideological and political education is feasible: first, the teaching goal of Advanced English is consistent with the general goal of curriculum ideological and political education; second, there are rich ideological and political elements in the teaching content of this course. By training students' abilities in English understanding, communication and writing, Advanced English course aims to promote students' cultural quality, moral quality and the capacity for sustainable development. Since the texts of Advanced English are mainly about western literature, history, custom, social conventions, values, etc., it is natural for teachers to carry out ideological and political education in the form of cultural comparisons.

However, the unbalanced cultural input may probably lead to western culture worship and the widespread neglect of Chinese culture among Chinese college students as they still lack of ability to distinguish the good from bad in western cultural values. Thus, Advanced English teachers not only shoulders the responsibility to impart language knowledge and train language skills but also to integrate ideological and political education into professional teaching. Only in this way can students be properly guided to establish correct world view, life view and values and build cultural confidence.

3. An Analysis of the Teaching and Learning Situation of Advanced English

3.1. From the Students' Perspective

Being a course featured with both instrumentality and humanism, Advanced English sets double goals for students: to obtain solid professional knowledge on the one hand; to reflect on life, society, nature and human nature, to broad horizons and cultivate one's mind through reading fine literary works. However, it is not easy to achieve the latter goal as most students pursue their study with an utilitarian thought. At the author's university, courses aiming at training language skills or practical skills are more popular than humanistic courses since most students think practical skills are what they most need after graduation while humanistic courses are time-consuming and lack of practical value.

On the other hand, Advanced English course is featured with one-side western culture input which can easily lead to western culture worship and neglect of Chinese culture among learners. The actual classroom teaching reveals that Chinese students have great enthusiasm in learning western cultures including festivals, traditions, customs, conventions, etc. and can properly express them in English while their knowledge of the corresponding Chinese culture is very poor, not to mention to express Chinese culture in English. Thus, Advanced English ideological and political education is both urgent and significant. Teachers of Advanced English must help students establish proper values and build cultural

confidence.

3.2. From the Teachers' Perspective

In actual teaching, teachers of Advanced English display weakness in two aspects: a general weak awareness of ideological and political education and lack of professional knowledge and teaching experience to carry out ideological and political education. Thus, various aspects of the Advanced English teaching need to be improved. For example, the teaching content is mainly confined to language knowledge in the textbook; teachers don't bother to explore ideological and political elements hidden in each lesson; the final exam of Advanced English is not conducive to cultivate students' critical thinking ability and innovative ability as it only examines students' mastery of language points.

4. Strategies to Promote Advanced English Ideological and Political Education

4.1. Enhancing the Teaching Team's Awareness of Ideological and Political Education

As required by ideological and political education, teachers need to integrate ideological and political education in the process of imparting professional knowledge in an imperceptible way. To achieve this goal, the whole teaching team needs to improve awareness of ideological and political education. Specifically speaking, efforts can be made from the following aspects: firstly, the whole teaching team of Advanced English should enrich related theoretical knowledge, to learn about current international situation and the latest policies at home; secondly, lectures or model course sharing can be organized at the school level to provide opportunities for teachers to learn from experts' colleagues on how to carry out ideological and political education. All in all, only when teachers are aware of the significance of curriculum ideological and political education can they have the motivation to make innovations on teaching content and teaching mode.

4.2. Carefully Selecting Teaching Content

Advanced English Book 1&2(the 3rd edition) are the textbooks most commonly used for Advanced English courses in colleges and universities and the author's university also adopts these textbooks. There are altogether 30 texts in the two books while only 8 texts can be selected for classroom instruction due to limited study hours. Our teaching team made the following selections to ensure ideological and political education can be naturally integrated into each lesson.

The following are lessons (from Book 1) selected for classroom instruction of Advanced English 1 with the major content and themes of each lesson being briefly introduced. Lesson 1 Face to Face with Hurricane Camille is a touching story about the Koshaks' fighting against hurricane Camille. With an extension of the story in lesson 1, students are encouraged to share news on Chinese people fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic so that they can build cultural confidence and a strong sense of national pride. Lesson 3 Blackmail is about the Duke and the Duchess who tried to buy off a hotel inspector after committing hit-and-run. By reading the story, students are guided to discuss the proper response after breaking the law as well as a citizen's social responsibility. Lesson 6 Mark Twain-Mirror of American(Excerpts) displays a panorama of American society in Mark Twain's times and analyzes the impact of social environment on Mark Twain's literary creation. Through this text, students need to critically analyze the progress as well as problems existing in the 19th century American society. Lesson 14 Speech on Hitler's Invasion of the USSR is a piece of political speech strongly condemning Hitler's fascism. Nowadays, hegemonic politics still exist in the world and with related news being shared, students are guided to discuss social justice and humanistic spirit.

The following are lessons (from Book 2) selected for classroom instruction of Advanced English 2 with the major content and themes of each lesson being briefly introduced. Lesson 1 Pub Talk and the King's English tries to illustrate the art of conversation through a casual pub talk. Since pubs to British is what tea-houses to Chinese people, a comparison between pub culture and tea-house culture would be conducted to guide students to learn about and spread Chinese culture in English. Lesson 2 Marrakech reveals the suffering and misery of the colonial people through different scenes. The suppression of Marrakech would certainly remind our Chinese of the humiliating history of Chinese nation reduced to a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society. Through history review, students' nation consciousness and the determination to achieve national rejuvenation could be greatly aroused. Lesson 4 Love is a Fallacy tells a humorous love story. By appreciating the love story, students are encouraged to share their own love views and are guided to establish a healthy love mentality. Lesson 5 The Sad Young Men focuses on American young intellectual who felt alienated, disillusioned and lost after returning from the WWI battlefield. Based on the sad young men's life experience, students can discuss the impact of war on people's physical lives and mentality so as to help students establish correct world view, life view and values.

4.3. Innovating Teaching Method and Course Assessment

To achieve the goal of imparting professional knowledge and value shaping, Advanced English course needs to make innovations in both teaching methods and course assessment. Considering the limited study hours and a large amount of language points, blended teaching mode could be introduced with language points teaching being transferred to Yunban platform while classroom instruction focuses on explaining difficult points and carrying out ideological and political education. Specifically speaking, Advanced English adopts the teaching mode of "instruction+ discussion+ presentation" with ideological and political education being carried out through discussion and presentation to make cultural comparisons. After class, various activities or competitions including debates competition, speech contest, writing competition and translation contest can be organized to draw students' attention to fine traditional Chinese culture and strengthen their ability to spread Chinese culture in English.

On the other hand, course assessment should also make adjustments to promote the effects of ideological and political education. Since all the items in traditional Advanced English exam mainly examine the language points appeared in the textbook, changes could be made in the translation and writing part. Writing topics and translation materials should be carefully selected to give play to ideological and political education. Besides, teachers should arrange multiple activities including online or off-line discussion, speeches, debates, etc. to cultivate students' critical thinking and proper

values.

5. Conclusion

Advanced English is a core course for junior and senior English majors and the necessity of integrating ideological and political education in this course is obvious. However, there are many obstacles in implementing ideological and political education: students pursue study with utilitarian thoughts; widespread western culture worship among students; teachers have a weak awareness of ideological and political education, teaching content is mainly confined to language points appeared in textbook. In order to overcome the above difficulties, the following strategies are put forward: enhancing teachers' awareness of ideological and political education through multiple channels such as holding lectures, watching model course display, etc; carefully selecting teaching content to ensure ideological and political education can be naturally integrated into each lesson; innovating teaching mode and course assessment to cultivate students' critical thinking ability. Through the exploration of the teaching mode of Advanced English ideological and political education, it is hoped that Advanced English course could better achieve the goal of both imparting professional knowledge and value shaping.

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