

Innovation in "Four Dimensions": Construction of Curriculum with Ideological and Political Education in English Courses in Zhaoqing University

Tang Enping

School of Foreign Languages, Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing, Guangdong, China

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7491150>

Published Date: 29-December-2022

Abstract: "Building morality and cultivating people" is the fundamental task and primary mission of colleges and universities. Currently, colleges and universities in China are carrying out reform in curriculum with ideological and political education, advocating that all courses should give students some ideological and political education while teaching them professional knowledge and skills. With a case study of English courses in Zhaoqing University, the author proposes that the construction of curriculum with ideological and political education should carry out innovation in "four dimensions" - teaching philosophy, teaching content, teaching methods and teaching evaluation, to effectively strengthen the effect of ideological and political education in English courses.

Keywords: curriculum with ideological and political education; English teaching; ideological and political elements.

I. INTRODUCTION

"Curriculum with ideological and political education" is part of the current education and teaching reform in colleges and universities in China. It was first proposed by the Shanghai Education Commission in 2014, pointing out that it is a task that needs to be implemented in practice (Bai & Jin, 2022, p. 148). Its guiding ideology comes from a series of important speeches and publications on education by the Chinese leader General Secretary Xi Jinping, as well as a series of guiding documents issued by the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the State Council and the Ministry of Education.

General Secretary Xi Jinping delivered an important speech in December 2016 at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities. He emphasized, "We should make good use of the main channel of classroom teaching. Ideological and political theory courses should be strengthened throughout the process of reform. The acceptability of ideological and political education should be improved. The needs and expectations of students' growth and development should be met. Other courses should also make good use of the main channel of classroom teaching, take up their own responsibility, so that all other courses and ideological and political theory courses can go hand in hand with each other, forming a synergistic effect (Xi, 2016)."

General Secretary Xi (2018) pointed out, "People are not cultivated without morality. The fundamental task of cultivating people is to build morality." "Building morality and cultivating people" is the fundamental task and primary mission of colleges and universities. We must insist on taking the effect of "building morality and cultivating people" as the fundamental standard for education evaluation. The construction of curriculum with ideological and political education is a key link in implementing the fundamental task of "building morality and cultivating people".

In August 2019, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued Several Opinions on Deepening the Reform and Innovation of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Schools in the New Era. In May 2020, the Ministry of Education issued *the Guiding Outline for the Construction of Curriculum with Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities*. These two documents both clearly pointed out that the construction of curriculum with ideological and political education should be comprehensively implemented in order to fulfil the fundamental task of "building morality and cultivating people". Since then, the construction of curriculum with ideological and political education has been officially launched throughout China. It has become a heated issue for colleges and universities to comprehensively promote the construction of curriculum with ideological and political education, to give full play to the educational role in each course, and to improve the quality of talent training in colleges and universities. In the practice of English teaching in colleges and universities, searching for ideological and political elements and integrating ideological and political education with English teaching have become heated issues for exploration.

II. ISSUES OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN ENGLISH CURRICULUM IN ENGLISH COURSES

Some scholars used the keywords of "new liberal arts" and "curriculum with ideological and political education" in the advanced search of CNKI, to find that the available data was 1986 in 2019, 5593 in 2020, and more than 4300 by the first half of 2021 (Dong & Wu, 2022, p. 138). From the data we can see that curriculum reform of integrating ideological and political education with other courses has been thriving in colleges and universities in China.

However, research in curriculum with ideological and political education in colleges and universities is still in the exploratory stage. The majority of educators and scholars carry out the construction of curriculum with ideological and political education according to their personal experience and understanding. Therefore, there are many issues concerning the current construction of curriculum with ideological and political education in colleges and universities, "Major issues are a lack of cognition of integrity of curriculum with ideological and political education, a lack of effectiveness in the process of practice, a weak synergy between professional courses and ideological and political courses, and a lack of a systematic evaluation system etc.(Zhou & Deng, 2021, p. 3)." Some scholars pointed out some other issues: Teaching philosophy in professional courses in curriculum with ideological and political education is "too shallow" and "too simple"; teaching content in curriculum with ideological and political education is "too narrow" and "too wide"; teaching methods are "too stiff" and "unidirectional"; and teaching evaluation is "unilateral" and "uni-dimensional" etc. (Meng, 2022, p. 53). Another scholar pointed out that the phenomenon of "two skins" exists in different degrees between ideological and political courses and professional courses, showing insufficient ability to search for the ideological and political elements in teaching professional courses and a lack of awareness of different educational requirements of emotion, attitude and values in different courses (Yang, 2019, p. 123).

III. INNOVATION IN "FOUR DIMENSIONS"

Zhaoqing University, where the author teaches, is carrying out the construction of curriculum with ideological and political education in English courses. Drawing on other scholars' researches on the ideological and political issues of the curriculum, the author proposes innovation in "four dimensions": teaching philosophy, teaching content, teaching methods and teaching evaluation in the construction of curriculum with ideological and political education in English courses.

A. Diversified Teaching Philosophy

Some teachers do not have a scientific orientation of ideological and political education. "Curriculum with ideological and political education" is not only an educational concept, but also a scientific concept of education and teaching (Meng, 2022, p. 54). The essential goal of implementing curriculum with ideological and political education is to realize the fundamental task of "building morality and cultivating people" in higher education, by promoting a system of "Three-all Education"-all members, all processes, and all directions, to fulfil the fundamental task of "building morality and cultivating people" in higher education, to ultimately solve the fundamental educational questions of "who to cultivate, how to cultivate people, and for whom to cultivate people", which in fact is to trace back to the essence of the values and meaning of education, in compliance with the laws of education (English Teaching Guidance Sub committee of the Foreign Language and Literature Teaching Guidance Committee of the Ministry of Education TeachingTeaching, 2020). Curriculum with ideological and political education in English courses requires English teachers to first identify with the value of ideological and political education from the perspective of educational philosophy (Zhang & Li, 2020, p. 7).

In the practice of English teaching, under the guidance of the scientific education and teaching concept of "curriculum with ideological and political education", we should search for the materials related to ideological and political education, and logically and gradually integrate them into the English teaching, in order to conduct an ideological and political education for students in a subtle way. For instance, in Zhaoqing University, where the author teaches, in one of the core courses, *Comprehensive English I*, the title of Unit 8 is *The Young On The Old*, which is intended to remind young people to respect their parents. In the teaching practice, English teachers can guide students to review the culture of filial piety in Chinese culture, collect famous quotations about filial piety, read outstanding moral exemplary deeds in filial piety, and assign students to do something for the elders of the family to show their filial piety. Under the guidance of the educational concept of ideological and political education, we can thoroughly search for the ideological and political elements, so that ideological and political education can be naturally integrated into the specific activities of English teaching.

B. Deepening of Teaching Content

Some teachers view curriculum with ideological and political education only in the sense of political education, narrowly interpreting it to be a pure political task that colleges and universities must complete in the ideological field to maintain national political security (Gao & Wang, 2020, p. 17), preventing them to search for the ideological and political elements other than political education in English teaching. This kind of cognitive deviation will mislead them in designing teaching content for ideological and political education in the teaching practice.

In terms of teaching content of ideological and political education in English courses, "ideological and political education" is not only about political education; it can also include more in-depth content in a broader range, such as theoretical communication, ideological guidance, value orientation, spirit training and moral and ethical education. In the four courses of *Comprehensive English* for English majors in Zhaoqing University, breakthrough points of ideological and political education can be found in different fields.

For instance, in *Comprehensive English IV*, the title of Unit 4 is *Network Designer-Tim Berners-Lee*. If we want to include some ideological and political content, the key points of this biography will increase. We should probe into the moral aspect from the hero's innovative awareness and exploratory spirit: the fundamental reason for "the Founder of the World Wide Web" to give up fame and wealth is not forgetting the original intention of scientific research and selfless dedication. This is an example of deepening of teaching content in the teaching design under the guidance of ideology and political education.

In designing teaching content in English courses, the systematic classification of ideological and political content and its gradual integration into classroom teaching can enhance the moral sentiment of English majors, enhance their political concepts, ideals and beliefs, national identity as well as devotion to family and country, and enable them to avoid the wrong practice of valuing Western culture over Chinese culture.

C. Diversified Teaching Methods

Teachers should take the lead in class, with students as the main body, adopt flexible and diversified teaching methods, and avoid one-way and monotonous teaching and lecturing. There is a particular objective in English teaching: to help students learn the language. The communicative teaching method is mainly used, supplemented by other teaching methods, to promote the interaction between teachers and students, and strengthen the effect of ideological and political education in English courses.

Communication is the key to English teaching with communicative teaching method as the dominant method. Communication in English teaching is not only limited to oral communication, but also includes reading communication and writing communication. Oral communication, well-known by teachers and students, includes pairs of oral activities, group discussions and questions and answers, etc. Reading communication include the communication between readers and authors, and the exchange of reading experience between teachers and students. In traditional English classes, when reading a text, the focus is on reading comprehension, which tends to be practical. However, it is difficult to carry out ideological and political education. When reading a text, English teachers can guide students to communicate with the author in the process of intensive reading, that is, try to understand the author's writing intention or put forward different opinions from the author and record them. When teaching reading a text, English teachers can share with students their own thoughts and questions concerning the text, and then discuss with students, to activate their reading experience and improve their critical thinking. In the process of communicating with students, teachers should seize the opportunity to "be the guide of students' character forming, knowledge learning, innovation training and dedication to the motherland cultivating" (Ministry of

Education of the People's Republic of China, 2016). In writing communication, in addition to assigning writing tasks, teachers can make full use of the advantages of the mixed-mode classes, by providing ideological and political topics related to the curriculum in the online teaching platform discussion area, so that students can write out what they have in mind, extend the classroom discussion to extracurricular activities, and combine offline teaching with online teaching. Through oral communication, reading communication and writing communication, the two-way interaction between teachers and students as well as interaction among students can be realized. Meanwhile, ideological and political education are integrated into the teaching practice of English teaching, exerting an influence on students in a subtle way.

In teaching English with ideological and political education, teachers should adopt diversified teaching methods in addition to communicative teaching method. Task-based teaching method, audio-visual teaching method and classroom presentation method can greatly supplement communicative teaching method, to make the classroom more lively and improve the enthusiasm of students to participate in class. Task-based teaching method, making students work together to complete a specific task, helps to cultivate students' team spirit; Audio-visual teaching method can stimulate students' interest and help them quickly enter the state. Audio-visual and oral ability training should be penetrated in the process of various professional courses for English majors. Classroom presentation includes teachers' presentation and students' presentation, individual presentation and group presentation. Classroom presentation can effectively help to improve classroom participation. In the presentation process, both teachers and students can show their understanding of knowledge and their thinking about ideological and political issues, making the classroom a great place for students' mind developing and thinking ability training.

When diversified teaching methods are adopted, ideological and political education can be naturally integrated into English teaching, making it readily accepted by teachers and students, to realize the mutual benefit between teaching and learning.

D. Multi-dimensional Teaching Evaluation

Curriculum with ideological and political education is a kind of invisible education. How to evaluate the effect of ideological and political education in English courses is still under discussion in academia. Building an effective evaluation system of ideological and political education is a guarantee to promote the development of ideological and political education in English courses.

The evaluation system of ideological and political teaching effect in English courses should be multi-dimensional. In the evaluation of teachers, questionnaire can be adopted. The questionnaire on ideological and political education in English courses should include teachers' political awareness, ideological level, course design, teaching and educating ability, etc., with both subjective evaluation and quantitative scoring, to help teachers gain a clear idea about their teaching effect, and adjust the course design in ideological and political education in the future. In the evaluation of students, indicators such as ideological awareness, moral cultivation and professional quality should be introduced into the course evaluation, to guide students to attach more importance to ideological and political education in English courses.

IV. CONCLUSION

The National Standards for the Teaching Quality of Undergraduate Majors in Ordinary Colleges and Universities (English and Literature) requires English majors "to have a correct outlook on the world, life and values, a high morality, devotion to country and international vision, and a sense of social responsibility" (Higher Education Steering Committee of the Ministry of Education 2018; English Teaching Guidance Sub committee of the Foreign Language and Literature Teaching Guidance Committee of the Ministry of Education Teaching 2020). Under such background, *Teaching Guide for Undergraduate English and Literature Majors in Regular Institutions of Higher Learning (Part I)-Teaching Guide for English Majors issued in 2020* requires English teachers do some exploration in curriculum with ideological and political education, in order to cultivate students to be English professionals and interdisciplinary English talents "with communication skills, humanistic concern, devotion to country and international vision (Zhou & Deng, 2021)."

According to the guiding spirit of the government, Zhaoqing University has been building a curriculum system with ideological and political education in English courses. This system requires teachers to carry out reform and innovation in the four dimensions of teaching philosophy, teaching content, teaching methods and teaching evaluation. This system aims to deeply search for ideological and political elements such as patriotism, a sense of alignment, a striving spirit, and humanistic concern, to cultivate students into English professionals who meet the national requirements and have both ability and integrity. In this way, we can promote ideological and political education in the curriculum in the new era.

Funding of this Research:

This work is supported in part by 2021 Demonstration Classroom Project of Zhaoqing University: Curriculum with Ideological and Political Education. *Comprehensive English · Network Designer - Tim Berners - Lee*. Project Number:35; in part by 2021 Teacher Education Research Project of Zhaoqing University: "Promoting Learning through Competitions" *Research on Improving the Education and Teaching Ability of English Major Normal Students*, under Grant ZQJYY2021140. This work is the staged result of the above two projects.

Original information of the Funding is written in Chinese as follows:

1.2021 年肇庆学院课程思政示范课堂项目 项目名称: *Comprehensive English· Network Designer - Tim Berners - Lee*. 课题序号:35

2.肇庆学院 2021 年度教师教育研究课题:“以赛促学”提高英语专业师范生教育教学能力的研究 项目编号:ZQJYY2021140

REFERENCES

- [1] Bai, Shuya, & Jin, Wei. (2022). Summary of Studies in Ideological and political education in English curriculum in Collages and Universities. *Research on Ideological and Political Courses*, 04, 148-156.
- [2] China, Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of. (2016). Teachers Should Be Good Guides for Students. Retrieved from http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/moe_2082/zl_2016n/2016_zl48/201609/t20160918_281294.html
- [3] Dong, Wei, & Wu, Xiaodan. (2022). Overview of Studies in Ideological and political education in English curriculum in English courses in the Context of New Liberal Arts. *Taste Classics*, 06, 138-140.
- [4] Higher Education Steering Committee of the Ministry of China. (2018). National Standards for Teaching Quality of Undergraduate Specialty (English and Literature) in Ordinary Colleges and Universities. In. Beijing: Higher Education Press.
- [5] Gao, Ning, & Wang, Xizhong. (2020). Comprehensively Understanding of the Theory, Integrity and systematization of the Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological and political education in English curriculum in Collages and Universities. *China University Teaching*, 09, 17-22.
- [6] Meng, Zimin. (2022). Issues and Ways for Improvement in the Practice of Ideological and political education in English curriculum *China University Teaching*, 3, 51-57.
- [7] Teaching, English Teaching Guidance Sub committee of the English and Literature Teaching Guidance Committee of the Ministry of Education. (2020). Guide for Undergraduate English and Literature Majors in Ordinary Colleges and Universities (Part I) -- Teaching Guide for English Majors. In. Shanghai: Shanghai English Education Press.
- [8] Xi, Jinping. (2016). Ideological and Political Work Throughout the Whole Process of Education and Teaching. Retrieved from http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-12/08/c_1120082577.htm
- [9] Xi, Jinping. (2018). Speech at the Symposium between Teachers and Students of Peking University. Retrieved from http://www.xinhuanet.com/2018-05/03/c_1122774230.htm
- [10] Yang, Jianchao. (2019). A Rational Review of the Reform of "Ideological and political education in English curriculum" in Colleges and Universities under the Concept of Collaborative Education. *Journal of Nantong University (Social Science Edition)*, 35 (6), 121-128.
- [11] Zhang, Xinghai, & Li, Shanshan. (2020). "Four Theories" in the Reform of Ideological and political education in English curriculum in Collages and Universities. *Z2*, 7-9.
- [12] Zhou, Song, & Deng, Shuhua. (2021). Issues and Path Optimization in the Construction of Ideological and political education in English curriculum in Collages and Universities. *School Party Building and Ideological Education*, 10, 3.