



Research on the Innovation Pathway of *Regards sur La France* Course Based on Information Technology

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Abstract. *Regards sur La France* is an important professional course in French learning. Its main innovation direction lies in reasonably integrating ideological and political education, based on “high-level, innovative and challenging” requirements for the course with a view of enhancing students’ sense of gain by means of information technology, design of teaching objectives and teaching activities and “transfer output” forms. Through this course, students’ language production ability will be promoted, their cultural vision enhanced, and the phenomenon of weak cultural output improved. The unity of knowledge and action is valued in this course, helping students understand French culture while cultivating their abilities to tell China’s stories well.

Keywords: Information technology; *Regards sur La France*; course innovations; ideological and political education in the course.

1 Introduction

Language could not exist without culture. To be proficient in a language, one must understand its culture. It has long been the consensus among foreign language teaching circles that students majoring in foreign languages need to be familiar with the history of civilizations and cultural profile of the country regarding the language they are learning, while passing on the history of civilizations and cultural profile of their own country to the country corresponding to the language they are learning. According to the Syllabus of French Teaching for French Major in Institutions of Higher Education and Norms for Undergraduate French Major in Institutions of Higher Education, the training goal of the French major is “to cultivate interdisciplinary French talents who have a solid foundation in French language and extensive cultural knowledge and can engage in translation, teaching, management, foreign affairs, foreign trade research, and other work by using French skillfully”. In this sense, students should not only master certain basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating in French but also acquire certain cultural knowledge of France[1]. At present, with the promotion of ideological and political education in colleges and universities in China, how to tell China’s stories well and spread China’s culture in French has also been incorporated in the teaching vision of *Regards sur La France* on

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the basis of understanding relevant cultural knowledge of France. In the fifth semester, the French major at Xi'an FanYi University offers a professional core course, namely *Regards sur La France*. At this stage, students have basically mastered the basic knowledge of French. Hence, the course is taught in both Chinese and French. The course of this type plays a significant role in French learning from the perspectives of training objectives, number of students, and course categories. Therefore, it is quite essential to try newer and better teaching methods and modes to take this course as the goal of innovation and reform in teaching.

2 Overview of *Regards sur La France* Course

2.1 Basic Information of the Course

1. *Regards sur La France* is a professional mandatory course for French undergraduates, with 2 credits and 32 class hours. It is taught in the fifth semester, and the textbook used is *Regards sur La France*.

2.2 Ideas of Teaching Design

The teaching design principle of this course is to closely combine the advantages of offline teaching with those of online learning. It should not only give full play to the leading role of teachers in guiding, inspiring, and monitoring the teaching process, but also fully reflect the initiative, enthusiasm, and creativity of students as the subject of the learning process, so that the course will be taught in both a knowledge-rich and fascinating manner, creating a personalized learning experience for students engaged in the course to a great extent. According to the content and links of teaching, information technology is reasonably applied with carefully designed teaching activities (problem exploration, scene simulation, project discussion, thematic debate, and classroom presentation). High-level, innovative, and challenging features are reflected through teaching objectives, teaching contents, and evaluation methods, respectively. Meanwhile, ideological and political education is ingeniously integrated into the course through thematic comparisons between China and France.

2.3 Evaluation Method of Course Grades

A diversified formative evaluation method is adopted for the course grades in *Regards sur La France*, with the first, second, and third-level evaluation indicators and evaluation criteria formulated in detail.

Total score = daily performance 50% {online learning before class 20% (audios and videos, documents, chapter tests + discussions) + in-class learning for the semester 40% (in-class participation, group cooperation, and in-class exercises) + homework 30% (homework + thematic presentations + exchanges and discussions) + class notes 5% + extra credits for expansion 5%} + final written exam 50%.

3 Teaching Innovations of *Regards sur La France* Course Based on “high-level, innovative and challenging” standards

The course is reformed and upgraded based on “**high-level, innovative and challenging**” standards, while integrating ideological and political perspectives into the course. The innovations of the course are as follows:

3.1 Enhance the “high-level” feature

1. Objectives of teaching: By integrating knowledge, abilities, and qualities organically, comparative research from the perspective of China, the course teaching aims to cultivate students’ comprehensive abilities and advanced thinking to solve complex problems from a cross-cultural perspective.

(1) Knowledge: Understand and be familiar with the geography, history, politics, economy, culture, education, and other knowledge of France to enrich cultural accomplishment and broaden horizons and knowledge.

(2) Capabilities: Be able to reasonably interpret cultural differences between China and France, recognize the diversity of the world, treat the multicultural phenomena they encounter with an open attitude of seeking common ground while reserving differences, and enhance their abilities in cross-cultural communication; capable of making special statements on relevant contents, thinking deeply about transnational cultural differences, and conducting effective cross-cultural communication.

(3) Qualities: Be able to correctly understand the national conditions of France and enhance cultural confidence, national pride, and patriotism through multi-faceted and multi-angle comparisons with China’s national conditions, society, and culture, as well as consciously practice core socialist values.

2. Scope of teaching: By emphasizing breadth and depth, the low-level thinking of understanding various topics of *Regards sur La France* will be changed to compare, understand, interpret, and evaluate related topics[2].

3.2 Highlight the “innovation” standard

1. Scope of teaching: It reflects the times and cutting-edge features. While teaching France’s social, educational and cultural sectors, the achievements of academic research plus ideological and political education will be integrated into the teaching.

2. Modes of teaching: The deep integration of modern information technology into teaching is vigorously promoted[3], and students are guided to carry out inquiry-based and personalized learning with such technologies applied below:(1) Watch our self-purchased quality online course *Speak France in French* and self-organized online courses before class to understand and master the cultural knowledge of France;(2) Make full use of the *Xuexitong* teaching platform to organize online and offline mixed teaching;(3) Use audio and video means to arrange situational sketches with cultural themes and conduct immersive teaching in combination with the theme;(4) Share students’ excellent course papers and thematic introductions to WeChat official ac-

counts for results release;(5) Co-build Sino-French parallel corpus with students, collect and sort out Chinese and French cultural materials to expand theme reading, conduct in-depth study by using the established corpus, and write papers and reports[4].

3.3 Increase the “challenging” level

1. Teaching design: The teaching design, based on “thematic knowledge input plus French output”, enhances students’ abilities to express Chinese culture and cross-cultural communication in French, and it enriches the form of students’ “transfer output” by setting up papers, reports or project documents.

2. Assessment and evaluation: Diversified assessment and evaluation: “course credits plus expansion credits”, students are encouraged to transform their learning results into achievements and integrate the “first classroom” and “second classroom” as a whole:

(1) Encourage students to publish theme papers and excellent reports on Chinese and French culture in the WeChat official account of the “French Center” of our department; (2) Guide students to shoot micro-videos with the theme of classroom expansion and actively participate in the micro-video contest titled “Tell China’s Stories in a Foreign Language”; (3) Guide students to apply for the College Students Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education Project. The “Sino-French Bridge” Translation Studio project currently being applied by 2020 students is derived from the results of the *Regards sur La France* course, which pushes the thematic content of Chinese and French culture to major social platforms at home and abroad, providing a stage for domestic French lovers to showcase their talents and a platform for Chinese culture lovers abroad to understand and communicate.

4 Teaching Practice-Take the lesson of *Cultural Differences between China and France* as an example

4.1 Analysis of Learning Situation

1. Cultural theme of this lesson: Due to students’ lack of communicative environment and systematic learning, the knowledge of Sino-French cultural differences is only fragmented. French language in this lesson: Students’ French reading ability is at A2-B1 level; French listening and speaking ability is about A2 level, especially for cultural output, which students are not good at.

4.2 Integration of Ideological and Political Education in This Course

1. Comparisons of cultural differences between China and France: Introduce the way Chinese people treat others and deal with affairs, and highlight “civilization”, “integrity”, and “friendliness” in the core socialist values;

2. Transfer output: From the perspective of social culture, students are guided to think about other cultural differences between China and France and try to express

them in French to friends from France, in a bid to spread Chinese culture and etiquette. The final classroom results are a French version of Guide to China's Etiquette Culture jointly formulated by the whole class.

4.3 Innovations of Teaching Concepts

With students centered, FLE communicative teaching concept is adopted to complete the teaching of this course through "introduction-student observation and analysis-systematic explanation-transfer output".

4.4 Innovations in Teaching Content and Methods

The course *Regards sur La France* before modification takes France's geography, history, politics, economy, culture, and education as its main teaching content, so that students can master and understand the subject knowledge of France through the course study. After the course reform, this course emphasizes "cultural input plus language output". According to differences in teaching contents and links, it is skillfully integrated into ideological and political education through a comparison of Chinese and French cultural knowledge. For example, for the course *Cultural Differences between China and France*, the course team reconstructed the teaching content by initial "breaking", moving away from the conventional approach of explaining each section in its original format. Instead, it focuses on extracting the differences in the "ways of interaction" between China and France. Then comes the "establishment" phase, where immersive language communication scenarios are created using information technology to interpret these cultural differences.

4.5 Innovations in Teaching Evaluation Methods

In the part of thematic presentations, a "three-party learning evaluation" method is adopted in this course: an individual learning evaluation form, an intra-group interactive evaluation form, and a teacher's evaluation form are created to evaluate the learning effect of cultural themes. The Individual Evaluation Form is a self-evaluation of the individual's actual mastery in the teaching process, accounting for 40% of the total score; the Group Interaction Evaluation Form is a joint scoring based on individual performance in group activities and group discussions, taking up 30% of the total score; the Teacher Evaluation Form is a score given by teachers corresponding to students' performance in group activities, classroom interactions and online discussions, accounting for 30% of the total score[5]. The above three evaluation forms are published on the "Xuexitong" platform, and students shall complete and submit them after class within one week after the end of teaching activities. Those with high scores in the tripartite review will post their thematic presentations on the WeChat official account "French Center" of the French Language Department to obtain extra credits.

5 Conclusions

It is not easy to transform the teaching objectives of *Regards sur La France* and students' learning expectations from simple cultural input into a combination of cultural input plus language output. In addition to making good use of teaching methods, such as the communicative teaching method, output-oriented method, and task-driven method, it is also necessary to set up different teaching methods according to different topics, which cannot be directly nested in one mode. Based on different scopes of courses, we should reasonably integrate ideological and political education into the course, and apply information technology to design the teaching objectives, teaching activities and "transfer output" forms of each lesson from the perspective of improving the "high-level, innovative and challenging" standards of the course, in a bid to enhance students' sense of gain, which should become the direction of thinking in my classroom design.

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