



Exploring Practical Approaches to Ideological-Political Education in College English Courses

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Abstract. It is a heated research topic to integrate ideological-political elements into English teaching and learning process in China. The author takes the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) rationale as the guiding principle to design the teaching process. The prime responsibility of current college English teaching is to develop students' abilities of cross-cultural communication and critical thinking, contributing to the international dissemination of Chinese culture and fostering students' national confidence. This paper takes "Introducing Chinese Culture in English" as an example, addresses two essential teaching questions: "What to teach?" and "How to teach?" It provides a valuable reference for ideological-political education in college English courses.

Keywords: College English Courses; Ideological-Political Education; Practical Approaches; Chinese culture

1 Introduction

At present, according to the spirit of the "Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological- Political Education in Higher Education Courses" issued by the Ministry of Education^[1], focusing on morality education. It is an important mission for teachers to cultivate talents with patriotic spirits and great morals. University English courses must not only enhance students' comprehensive English proficiency, including listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation, but also focus on ideological-political education. Textbooks, as the medium, significantly influence students' developments in ability cultivation, value formation and personality shaping. On top of that, the teaching design plays a vital role in determining whether students can deeply understand and accept a particular set of thoughts or values.

However, the majority of existing researches focus on the connotation, theoretical framework and suggestions of ideological-political education in foreign language courses. Although there are few discussions on practical approaches and teaching designs that put the theory into practice, they are not relatively operational for most English teachers. Taking "Introducing Chinese Culture in English" as an example, this study explores how to design teaching tasks revolving around ideological-political ed-

ucation with the approaches of question-oriented introduction and critical thinking expansion. By learning and experiencing traditional Chinese culture, the goal is to enhance students' patriotism and cultivate them cross-cultural communication skills, thereby achieving the teaching objectives of nurturing talents with patriotism and global mindset. This study provides a reference for ideological-political education in college English courses.

2 Blended Teaching

Blended learning can be comprehended in both broad and narrow senses. In a broad sense, blended learning includes the integration of learning theories, learning resources, learning environments, learning methods, and learning assessments (Mangina, 2022)^[2]; while, in a narrow sense, it refers to the combination of face-to-face teaching and online learning (Yusny, 2021)^[3]. He Kekang (2019)^[4] believes that blended learning integrates the traits of online and offline learning and emphasizes the needs of constructing a student-centered teaching mode, which aims to create a learning atmosphere of "autonomy, inquiry and cooperation". It facilitates the cultivation of innovative talents in China.

3 Course Design And Practice

3.1 Teaching Concept

Outcome-based education (OBE) is an educational model based on learning outcomes, that is the teaching design is driven by expected learning outcomes, respecting individual differences, emphasizing competence-based education, and using the feedback to revise the existing teaching designs (Subbarao, 2023)^[5]. The blended teaching model aims to stimulate students' learning motives, promote personalized learning and emphasize the cultivation of their skills. Based on its operational mechanism, teachers' adopting "problem-based introduction" to conduct interactive teaching helps facilitate students' critical thinking and in-depth learning.

3.2 Teaching Design

Language is closely connected with culture and cognition. From the perspective of functional discourse analysis, "any discourse is value-oriented, expressing or implying certain values, and thus can be examined from an ideological-political perspective" (Huang Guowen, 2020)^[6]. Therefore, foreign language teachers should be good at digging out the hidden values within the text. Huang Guowen and Xiao Qiong (2021)^[7] started from a "problem-based" approach and explored the six elements of ideological-political education in College English courses: why, what, who, when, where, and how. Among these, "what to do" in ideological-political education is the key question for us. Only by clarifying "what to do" can we discuss "how to do it." The practice of integrating ideological-political education into College English ultimately revolves around

"what to teach" and "how to teach." The teaching design is vital in the teaching process, which requires teachers to dive deep into finding out the ideological elements in teaching materials and fully explore the advantages of language in ideological-political education. Therefore, the teaching design should integrate ideological-political elements into the teaching objectives, content, process and evaluation to ensure the achievement of ideological-political education goals.

3.2.1 Course Content.

The first problem we should deal with is to determine "what to teach." The course selected "Introducing Chinese Culture in English" as textbook, which is "based on traditional classroom teaching and large-scale online open courses (MOOCs), incorporating the advantages of similar domestic textbooks." This textbook is a continuously polished by an expert team through years of teaching practice. Additionally, through the MOOC platform, teachers and students can engage in simultaneous online and offline teaching. The textbook integrates the knowledge of language with traditional Chinese culture, including topics, such as, Confucius, Laozi, Calligraphy, Festivals, Weddings, Chinese Clothing, Chinese Handicrafts, Chinese Architectures, Chinese operas, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Chinese Painting, and Chinese Kung Fu, reflecting China's distinctive cultural characteristics.

3.2.2 Teaching Procedures.

After fixing the problem of "What to teach?", we need to address the question of "how to teach?" Based on the characteristics of OBE (Outcome-Based Education), this paper adopts a "problem-based introduction" approach to facilitate effective classroom interaction. The key is to design appropriate problems. Parman (2020)^[8] reviewed teachers' verbal and written questioning methods in the classroom, the impact of questioning on students' critical thinking and learning outcomes and questioning strategies. He proposed two research models: "question levels" and "questioning strategies," emphasizing that teachers' "question design" has a significant impact on the effectiveness of questioning. This paper focuses on the "question levels" in the design of teaching tasks, promoting the interactions between teacher and students to enhance students' critical thinking abilities. This enables students to have an immersive learning experience and achieve the expected learning outcomes.

Before Class: Students learn the new words, expressions and other online resources to complete the learning tasks and finish the quiz on the U Campus platform. They also engage in warm-up activities based on the discussion topics and materials provided by the teacher, preparing for offline classroom activities. Teachers provide learning guidance based on platform questions and comments, analyzing the learning situation and adjusting the focus of face-to-face teaching.

In-Class: The teaching process revolves about the needs of students, focusing on the improvement of students' critical thinking abilities. When analyzing the text, the input of cultural content and language knowledge is high-lightened. Using task-based teaching methods, students are guided to participate in teaching activities such as answering leveled questions, role-playing, simulated scenarios, expressing viewpoints, and groups

discussions. This approach stimulates students' thinking, allows them to present their team works, and achieves synchronous output of language, skills and ideology.

After Class: The discussions can be conducted outside of the classroom. Students are organized to conduct group cooperative learning, extensive reading and review the acquired knowledge. Through online communication within or between the groups, the students broaden their perspectives on problem-solving and knowledge-sharing. An essay writing is assigned to students.

We take Unit 6 "Chinese Wedding Ceremony" in "Introducing Chinese Culture in English" as an example, the teaching procedures are demonstrated in Table 1. Through pre-class learning, students independently explore the characteristics of Chinese and Western wedding ceremonies. In-class group discussions encourage students to think about the procedures of a traditional Chinese wedding, such as matchmakers help proposing, bridal makeups, the ritual of showing respects to heaven and earth and returning to the bride's home. We compare these rituals with Western wedding customs, such as "Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue, and a silver sixpence in her shoe." Students are required to role-play and perform the wedding ceremonies of both cultures in class, allowing them to experience the differences directly. After class, students engage in online critical thinking and exchanges from a comparative perspective between Chinese and Western cultures. They explore the different social and cultural values implied behind the ceremonies, deepening their understanding of traditional Chinese culture and enhancing their cultural confidence.

Table 1. Teaching procedures of "Introducing Chinese Culture in English"

Activities	Tasks		Contents
	Students	Teacher	
Preclass Online Automatic- Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete language learning tasks 2. Gather information about Chinese wedding ceremonies 3. Analyze the characteristics of Chinese and Western wedding ceremonies and figure out the differences between them 4. Discussions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze the theme of unit, determine teaching objectives, and sort out the ideological-political education materials. 2. Introduce the topic "Chinese Wedding Ceremony" with videos and documentaries. 3. Diagnose the learning situation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students recognize their leading role in their own learning. 2. Students engage in self-directed inquiry through digital technology. 3. Understand different types of lifestyles and customs as a warm-up.
Offline Face-to- face Classroom instruction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch videos 2. Conduct group discussions, comparing the process and customs of Chinese and Western wedding ceremonies, and present the discussion results. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Based on pre-class diagnosis of the learning situation, use inspiring and leveled questioning to provoke students' thinking. 2. Review vocabulary and analyze the text. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guide students to rationally view issues of love and marriage and understand the different values between Chinese and Western cultures. 2. establish a sense of responsibility in

		<p>3. Organize group discussions; role-play: perform Chinese and western wedding ceremonies.</p> <p>4. Evaluation, raise thought-provoking questions.</p>	relationships and marriage.
Post-Class Online teamwork	<p>1. Work in groups to gather the information and short videos, brainstorm and identify the differences in Chinese and Western cultures regarding love and marriage as well as wedding ceremonies.</p> <p>2. Write a short essay.</p>	<p>1. Conduct online guidance, management, and supervision.</p> <p>2. Provide essay structure (compare/contrast structure) and common expressions for argumentative writing.</p> <p>3. Correct and evaluation.</p>	<p>1. Help students hold the correct views on marriage, life and values.</p> <p>2. Address issues of relationships with the values such as "respect, gratitude, and responsibility" found in traditional Chinese culture.</p>

3.2.3 Evaluation.

The ideological-political education in College English courses integrates value education into the teaching of language knowledge and cultural content. In this case, evaluation should be diversified and formative. Therefore, the evaluation should go beyond the language proficiency and include the evaluations in the perspective of ideology, values and attitudes. (Zhang Jingyuan, Wang Na, 2020)^[9], forming a multidimensional assessment of language, culture and values. Secondly, since ideological-political education is subtle in form, the evaluation of its effectiveness should be mainly formative, spanning the entire learning process to highlight the subtle changes in students' feelings, attitudes and values. In addition, we rely on the evaluation functions of online platforms, combined with teachers' evaluations to record and measure students' performance in and out of class. Students can also provide suggestions and evaluations on course content, activity arrangements and teaching implementation.

4 Conclusions

In order to achieve the goal of morality education, the teaching content is delicately selected. The themes of the textbooks cover the essence of traditional Chinese culture. The teaching process is designed based on the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) model. By conducting learning tasks through "problem-based introduction" and "critical thinking expansion," we explore how to effectively improve students' comprehensive English proficiency and enhance their understanding of traditional Chinese culture.

This study further defines the role of teachers in the teaching process, motivates students' learning and cultivates their autonomous learning abilities and critical thinking abilities. Meanwhile, the study innovates the teaching mode by applying modern information technology in ideological-political teaching. The author utilizes blended teaching to stimulate students' learning motives, promote personalized learning and emphasize the cultivation of their skills.

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