



The Guidance of the Classical Chinese Work 'The Great Learning' in Enhancing the Foreign Language Learning Abilities of Vocational College Students

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Abstract. "The Great Learning" constitutes the program of classical Chinese learning and embodies the essence of Chinese traditional educational thought. It represents an eternal truth, and its guidance on all facets of education is the most direct and efficacious. This paper interprets the crucial points of "The Great Learning" in guiding life, integrates the current situation of students' foreign language learning, and deduces practical approaches to effectively address the issue of low efficiency in foreign language learning among vocational college students. This paper transcends the levels of researching language learning content and high-tech means, and surpasses the dimension of the ideological and political education role of traditional culture in foreign language classrooms. It directly reaches the core, detects the root problem, and fundamentally resolves the issue in accordance with the core educational thought of "The Great Learning".

Keywords: The Great Learning, Learning Ability, aspiration, tranquility

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the educational thought in "The Great Learning" and its application to address the issue of low foreign language learning efficiency among vocational college students. It interprets the key points of "The Great Learning" in guiding life. Analyzing the current status of students' foreign language learning, it points out problems like low application capacity and being disturbed by electronics. By applying the guidance of "The Great Learning", it finds the root cause is the lack of proper goals. Then, countermeasures including classical education, revolutionary education, role models, etc. are proposed, along with principles to be grasped during implementation.

2 INTERPRETATION OF EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT IN "THE GREAT LEARNING"

The opening assertion of "The Great Learning" states: The path of great learning resides in manifesting one's eminent virtue, renovating the people, and attaining the supreme goodness. The awareness of where to repose leads to stability. Stability results in tranquility. Tranquility gives rise to peacefulness. Peacefulness brings about deliberation. Deliberation leads to attainment. It elucidates that "reposing" is the premise and source. "Resting" refers to the ultimate objective and destination. Resting in "the highest goodness" is founded upon "manifesting one's illustrious virtue" and "renovating the people." When everyone "manifests their illustrious virtue" based on restoring the originally bright moral nature, one aspires to return to one's original nature along with everyone. Only through "resting" can the five learning capabilities of "stability, tranquility, peacefulness, deliberation, and attainment" exist. Without the determination of this ultimate goal, all learning would be unattainable, just like a building without a foundation, which is impossible to come into being.

The subsequent elaboration is as follows: "Knowing where to rest leads to stability. With a defined goal, stability is achieved and one's energy is not dissipated. 'Stability leads to tranquility.' 'Tranquility' implies concentration, which constitutes the primary guarantee for learning ability. 'Tranquility leads to peacefulness.' Students can advance firmly towards the goal and be content with each stage of learning, thereby generating perseverance and willpower. 'Peacefulness leads to deliberation.' Students' wisdom is unlocked, and they can fully absorb, comprehend, and apply flexibly what they have learned. 'Deliberation leads to attainment.' Students can attain success in learning.

To summarize the aforementioned interpretation, possessing a broad aspiration, a magnanimous mind, and a learning pattern for the well-being of all humanity rather than for oneself constitutes the decisive factor for students' learning ability. Neglecting the cultivation of this foundation of life will render education futile. Once this is accomplished effectively, education will be a once-and-for-all matter, because with the prerequisite established, the cultivation of the five abilities thereafter occurs naturally. Or rather, "resting" and "stability, tranquility, peacefulness, deliberation, and attainment" emerge concurrently.

3 CURRENT STATUS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AMONG VOCATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS TAKING ENGLISH AS AN ILLUSTRATION, THE CURRENT STATUS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AMONG VOCATIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS CAN BE GENERALIZED IN THE FOLLOWING THREE ASPECTS:

3.1 The Long-Term Exam-Oriented Learning Has Resulted in a Low Language Application Capacity.

Both speaking and writing skills are deficient, and the language sense is poor. Furthermore, despite their continuous practice of grammar, there are still numerous grammar errors in oral expression and writing.

3.2 The learning Efficiency is Relatively Low.

Upon entering college, despite long study hours, no significant improvement in language ability is observable. Even students majoring in English fail to apply English proficiently in their work after graduation.

3.3 Disturbed by Electronic Products Since Childhood, Students Exhibit Weak Concentration and Endurance.

They are internally impetuous and lack the ability to focus.

4 ANALYZING THE REASONS BY APPLYING THE GUIDANCE OF "THE GREAT LEARNING"

Any subject constitutes a vast and complex system. Absent the corresponding abilities of concentration, absorption, and comprehension, mastering it is out of the question, particularly for language learning. The status of students is far removed from the conditions requisite for language learning. No matter how strenuously they strive, success is unattainable. Furthermore, effort is also an overly exacting demand for students.

For an extended period, with the aim of altering the present circumstances, numerous teachers have conducted extensive research and practices. However, the majority of them have concentrated on approaches, content, the application of modern technology, and the integration of traditional culture. They have failed to reach the core and address the essence of the problem.

By applying the guidance of "The Great Learning", the cause of the aforementioned situation precisely lies in the absence of goals. Students have not received "aspiration cultivation" education since childhood. Families and schools teach for examinations,

and students study for examinations. Not only is there insufficient motivation, but it also gives rise to inner emptiness. Consequently, the deluge of electronic products seizes the opportunity to invade students' minds. As a consequence, students achieve nothing in language learning and in other fields as well. Solving the issue of "goal" can trigger a long-term and profound internal driving force, and other problems will be readily solved. Otherwise, all efforts will merely address the symptoms rather than the root cause.

The "goal" referred to herein is not an ordinary one. It must scrupulously adhere to the ideological guidance of "The Great Learning" and lead students to establish a life value goal of "the highest excellence" sincerely from within. Beginning with filial piety to parents, extending to serving the motherland, and further reaching to achieving great harmony among humanity and world harmony, students should study for world peace and the common prosperity and happiness of people around the world. Only this goal conforms to people's originally brilliant moral nature, can trigger the inherent learning abilities of "stability, tranquility, peacefulness, deliberation, and attainment," and can also be in harmony with languages and all other disciplines, enabling students to master each discipline with ease. Studying for a decent job and a good life in the future represents the most fundamental error made by parents and teachers and constitutes the fundamental cause of educational failure. It is not of significance in which field one aspires to become an expert. What matters is to aspire to become an expert who serves the motherland selflessly.

5 COUNTERMEASURES FOR ADDRESSING THE ISSUE

Understanding the root cause of the problem and applying the appropriate solution ensures that we do not randomly attempt various treatments and guarantees the efficacy of problem-solving. Wang Yangming stated, "Nothing can be achieved in the world without a firm aspiration. Even in all kinds of skills and crafts, none is not founded on aspiration." Aspiration serves as the foundation. "Once the foundation is established, the path emerges." Inspiring students to set aspirations is of paramount importance for educators. The content and methods adopted by teachers are as follows:

5.1 Classical Education: The Confucian Classics are Most in Harmony with the Inherent Goodness of Human Nature.

Studying and reflecting on these texts will awaken the noble qualities within individuals, guiding them to reconnect with their original aspirations and to forsake the narrow self-interests and negative habits that have developed over time. In addition to "The Great Learning," "The Doctrine of the Mean," "The Analects of Confucius," and "Mencius" can all effectively contribute to achieving these goals. Once students have established a sense of purpose and confidence, they can further engage with interpretations and studies of other classics such as "Standards for Being a Good Pupil and Child," "Maxims of the Zhu Family," and "Instruction of Liao-Fan." This will assist students

in refining their moral character through attention to subtle details in behavior, allowing their aspirations to take root more deeply.

5.2 Revolutionary Education: The Stories and Revolutionary Songs from the Periods of the War of Liberation and the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression Serve as Powerful Interpretations and Celebrations of the Resilience of Human Nature.

As educational content, they have the potential to foster students' ambitions, instill a sense of gratitude for their current lives, and promote inner peace. The selfless and fearless spirit embodied by heroic figures can awaken latent emotions within students, helping them discover their innate strength, clarify their life goals, and cultivate long-term motivation.

5.3 Role Models: The Stories of Great Individuals, Chinese Moral Education Narratives, and the Tales of Champions All Serve as Powerful Educational Materials.

This is because the achievements of these remarkable individuals stem from their aspirations and inherent moral nature. Their success is not accidental, but rather an inevitable result achieved by adhering to the laws of human nature. When imparting these stories, educators should take care to delve beyond the surface and uncover the fundamental characteristics and core qualities of the individuals behind the narratives in order to achieve a purposeful and impactful influence.

5.4 Education on History and national conditions: The Connection Between History and Individuals Lies in its Ability to Elucidate Human Nature and Reveal Patterns Through the Cause-and-Effect Relationship Between Human Nature and Accomplishments.

"Prosperity" stems from selflessness and serving the people, while "decline" arises from selfishness and self-serving behavior. This enables students to clearly understand how to choose their own positions. History education also instills a sense of pride in students as descendants of China. The development of a great civilization in a great country has withstood numerous challenges but has endured for an extended period. The abundant resources and rich cultural traditions within Chinese territory will evoke pride in students, helping them break free from self-deprecation and narrow-minded learning orientations.

5.5 Counseling on filial piety and fraternal love: Effective Communication Between Students and Their Parents and Siblings is Crucial.

The ability to love and show gratitude towards one's parents and siblings, who have given birth to them and raised them, is essential for the development of a compassionate

heart that can serve others and the country. Therefore, teachers should assist students in recognizing and addressing any feelings of estrangement from their parents.

5.6 Meditation Practice: While True Tranquility Comes from Setting Aspirations, it is Beneficial to Incorporate Auxiliary Meditation Exercises in the Classroom to Help Students Experience the Difference in Learning Effects Under a Calm State and Thus Correct Their Language Learning More Quickly.

Teachers can use relaxing music to guide students in putting down their mobile phones and engaging in physical activities, focusing on breathing, eliminating distractions, and allowing the body and mind to completely relax. During this time, students can quietly listen to a language passage and then discuss the changes in their learning status. Additionally, activities such as calligraphy, traditional Chinese painting, tea art, and flower arrangement in Chinese traditional culture can also aid in calming students' bodies and minds while improving language learning efficiency.

With the implementation of the aforementioned teaching strategies, students will gradually shift their focus away from short-term goals such as exams, employment, and personal success, and instead prioritize the development of their homeland and the well-being of people worldwide. This shift in perspective will lead them to redefine their language learning objectives, ultimately leading to personal growth and self-improvement in order to contribute to the advancement of their country and work towards a world free from conflict and suffering. The ultimate goal is for everyone to live and work in peace and contentment. Their language abilities should be harnessed to serve these noble aspirations. By approaching language learning in this manner, students will exhibit determination, consistency, concentration, and proactivity which will undoubtedly facilitate mastery of the language with ease.

6 PRINCIPLES TO BE GRASPED WHEN APPLYING COUNTERMEASURES

The effectiveness of the above-mentioned countermeasures depends on the application of the following two crucial principles.

6.1 Teacher's Role

The fundamental principle of education is leading by example. Teachers must embody selfless dedication to serving the people, the motherland, and the educational cause. Regardless of the content being taught, teachers should base their approach on their own experiences. They should be genuinely moved and educated by the educational content themselves or simultaneously with their students. In this process, teachers are active participants who are also influenced by the material being taught. Only through this approach can educational goals be achieved. Conversely, if teachers simply issue orders and make educational objectives a requirement and evaluation standard for

students, there will be no meaningful educational impact; in fact, students may become even more disengaged and apathetic towards learning.

6.2 Principle of Being Flexible

There is no fixed method for application, as it must be adjusted according to the specific time, place, and individual involved. It should not become a routine or simply be mechanically replicated, but rather carried out with a sense of empathy towards the students. As educators delve deeper into this approach, their understanding will grow more profound, leading to constant changes in both content and form.

7 CONCLUSION

The content discussed in this paper may appear straightforward, but the fundamental and succinct approach to education must be deeply and extensively implemented. Only then can we effectively discuss the content, methods of language teaching, and other external factors.

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