

An Action Research on Infusing Moral and Political Education into College English Teaching from the Perspective of New Liberal Arts

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Abstract

Under the background of new liberal arts, the era of "great foreign languages" requires college English teaching in local applied colleges and universities to break through the barriers of result-centred traditional teaching and bravely shoulder the important task of "moral and political education". In order to guide teachers to carry out this key task effectively, the present study preliminarily builds a teaching model in which four links of curriculum moral and political goals, teaching content, implementation steps and curriculum evaluation are interrelated. After a semester of teaching practice, the students participants are not satisfied with such an English teaching model integrated with moral and political education. The teacher participants do not understand the connotation of curriculum moral and political education, how to integrate moral and political goals with knowledge and ability goals, on how much degree to integrate moral and political education with college English teaching, and what is the standard to evaluate such a comprehensive course. Most of them hope to be guided by experts and learn from the demo courses. Therefore, this study further accurately sets teaching goals, determines systematic teaching content, highlights the gradual teaching process, and integrates teaching evaluation methods to reconstruct a dynamic and systematic teaching model of moral and political education into the course of college English, in order to provide teachers with standards and norms of moral and political education in the course of college English, and help teachers design excellent courses of moral and political education in the course of college English, so as to provide a guarantee for local colleges and universities to train applied and qualified talents.

Keywords: new liberal arts, College English, curriculum moral and political education, dynamic and systematic teaching model, action research

1. Research Background

In 2016, president Xi Jinping stressed at the National Conference on Moral and Political Work in Colleges and Universities: "All courses should guard a canal and plant a field of responsibility, so that all courses and moral and political theory can go hand in hand in the same direction and form a synergistic effect." (Xi, 2017) In 2018, the former Chinese Minister of Education stated on the conference of Accelerating the Construction of High-level Undergraduate Education and Comprehensively Improving Talent Training Ability that moral and political education should run through the whole process of high-level undergraduate education and strengthen curriculum and professional moral and political education (Wu, 2019). In March 2019, Mr. Wu put forward a new concept of "great foreign language", that is, foreign language education is huge in scale, large in pattern, and heavy in responsibility. Foreign language teachers should actively respond to the technological revolution and strive to expand the influence of foreign language education. On June 15, 2020, Minister Wu pointed out under the background of the construction of new liberal arts, curriculum moral and political education should be promoted completely, and the traditional course of college English should be turned into an excellent one integrating moral and political education with the majors closely. Under such circumstances, the curriculum reform of college English should meet the original intention of the curriculum standard, the foreign language ability of college students, the needs of various social industries, the development of the interdisciplinary fields, the needs of the academic world at home and abroad and national strategic needs of China. The foreign language courses of local applied universities are an important part of the construction of "new liberal arts". We should focus on the development trend of higher education at the modern era, and build a first-class talent training system with its own characteristics, advantages and levels (Wen, 2012).

A local applied university, Longdong University, where the researchers are teaching, has been deeply influenced by the development of the traditional teaching of science and engineering. Without interdisciplinary concepts, the college of foreign languages of the university focuses on the tool nature of language, the results-oriented examinations, and ignore their humanities and all-round education. Too much emphasis is placed on the transmission of knowledge, but neglect the "curriculum moral and political education", like passing on ideas, truth, shaping souls, life and newcomers, the courses and majors reform of liberal arts, and the training of teachers in new teaching concepts are all neglected. How to promote the unity of "education of people" and "education of talents" according to the principle of the Ministry of Education (2020) in developing new engineering and new liberal arts, how to use Chinese values, spirit and excellent traditional culture to achieve the integration of "curriculum moral and political education" and interdisciplinary concepts, how to cultivate a sense of teamwork, sharing, responsibility and patriotism, how to teach new talents to have a sense of community of human destiny, and how to provide solid backing and guarantee for the cultivation of talents with multiple practical ability in universities are all issues that should be considered in the teaching reform of college English teaching. Therefore, this study explores how to establish a new teaching model around the links of goals, content, implementation steps and evaluation of integrating moral and political education with the course of college English, and carry out dynamic and systematic teaching practice and action research.

2. Preliminary Construction of a Teaching Model of Moral and Political Education in the Course of College English

In order to explore the effective moral and political education in college English, make full use of teaching resources, and to form scientific curriculum system, the researchers first designed and constructed a dynamic teaching model of moral and political education in college English teaching. Thus the epochal and open characteristics of moral and political education have continuously injected new vitality into college English courses. The four links, curriculum objectives, teaching content, implementation steps and curriculum evaluation are interrelated and interact with each other to form a dynamic and systematic teaching model of "curriculum moral and political education" of college English. In the planning stage, the value goal of teaching should contain core values of socialism, university talent training goals and curriculum goals to excavate and refine the material of moral and political education from multiple levels, and to clarify the curriculum content of moral and political education. In the teaching design stage, with the help of high-quality network resources, such as MOOC, TED Speech, China Daily, etc., we can select static text resources, dynamics audio and video resources, pictures and other multi-modal resources that carry moral and political education elements, including Chinese traditions English learning corpus with different themes such as modern culture, economy, science and technology, politics, and students' "three outlooks" education. Such topics can be discussed with students, like, "Culture of Mid-Autumn Festival: Chinese complex towards moon", "Spring Festival: the holiday celebrated by one sixth of the world's population", "What is the charm of Chinese when the world sets off a China fever". Other topics also can be taught, such as: the theme of Chinese economy, science and technology, "One Belt and Road to the World Road", "Why are products made in China popular", "Science and technology of making the Future: China has entered the era of face scanning", "The miracle of Chinese poverty alleviation contributes to the world's poverty alleviation"; the theme of local regional culture in Qingyang, like "Nanliang Spirit", "Qihuang Hometown", "Zhouzu Holy Land", "Huanxian Shadow Puppet", "Sachet Embroidery, Folklore Qingyang". All these moral and political education resources are the content of College English teaching. They are related either to national events, or to social hot spots and local culture. Thus, language teaching can closely combine with moral and political education. In the implementing stage, the learning platform, Superstar is used to implement online and offline mixed teaching modes to ensure all-round integrating of moral and political education with College English. Finally, in the assessment stage, a combination of diagnostic, formative evaluation and final evaluation is used for evaluating the teaching effect. The researchers shared the teaching model with other 53 teachers in English Department so as all the teachers to implement the dynamic and systematic teaching model of curriculum moral and political education. After the teaching experiment of seven units in a semester, the research group conducted a sample questionnaire survey of non-English majors among the freshmen and sophomores of Longdong University to survey the current implementing status of integrating moral and political education with the Course of college English under the perspective of students. Then 18 teachers were randomly selected from 53 college English teachers for interviews (the detail information of them is shown in Table 1), and they were asked to provide their semester's teaching plan to survey teachers' cognition of moral and political education in college English teaching, what confusions exist in teaching practice, what are the shortcomings of the program in achieving the value goals of moral and political education, and what are their suggestions? Finally, according to the results of the survey of students, interviews with teachers and the analysis of teaching plans, the systematic

and dynamic teaching model of moral and political education in college English teaching would be further adjusted and improved, and a new round of teaching experimental research would be carried out next semester.

Table 1. Participants of the study

Participants	Male		Female	
	of freshmen	of sophomore	of freshmen	of sophomore
Teachers	3	2	6	7
Students	freshmen 320	sophomore 260	freshmen 434	sophomore 486

3. The Effect and Problems in The Preliminary Implementing Stage

After conducting the teaching experiments for a semester, in order to better understand the current situation, the implementing effect of dynamic and systematic teaching model of moral and political education in college English teaching, so as to find more specific and targeted ideas and measures to improve the the teaching model, the researchers analyzed 1288 effective questionnaires received from students (see Table 2), the interviews and the teaching plans submitted by 18 teachers (see Table 3). The results showed the effect and problems of curriculum moral and political education in the preliminary stage. Such results enlightened researchers on how to further adjust and improve to get the new and perfect teaching model of moral and political education in college English teaching.

3.1 The Effects of Moral and Political Education in College English Teaching under the Perspective of Students

The results of the questionnaire show that most teachers and students don't know exactly the concept of moral and political education in the course of college English. For the question of "Do you know moral and political education in college English courses?", only 10.5% of students chose "know it very well", and 8.69% of students "have never heard of this concept at all". As for "whether do your teachers integrate moral and political education such as outlook, outlook on life and world, in college English teaching?", 38% of students said their teachers' teaching are not involved with moral and political education, which means lots of teachers have no accurate concept of active learning. As to "The current problems of integrating moral and political elements with college English teaching", 30.6% of students chose "teachers pay insufficient attention to it"; 20.2% of them thought that the integration of moral and political education in college English teaching "takes too much time of the lessons". These students still follow the idea of exam-driven learning and believe that it's better to learn more vocabulary and sentence patterns during college English learning. If the teacher doesn't talk much about grammar in lessons, they think that the teacher is irresponsible and they will learn nothing; 60.2% of students think that the topic is "boring and uninteresting" when integrating moral and political education in college English teaching; 36.2% of them think that the whole integration process is "incompatible". The result of the survey shows that the preliminary teaching model was ineffective in moral and political education. It can be seen that the lack of appropriate teaching methods and well-designed teaching may arouse students' disgust, and such education is ineffective. Therefore, teaching objectives, content, process, evaluation and other aspects of the model of moral and political education in college English teaching still need to be further improved and refined.

Table 2. The effect of curriculum moral and political education

No.	Questionnaire	Percentage		
1	Do you know moral and political education in college English courses?	know well 10.5%	know a little 80.81%	never hear 8.69%
2	Whether do your teachers integrate moral and political education, like outlook on life and world, in college English teaching?	always 8.5%	sometimes 52.6%	never 38.5%
3	What problems do you think existing in integrate moral and political education with college English teaching?	teacher's attitude 30.6%	take time 20.2%	uneasy 49.2%
4	How do you like the teaching model of integrating moral and political education with college English teaching?	like very much 6.2%	not care 52.3%	dislike 41.5%
5	How well do you think your teacher's ability of integrating moral and political education with college English teaching?	instructive 3.6%	boring 60.2%	incompatible 36.2%

3.2 The Perception and Confusion of Moral and Political Education in College English Teaching under the Perspective of Teachers

The results of interview show that when teachers explain the concept of "moral and political education in the course of college English", it is difficult for 78% of teachers to describe it accurately, and they are not sure what "curriculum moral and politics education" should be contained in college English teaching. Teachers have repeatedly mentioned culture and moral education, which shows that teachers have a very high awareness of cultivating students' patriotism and helping students establish correct values, and they know well the value goal of their education. 82.2% of teachers believe that moral and political education in the course of college English should involve traditional Chinese culture and local characteristic culture. They also mentioned the dimensions of ability development, and pointed out that students should acquire the abilities of critical thinking, academic research, cross-cultural communication. These ability dimensions are in line with the principle of moral and political education in College English Teaching Guide (2020), which clearly stated the key contents of curriculum moral and political education are identity, patriotism, cultural literacy, constitutional rule of law awareness, professional ethics cultivation. However, few teacher participants in the interviews mentioned the dimensions such as rule of law education and professional ideal, which shows that teachers don't know the exact connotation and content of curriculum moral and political education. Only 28.6% of teachers stated they have integrated moral and political education with English teaching. 68.5% of teachers said that "the content of the textbook has been fully explained, but they are not sure whether the standards of moral and political education have been met"; 57.2% of teachers believe that "there is a lack of a consistent guidance, and the extent and direction of exploring the theme of the course are unclear". 38.6% of teachers stated that there is an urgent need for more expert guidance on the ways and means of curriculum moral and political education, and hoped to "understand how to naturally link the teaching content with moral and political education, and pay more attention to students' acceptance so as to achieve effective and interesting moral and political education in the course of college English."

Table 3. Teacher's perception of curriculum moral and political education

No.	Interview	Percentage		
1	Do you know the concept of moral and political education in the course of college English?	know well 15.5%	know a little 82.9%	never hear 1.6%
2	Do you know how can curriculum moral and politics education be included in college English teaching?	know well 82.2%	know a little 10.5%	know nothing 7.3%
3	Should traditional Chinese culture and local characteristic culture be involved in moral and political education in the course of college English?	sure 80.3%	sometimes 15.2%	unsure 4.5%
4	Do you know how to integrate moral and political education with college English teaching?	know well 14.7%	know a little 80.5%	know nothing 4.8%
5	How well do you think your ability of integrating moral and political education with college English teaching?	better 4.9%	good 28.6%	poor 68.5%
6	What kind of help do you need in integrating moral and political education with college English teaching?	guidance from the experts 38.6%	model lessons 42.8%	assessment standard 18.6%

The teaching cases provided by teachers show that teachers still pay more attention to the learning goals of language and ability in teaching design, but rarely set learning goals in the moral and political education; Teachers' design of moral and political education in teaching is relatively simple, and most of them integrate moral and political education from a cultural perspective; Teachers prefer to discussion and situational teaching approach, but less try task-based teaching and thematic teaching. Among all the teaching stages, the assessment of curriculum moral and political education is the biggest problem in the current teaching. In 80% of teachers' teaching plans, the curriculum assessment lacks moral and political dimensions. Therefore, reconstructing the

moral and political teaching model of college English courses, including setting clear teaching goals, establishing specific teaching content, exploring appropriate moral and political integration methods, and building scientific standards and systems for moral and political education in course of college English, is the key task in the latter stage of this study.

4. Reconstruction Effective, Dynamic and Systematic Teaching Model of Moral and Political Education in The Course of College English

Based on the above survey of non-English major students, interviews with college English teachers and analysis of teaching plan, the result showed the teaching model of moral and political in the course of college English designed in the early stage cannot guide college English teachers to teach effectively. Students are not satisfied with the teaching effect. Teachers are still confused and hope to further improve the quality and effect of moral and political education in college teaching. Therefore, this study reconstructs the teaching model of moral and political education in college teaching so as to construct dynamic and systematic teaching model from the following three aspects.

4.1 Cultivating and Improving Teachers' Quality, Awareness and Ability of Integrating Moral and Political Education in The Course of College English

As to the integration of teaching objectives of knowledge, competence, moral and politic, teachers should realize that these 3 aspects of teaching objectives are not conflict and they are in fact compatible (Zhang, 2020). When students acquire positive values in the course, they will better realize their social responsibility, which in turn generates stronger learning motivation. As a result, students can acquire more knowledge and improve their competence. Curriculum moral and political education makes it necessary to combine heated social issues, national development, current global affairs, local culture with college English teaching. Thus teachers are confronted to new requirements for renewal of their knowledge system and improvement of their teaching ability and language skills. Therefore, university should regularly hold teachers' training on improving the moral and political education awareness. The course team should prepare lessons together in advance and reflect on the lessons collectively after class, so as to cultivate and improve teachers' quality, awareness and ability of moral and political education in college English teaching (Wang & Yue, 2019).

Under the perspective of national macro-education policy, teachers can focus on the direction and give full play to the unified role of teaching system in the ecosystem of foreign language teaching. Under the perspective of curriculum theory, it is necessary to establish a pluralistic curriculum moral and political outlook and organically coordinate the interactive unity of teaching design, methods and practices. Under the perspective of foreign language disciplines, linguistic theory can be used to excavate moral and political elements and improve the curriculum characteristics of college English teaching. Only when these three perspectives are interrelated can teachers systematically grasp the connotation of moral and political education in the course of College English, better guide the practical innovation of teaching design, and promote the deep integration of curriculum moral and political education with English teaching. Experienced teachers can regularly share some excellent lessons of moral and political education in college English teaching with other teachers. Mutual assistance should be encouraged to build a resource library for curriculum moral and political education to promote teacher's professional development and improve the construction of the curriculum system of College English.

4.2 Redesigning the Teaching Model to Improve the Effect of Moral and Political Education in College English Teaching

The nature of the curriculum should be grasped, and moral and political education should be integrated with the whole teaching process in course designing. Course systematization should be highlighted, and the objective of curriculum moral and political education should be clarified, so as to achieve whole process and all-round education. The primary task of teaching design of curriculum moral and political education is to accurately set teaching goals. It means the teaching goals of moral and political education in College English should be based on the in-depth exploring and refinement of language materials. Therefore, the project group has reconstructed and refined the "three-dimensional teaching goal" of college English teaching: knowledge, ability, moral and politic. In the knowledge dimension, focus is attached to linguistic teaching strategies of vocabulary, grammar, text and communication; in the ability dimension, focus is put on cultivating students' abilities of text analysis, genre pragmatics, academic writing, critical thinking; in moral and political dimensions, focus should be on cultivating students' positive values, stimulating students to be active and cooperate with others, and building their cultural and national self-confidence. Once teachers know clearly the curriculum goals, they can design specific teaching system in multiple dimensions (Pan & Yuan, 2021). The analysis of teaching plans suggests that the typical misunderstanding of teaching goal designing is that the teaching goals of moral and political

educational are aimless, independent of the material, and are arbitrarily raised or labeled, resulting in isolating between moral and political education and language teaching. The teaching goals of moral and political education must be text-based and surpass text, and highlight value shaping on the basis of language proficiency, which does not mean to reduce language skills. In teaching design, goals of knowledge, ability and moral and political education can be independent modules, but the three teaching goals should be integrated, logically related and organically integrated.

The content of moral and political education in college English includes two modules: subject content, focusing on language knowledge transmission and ability cultivation; moral and political content, focusing on value shaping. The systematization of the content is reflected in the organic integration of the two modules. Value shaping enriches the subject content. College English teachers have to know the entry point of each moral and political element in the curriculum and the internal relationship between moral and political education and language learning, and achieve the "genetic" integration of the two modules naturally, so that the two kinds of contents can be complemented each other. The analysis of teacher's teaching plan suggests there are two typical misunderstandings about the systematic content. First, the two modules have been separated and arranged in chronological order. This structured design seems very clear, but in fact it deviates from the system of curriculum moral and politics education, and turns implicit integration into explicit publicity, which shows that teachers' understanding of the systematic content of the curriculum is insufficient. The second mistake is reversing the explicit and implicit teaching content. In order to highlight curriculum moral and political education, some teachers dilute or even neglect the subject content, which does not meet the requirements of "guarding a canal and planting a good field of responsibility" (Xi, 2017). Consequently, college English teaching has become a moral and political lesson taught in English. As a result, "our own fields have been wasted and other's land has been planted", which violates the original intention of curriculum moral and political education.

Gradualness should be highlighted in designing the teaching process of moral and political education in College English. Teachers can build dynamic scaffolding for learners through the design of a series of activities and tasks (Liu & Li, 2020). These scaffolds include two levels: the scaffolds of language learning and moral and political education. The scaffolds of moral and political education is reflected in the process of focusing on language meaning and communication. The dynamic nature of scaffolds makes the degree of task difficulties increase gradually at different stages. Teachers need to provide scaffolds of different types and levels according to various goals of learners' learning tasks. The gradual nature of process design is reflected in a series of progressive learning tasks, from language input to output, from vocabulary, sentences, paragraphs to communication tasks. Thus, a dynamic scaffold can be built for students to acquire language knowledge and improve their language skills. The ability of transmitting Chinese culture should be cultivated during the whole process of language learning, so that two kinds of scaffolds can be organically coordinated to help achieve teaching goals. The analysis of teaching plans suggests that the typical problems of teaching process design is that teachers simply impart moral and political elements extracted from the teaching material. Teachers ignore the systematic design of the learning process and the construction of dynamic scaffolding, which turns interactive lessons into the teacher's lectures in English on moral and political education. Students can only passively accept teachers' moral and political values. The dynamic scaffolds can build a development channel between learner's current ability and their potential developing level. Such teaching method can effectively internalize learner's language competence and moral and political values gradually. Under the guidance of teachers, the Zone of Proximal Envelopment of students will be promoted forward persistently (Hu, 2021).

The teaching assessment should integrate moral and political education with language knowledge and skills. Both the assessing form and content must be considered. Surveys, interviews and teaching plans all indicate that the teaching assessment of moral and political education meet unique challenges, because morality cultivating and value shaping are consistent and cumulative process, and the final education effect needs to be assessed in the long run. However, assessment is a key step to test the teaching effect, so effective teaching design requires timely and comprehensive evaluation. Therefore, the researcher suggests that a comprehensive assessing system including knowledge, ability and moral and political dimensions should be constructed with the reference of "three-dimensional teaching objectives". Formative evaluation and terminal evaluation, teacher evaluation, peer evaluation, self-evaluation, quantitative evaluation and qualitative evaluation can all be used comprehensively. Technical support, Such software like Iwrite, Checker, Grammarly, WhiteSmoke, Correction Network, Ark Intelligent Writing Platform and other information technology and intelligent correction technology can all be used to carry out timely evaluating feedback. Teachers can follow the principle of combining explicit and implicit evaluation. The evaluation of language knowledge and skills is mainly dominant, and the evaluation of moral and political education is mainly implicit. Only when the teaching evaluation of moral and political

education in college English teaching is more specific can moral and political education be built into core knowledge and skills teaching, so as to achieve comprehensive improvement of students' knowledge, skills and qualities.

4.3 Expanding the Space and Time for English Learning and Constructing Excellent Curriculum Moral and Political Education in College English Teaching

During the information age and the post-pandemic era, mixed teaching model combining the traditional face-to-face teaching with online teaching is theoretical integration, environmental compatibility and knowledge reorganization. It has become a popular teaching model chosen by many colleges and universities to promote the construction of college English teaching. Under the background of constructing new liberal arts, college English teaching should also adopt such a mixed teaching method, expanding the space and time of teaching, providing students with rich online moral and political resources and extracurricular activities. Cognitive ability and the awareness of autonomous learning should be cultivated to construct effective course of College English under the background of "Internet+". In teaching practice, through the integration of multi-modal education methods, guided by the concept of language learning from an ecological perspective, and applying inquiry learning, active learning and other learning methods, students' analytical, integration and speculative abilities are cultivated, so as to improve students' knowledge, ability and quality completely. Through in-depth teaching, student's national consciousness can be cultivated, their international horizon can be broadened, moral and political education in college English teaching can make students master Chinese culture and enhance their cultural self-confidence, so that students will not neglect national culture, nor will they blindly worship foreign culture (Pan & Yuan, 2021). College English teaching should also take challenges as a measure and improve student's language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, organize diversified in-class, extracurricular, online and offline tasks from moral and political aspects, like culture, law and morality. By building excellent course of college English, Model lessons examples can be provided to help teachers achieve more optimized teaching model of moral and political education in college English teaching.

5. Conclusion

Under the background of the construction of new liberal arts, this paper presents an action research on construction of the moral and political education in the courses of college English two times. The current research aims to promote the construction of new liberal arts, achieve the unity of "education" and "talent cultivating", inheritance and innovation in the local university. Such research can both improve student's language skill, and cultivate student's qualities and values. A dynamic and systematic teaching model of curriculum moral and political education in college English teaching constructed with the help of the Superstar Learning Platform, to implement mixed teaching of online and offline learning. As a result, online courses are "lived", lessons become "Fresh", teachers and students are "busy", and the effect becomes "better". As a result, teaching reform has been achieved. It makes teachers "concern family problems, country issues, world affairs" in the process of preparing for lessons and searching for curriculum materials of moral and political education. students are busy with reading and thinking. Once moral political elements are involved to college English lessons, students can have patriotism, which make them view Chinese and Western culture correctly and objectively. When spreading Chinese culture to the outside world, they can have both national and cultural self-confidence, and tell Chinese stories to the world well in English. Curriculum moral and political education endows college English teachers with a higher mission and greater responsibility, and also provides a broader space for them to carry out teaching design creatively. College English teachers would have a strong desire to constantly improve the teaching design of moral and political education in college English teaching, and make great contributions to improving the quality of talent training and implementing the fundamental task of strengthening moral education.

Fund Projects

- 1) The research results of the key research project of English teaching reform in colleges and universities in Gansu Province in 2020 "An Action Research on The Dynamics and Systematized Teaching Model Construction of Infusing Moral and Politics into College English Teaching under the Perspective of New Liberal Arts" (Project number: Z202013);
- 2) The research results of the innovation fund project of colleges and universities in Gansu Province in 2021 "The Research on the Construction of Bilingual Corpus of the Revolutionary History and Culture of Naliang in China" (Project number: 2021B-266)

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