

Case Study of Moral Education in College English Teaching

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ABSTRACT

This article is intended to explore how to carry on moral education in College English teaching through case study, holding that college instructors can design topics for discussion before class involving moral elements, dig out ideological elements contained in the textbook in class by addressing key words and phrases, key sentences and understanding the text globally. Instructors can also strengthen moral education and enhance students' love for the family and their love for the country by designing open questions for students' further exploration after class. Moral education should be carried out in every aspect of language learning and run through the entire process of language learning. Just in doing so, can instructors complete the basic task of moral education.

Keywords: *College English teaching, Moral education, Case study.*

1. INTRODUCTION

With economic globalization, culture exchanges between different countries are soaring rapidly, accompanied by the conflict of different ideologies. And all kinds of information, true or false, can be found on the Internet, which may have a deep impact on college students. They are vulnerable to erroneous ideologies, network expressions and false information in that their world views, life views and values have not yet been fully formed. Therefore it is indispensable for colleges and universities to carry out moral education among college students, help them develop correct world outlook, life and value, and encourage them to work hard for the rise of China. It is the fundamental task of instructors to impart knowledge and educate the public, and it is also the original aspiration and mission of every teacher. General Secretary Xi once said at the National Conference on moral work in Colleges and Universities, "We should adhere to the central link of moral education, carry out the ideological and political work throughout the whole process of education, realize the-entire-staff-participation, the-whole-process and all-round education, and strive to create a new situation in the development of China's higher education." It puts forward new requirements and challenges for college English

teaching by taking "cultivating talents through virtue" as the central link of college English training and carrying out ideological and political work through the whole process of education and teaching. As an indispensable part of higher education, college English teaching must carry out moral education to learners throughout the whole process of English teaching. But how to carry out moral education in specific teaching practice? How to dig out moral elements in teaching materials? How to carry out moral education through the whole process of College English teaching? There are no ready-made answers to these questions, and there are few specific case studies at present, which requires every college English teacher to consider and explore into practicable methods and put them into practice.

2. MORAL EDUCATION IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

Guiding Outline of Ideological and Political Construction of Curriculum in Colleges and Universities points out: "To carry out the fundamental task of moral cultivation, value shaping, knowledge imparting and competence cultivation must be integrated as a whole. To promote the ideological and political construction of curriculum in an all-round way is to guide values

in knowledge imparting and competence cultivating, and help students shape correct outlooks on the world, life and values, which are essential contents of talent cultivating.” This statement enables educators to recognize clearly that in moral education, value shaping is the priority of education and should be integrated into the competence cultivating and knowledge imparting. Instructors should fully explore the moral elements contained in all courses so as to achieve the effect of education. The Guiding Outline also clearly points out that classroom teaching is the main channel of curriculum moral education, and requires instructors to integrate the elements of value shaping into the teaching contents and every link of classroom teaching. Peng Gang (2020), Vice President of Tsinghua University, believes that moral elements should be integrated into classroom teaching of different courses, and values should be embodied in the curriculum design and classroom teaching like salt in water, so as to achieve the effect of educating people gradually. Wang Yue (2019) believes that education not only imparts knowledge to learners, but also gives correct guidance to their life. The most efficient education is to stimulate students’ spiritual motivation and ideological vitality from the spiritual level.

College English is abundant in teaching materials and themes, covering society, economy, culture, etc., and is aimed at cultivating people’s humanistic quality and comprehensive abilities. In classroom teaching design, college instructors should be adept at discovering and fully exploring the language points embodied in humanities in each passage, so as to perfectly combine them with moral education.” *College English Course* is aimed at guiding students on the basis of deeply studying the text, cultivating the students’ English language competence and the comprehensive competence, meanwhile infiltrating moral education in the teaching process, and helping students cultivate correct world outlook, the outlook on life and values. Instructors are required to think seriously about moral education in the teaching process, explore ideological elements contained in teaching materials, and consciously add ideological contents, combine moral education with the mastering of knowledge and the cultivation of competence, and impart ideological education throughout the whole process of English teaching, so as to complete the fundamental task of educating people. Taking Unit 1 *Changes in the Way We Live* in College English Book 3 for example, this paper explores how to integrate moral elements into each link of

classroom teaching process, and how to better integrate knowledge objectives, competence objectives and moral objectives.

3. CASE STUDY OF MORAL EDUCATION IN COLLEGE ENGLISH TEACHING

In the construction of curriculum ideology and politics, instructors should first be knowledgeable and virtuous, with strong ideals and beliefs, and set a good example for students. In specific teaching practice, instructors need to carefully design topics or contents with moral education in each link of classroom teaching, and combine language learning, competence cultivation with moral elements, and achieve the best effect of moistening things silently. This paper will take *Mr. Doherty Builds His Dream Life* in Unit 1, Book 3 for example and deeply explore into moral elements in textbooks from the aspects of carefully-designed topics and lead-in work before class, global understanding of the text, language learning and consolidation, and assignment designing so as to find out effective ways to carry out moral education throughout the whole teaching process.

3.1 Carefully Designing Discussion Topics with Moral Elements Before Class

According to the unit title and the title of Text A, instructors can carefully design discussion topics with moral elements before class based on their real life experiences. Teachers may guide students to discuss in small groups the great changes that COVID-19 has brought to their lives and the countermeasures that they have taken and afterwards give reports in class. The title of this unit is *Changes in the Way We Live*. Based on the content of the unit and the COVID-19 pandemic, questions for pre-class discussion can be designed like these: What great changes have taken place in your life due to the outbreak of COVID-19? What should you do to protect yourselves in the course of this period? The title of Text A is *Mr. Doherty Builds His Dream Life*. And questions for discussion may be designed as follows: What is Mr. Doherty’s Dream Life? What two special qualities must the author have to live such a life? And what is your dream life? What should you do to realize your dream? By discussing the topic of the text, students are expected to think about their dream life and how to live up to their dream life, which is conducive for students to establish a correct outlook on life and values.

3.2 Digging out Moral Elements While Globally Understanding the Text

On the basis of the global understanding of the text, instructors can get students to go through the text quickly and find out the hardships and happiness that the author and his family have experienced in the countryside. Tasks may be designed like this: Skim the text and find out the happiness and hardships the family have experienced in the country and then do Exercise 2 (Text Organization) on Page 11. From the text we can see that Mr. Doherty and his family are tired of the city life. When they come to the countryside from the city, their lifestyle has changed greatly and their family income has decreased a lot. The author and his family were confronted with quite a few difficulties especially when they first came to the countryside. Nevertheless, they faced the difficulties positively, never grumbled, and made reasonable arrangements of time, and lived a busy and fulfilling life. In the face of plummeting incomes, they were frugal and made budgets wisely so that they could basically balance their income and expenditures without drastically reduced their standard of living. After a period of hard work, the farm yielded a bumper harvest, and the author and his family lived an ideal life eventually. In class, instructors can ask students to give priority to the hardships that they face, their positive attitude in the face of hardships, the happiness and hardships that they experience, and two special qualities that they must possess to live an ideal life: tolerance of loneliness, and great physical strength. Through the key study and discussion of the text content, students understand that provided that they want to live an ideal life, they should work hard, face difficulties positively, and never give up like the author and his family; they should also be adept at enduring loneliness and having a strong body at the same time, in that a strong body can help them become competent for heavy and hard work.

3.3 Permeating Moral Education in Language Learning

As for language learning, vocabulary learning and sentence analysis and understanding are of vital importance. In the process of vocabulary learning, students are encouraged to explore into ideological and political elements and figure out such words in the text expressing their emotional attitudes, like contentment, self-reliant, satisfying, anxious, miserable, amazing, love every minute of it, a sense of pride, etc. Afterwards students are expected to

find out the sentences expressing the author's emotional attitudes in the text, and attempt to understand the author according to the context. For instance:

- 1. And after years of frustration with city and suburban living, my wife Sandy and I found contentment here in the country.
- 2. It's a self-reliant sort of life. It's a satisfying life, too. We get excited about sunsets. We love the smell of the earth warming and the sound of cattle lowing.
- 3. While one storm after another blasted huge drifts up against the house and barn, we kept warm inside burning our own wood, eating our own apples and loving every minute of it.
- 4. It was amazing.
- 5. When the time comes, we will leave with a feeling of sorrow but also with a sense of pride at what we have been able to accomplish.

From these wonderful examples in the text, it can be seen that the author and his family achieved amazing harvest through their hard work. While enjoying the fruits of their labor, they were very excited and happy about the rural life. The entire family members are happy living together and working together. They love every minute of it. There are warm fascinating scenes like this: While one storm after another blasted huge drifts up against the house and barn, we kept warm inside burning our own wood, eating our own apples and loving every minute of it. With outdoor blizzard raging, the indoors are warm like spring, with the whole family sitting together and enjoying the fruits of labor. The author feels somewhat satisfied and a sense of pride that this life is a self-reliant, and satisfying life. Through hard work and mutual efforts of their families, they finally live an ideal life. This is encouraging for readers and also for college students: on condition that we work hard enough, we (students) can also live a carefree life in the future and enjoy family happiness of the ideal life. The author presents a warm and harmonious picture of family life in front of reader and it is instructive and worth learning from.

- 6. Three months ago when it was 30 below, we spent two miserable days hauling firewood up the river on a sled.
- 7. There have been a few anxious moments since then, but on balance things have gone much better than we had any right to expect.

- 8. But we are setting aside \$2,000 a year in an IRA.
- 9. We've been able to make up the difference in income by cutting back without appreciably lowering our standard of our living.
- 10. It takes a couple of special qualities. One is a tolerance for solitude. The other requirement is energy -- a lot of it.
- 11. The way to make self-sufficiency work on a small scale is to resist the temptation to buy a tractor and other expensive laborsaving devices.
- 12. Once economic conditions improve, demand for farms like ours should be strong again.

Life on the farm was hard and busy. Both the author and his family worked hard, whether it was cold or hot. They had two miserable days and a few anxious moments, but the family managed to keep positive and optimistic and look for ways to address the issues. For example: They set aside money for future use and cut back (expenses) to make up the differences in income. At this time, students can be taught not to be extravagant and wasteful but to be thrifty, and learn financial management, cope with possible financial difficulties in daily life, and get well prepared for the future. A tolerance for solitude is also a prerequisite for success. As a college student, one should learn to tolerate loneliness, calm down and work hard, master more skills, and make more contributions to the society and their motherland in the future. In Example 11, students are expected to resist temptations, especially online games, to acquire more knowledge and practice their skills. The sentence "Once economic conditions improve..." (Once the economic situation improves) shows that the author feels positive and optimistic about the future life, and has plans and arrangements for the future. Associated with our real life, great changes have taken place in our life due to the COVID-19, and our country has suffered tremendous economic losses. In face of these great changes and difficulties, students are encouraged to be positive and hopeful, learn to protect themselves from the COVID-19 and meanwhile believe in our Party and believe that our motherland is bound to conquer the pandemic successfully. By discussing the specific words and sentences in the text, students can improve their moral quality while learning the language points (diligent, thrifty, industrious, face difficulties and challenges bravely, be optimistic about the future, etc.)

3.4 Consolidating Language Knowledge Together with Emotional Penetration

When consolidating language knowledge, students are expected to repeatedly practise key words and key sentence patterns in the text, especially those relevant to feelings, attitudes and values in various forms until they really master them and can express them proficiently. Finally, they can integrate these attitudes and values into their own thoughts and form correct values, the world outlook and outlook on life. Consolidation exercises can be designed as follows:

- 1) Make sentences with words and phrases like frustration, contentment, self-reliant, satisfying, anxious, miserable, get through, improve the quality of life, cut back (on daily expenses), a sense of pride, resist the temptation, extravagant and so on.
- 2) Translate the above English sentences into Chinese and experience the differences between English and Chinese.
- 3) Group discussion: Discuss the pros and cons of city life and country life and try to come up with how to overcome the disadvantages of city life and country life.
- 4) Writing: For this part, you are allowed 30 minutes to write an essay on the topic of City Life VS with Country Life. You should write at least 120 words but no more than 180 words following the outline given below in Chinese: A) Many city people want to live in the country, and many country people want to live in the city; B) Both country life and city life have their pros and cons. C) My viewpoint.

The above exercises are designed to improve the comprehensive competence of language use (listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation) through the practice and application of language knowledge. Meanwhile, the pros and cons of urban life and rural life are examined and discussed. Students are expected to seek solutions to practical issues in urban and rural life such as housing issues, traffic jams, air contamination, noise pollution in big cities, education problems, medical problems, inconvenient transportation and so on in rural life. Through group discussion, Internet access to relevant materials, group presentation, writing and other ways of practice, college students may improve their sense of social responsibility and their competence to tackle practical problems.

3.5 Designing Open Assignments Reflecting Moral Education

After class, students are required to search the Internet for relevant materials of China's new rural construction, understand the relevant policies of China's new rural construction, focus their attention on the construction and development of the new countryside, and make contributions to the construction of a new fascinating countryside. Meanwhile, students are expected to tell the story of China's rural revitalization and transmit Chinese culture. In doing so, instructors can cultivate students' patriotic feelings and enhance their cultural confidence and also improve their sense of social responsibility. As Ding Shuifang (2020) said, "Under the guidance of the educational concept of 'curriculum ideology and politics', college English instructors should not only teach language points, but also spread Chinese culture and world culture, encourage students to tell Chinese stories in English, enhance students' patriotic passions and build students' cultural confidence."

4. CONCLUSION

Classroom teaching is the main channel of moral education, and moral education must run through the entire process of teaching, which requires the full and all-round participation of all the teaching staff. College English teachers should first improve their consciousness of ideology and politics and strengthen their self-cultivation; instructors should also explore into ideological elements in teaching materials and carefully design questions in the design of classroom teaching. Moral education should penetrate the entire process of teaching and learning, including discussions before class, classroom report and discussion, consolidation practice, the design of assignments and so on. Educators are required to guide college students to think about and discuss problems, form correct world, life and value outlooks, cultivate the sense of social responsibility and the spirits of being thrifty, hard-working, positive and hopeful in the face of difficulties and never give up; meanwhile college students are encouraged to compare the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western cultures, cultivate their love for the country, enhance their cultural confidence, transmit Chinese culture and tell Chinese stories well to the world.

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