

A Study on the Development of EFL Teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: With the continuous development of the connotative spirit in higher education, incorporating curriculum-based political and civic literacy with professional teaching has gradually become one of the main ways to achieve the goal of moral education and talent cultivation. College English teaching is an important carrier of humanities education, and therefore should have the dual functions of value guidance and language proficiency cultivation; to achieve this goal, systematic improvement of teachers' teaching ability in the curriculum of Political and Civic Education is required. Based on the theories of constructivism, humanism and cross-cultural communication, this paper studies how to integrate English teaching with curriculum-based political and civic education. It can also show the idea of college English teachers' teaching competence in curriculum-based political and civic education and its system of core components: value cognition, disciplinary transformation and teaching implementation. Based on the above, the development path for the teaching competence of college English teachers in Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness can be divided into three parts: strengthening the professional quality of teachers, improving the teaching practice and reflection system, and providing institutional guarantees and resource support. The aim is to promote the change of English education from an instrument-oriented mode to a goal-oriented mode and provide theoretical and practical support for deepening the reform of foreign-language teaching in higher education institutions.

Keywords: Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness; English Teaching; Teaching Competence; Teacher Development; Pathway Exploration

Introduction

With the progress of globalisation and frequent cross-cultural exchanges, the new task of college English education is to spread the achievements of civilisation, cultivate students' cross-cultural communication skills, and nurture their values. The aim of traditional English teaching has been to cultivate language proficiency; therefore, its other values and humanistic spirit have not been effectively promoted. Therefore, the teaching function of the subject has not been realised fully. Therefore, it is now necessary to promote the deep integration of curriculum-based political and civic awareness with English teaching and strengthen the teaching ability of teachers in this area during the current reform of higher English education. Systematically investigate the development process of college English teachers' curriculum-based political and civic awareness teaching competence from the three aspects of theoretical construction, competence connotation and development pathways. It hopes to meet the new demands on the professional quality of English teachers in the new era and offer theoretical support and practical guidance for building a talent cultivation system with Chinese characteristics.

1. Theoretical Basis and Feasibility Analysis of Integrating Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness in English Teaching

1.1 Theoretical Foundation of the Integration

Many different theoretical bases have been used to build the system of curriculum-based political and civic awareness in English classes. The construction of knowledge is built upon the previous construction, and students actively build knowledge through exploration and experience in their studies

rather than being passively informed of it. Cultural backgrounds, values and ways of thinking in the language materials for English teaching provide rich contexts for learners to build knowledge, and thus value guidance can be naturally integrated into the process of learning and using the language. Humanistic educational philosophy believes that the above integration is also necessary because it aims to promote the all-around development of students and help them realize their full potential; thus, education should not focus solely on teaching instrumental skills but also address students' emotional attitudes and personality growth.

As a humanities subject, English can naturally explore the common destiny of humankind, the conditions for individual existence, and various cultural values; thus, it can promote all-round development of people. In addition, the other basis is cross-cultural communication theory. Good cross-cultural communication needs to be accurate in language and sensitive to different cultures. By having students study, compare and learn from the knowledge of different cultures, they will develop cultural literacy and a sense of cultural pride. Thus it will foster value rationality by itself^[1].

1.2 Analysis of Feasibility Conditions for Integrated Implementation

Integration of curriculum-based political and civic literacy in English teaching is very feasible, and it can be achieved under the three conditions of disciplinary characteristics, teaching content and teacher-student interaction. English is a language that can be used to express ideas and carry culture; therefore, it is also a subject of study. The system of linguistic symbols is not independent of the socio-cultural connotations they carry; therefore, English teaching should be combined with value-laden cultural transmission and provide an embedded way to spread elements of political and civic consciousness.

At the level of teaching content, college English textbooks and supplementary materials have a large number of topics, such as literature, philosophy, society, technology, the environment, and many others. Many of the texts in this material deal with problems that are of general interest, such as ethics, social norms, technological ethics and the environment. There is a good supply of materials for critical thinking and value exploration; therefore, this aim can be achieved by combining it with text interpretation and language application without using external resources. The other is the degree of interaction among teachers and students. The new educational ideas are talkative and interactive in the class. Teachers can use good questions, project-based learning, leading group discussions and other teaching methods to transmit values indirectly through fair language and differences in opinions based on experience. Thus, the activity of teaching is transformed into a joint discovery of knowledge by teachers and students.

1.3 The Endogenous Logical Link Between Theoretical Foundation and Feasibility

The theoretical basis and the conditions for implementation are in agreement, so they form a complete logical system and can be applied in practice. The theoretical basis addresses the problem of "why integration is possible" from an academic perspective and shows that language learning, all-round development of individuals and value education are interrelated; thus, it provides direction and justification for integrated practice. The feasibility conditions will address the problem of "how to achieve integration" from an applied perspective and specify the practical path that can be taken given the inherent characteristics of the subject, existing teaching materials and the dynamic process of teaching.

The two are in harmony: practice is not far from theory, and theory has been expanded by practice. For example, the focus of constructivism on the construction of meaning is in line with the rich carriers of meaning in teaching content and the process of meaning negotiation in teacher-student interaction; the humanistic goal of all-round education can be achieved by paying attention to emotions, attitudes and values in language learning. The above inherent logical unity shows that the integration of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness into English teaching is not an artificial attachment but a natural fusion based on common educational ideas and disciplinary traits. First, there must be a good understanding of both the theory and the application in practice to do well.

2. Connotation and Core Elements of College English Teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness Teaching Competence

2.1 Conceptual Definition and Characteristics of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness Teaching Competence

College English teachers' curriculum-based political and civic education teaching competence is a type of compound professional competence. Teacher professional ability is the teacher's professional capacity to integrate the humanistic spirit, value rationality and critical-thinking dispositions of individuals in their teaching of English, thereby promoting the coordinated development of students' language proficiency and all-round abilities. The goal is no longer just to teach language skills; rather, it also seeks to help students cultivate moral qualities and learn about culture in the process of learning^[2].

Given that it is highly integrated, the components of political and civic education should be incorporated into the teaching content of language rather than being taught separately; inherent transformability requires teachers to be able to translate abstract values into specific teaching situations and language activities, profound reflexivity demands that teachers continually examine their own teaching behaviour and the underlying values of this behaviour, and specific disciplinary grounding requires that the form of implementation be in line with the disciplinary characteristics of English as an international lingua franca and the pedagogical ideals of cross-cultural communication. This ability is based on many foundations of pedagogy, applied linguistics and teacher development theory, and it is a new type of professional competence that differs from traditional teaching ability.

2.2 The Systematised Composition of Core Competence Elements

The system of curriculum-based political and civic awareness teaching competence for college English teachers is composed of several levels. The main layer of this system is value cognition and cultural understanding; therefore, teachers need to have a deep cross-cultural humanistic literacy, be able to grasp and analyse the values in Chinese and Western cultures, learn how to evaluate them critically, and form a stable yet open system of values. The middle level refers to the capacity for disciplinary transformation and instructional design of the components of political and civic awareness; that is, it is a teacher's ability to identify, explore and improve these components in English teaching materials by integrating them with language points, as well as the ability to design teaching plans that effectively link language goals with the aims of competence cultivation.

The outermost level is teaching and leading ability; it refers to how to use classroom discourse, organise critical discussions, apply skills in leading discussions on value-laden issues, and exercise pedagogical wisdom to maximise the educational effect of teacher-student interaction at all times and in all situations. The three levels work together to achieve the goal from the inside, and together they form a dynamic and interdependent system of abilities that can be shown in an "onion diagram".

2.3 The Synergistic Relationship Between Competence Connotation and Educational Goals

There is a good coordination among the content of college English teachers' teaching competence in curriculum-based political and civic awareness and the educational goals to be achieved. The goals of higher education in the current era are to foster all-round talents with professional knowledge, a global outlook, good moral character and social awareness. Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence is a particular way and professional guarantee to achieve this high-level goal in the field of English education. Thus, teachers will be able to change the mode of English teaching from purely instrumental to one that integrates humanism and education, thereby achieving the goal of enhancing students' English language proficiency and fostering all-round development^[3].

The combination of the two is that they have the same purpose; that is, the end goal of competence development is in line with the aim of cultivating all-around abilities in students. It is also shown in the unity of the process; that is to say, the very act of using this ability is a type of teaching that achieves educational goals. A profound understanding of the concept of competence and an organised construction of its main contents can provide theoretical support and a practical basis for investigating and improving the educational effect of English courses, ensuring that teaching activities are consistently in line with the goal of holistic education.

3. Exploration of Development Paths for College English Teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness Teaching Competence

3.1 Design Path for Enhancing Teachers' Professional Competence

3.1.1 Systematization of the Theoretical Foundation and Knowledge Structure

The system of theories and all other sources of knowledge for the cultivation of teachers' professional ability should be considered. At this time, teachers need to break away from the traditional concept of language teaching and learn how constructivism learning theory, cross-cultural communication theory and the philosophy of holistic education are applied in the context of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness. Teachers should build an interdisciplinary knowledge network that integrates applied linguistics, comparative literature, philosophical ethics, educational psychology, etc., to create an organised system of knowledge on the principles and methods of value education. The construction of this knowledge should not be confined to theory; rather, it should focus on how to integrate it with the specific characteristics of English classes so that teachers can use this theoretical knowledge to find, analyse and interpret values in language materials. At the same time, teachers should continuously update their cognitive schemas through the study of academic readings, thematic seminars and interdisciplinary exchanges over a long period, build a concept system that can be flexibly applied in all kinds of teaching situations, and provide a strong theoretical foundation for curriculum-oriented Political and Civic Awareness teaching^[4].

3.1.2 A Special Cultivation Method for Teaching Transformation Competence

On the basis of the above theoretical foundation, a special cultivation system for teaching transformation competence should be built. The purpose of the above is to enhance the professional quality of teachers in conveying abstract values for life in a practical manner. Based on an in-depth analysis of textbooks, development of teaching cases and design of classroom activities, a series of thematic workshops will be organised to help teachers learn how to organically integrate elements of political and civic education into all parts of teaching, such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. The two should be contextual and generative. Micro-teaching, peer observation and expert feedback are all ways to continuously improve one's teaching design skills in simulated and actual teaching situations, and thus one can develop their own characteristic pedagogical wisdom and style. The cultivation of teachers' "teaching transformation thinking" should be one of the focuses of teacher training; it is a type of habituated thinking that helps them form an organic connection between linguistic knowledge points and values at all times and naturally design teaching sequences. Help to close the gap between the idea of curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching and its actual implementation.

3.1.3 The Continuous Nourishment Function of Professional Learning Communities

Continuous improvement in the professional ability of teachers is based on the cultivation and support of professional learning communities. Organise an interdisciplinary and cross-departmental group of teachers to provide continuous academic support and a good working environment for the development of their teaching abilities in curriculum-based political and civic education. The above groups have organised regular teaching salons, group lesson preparation, joint research projects and experience-sharing activities to spread tacit knowledge and promote teaching innovation. Teachers have been learning about new events and changes in society by talking to people in the community, and as a result, their teaching of curriculum-oriented political and civic literacy has been constantly improving. It will help them take the initiative in their work and be more proactive. In the construction of a professional learning community, one should consider the differences and complementarities among its members. Teachers from all over the school, with different subjects and various years of service, will gather in a good mood to share teaching ideas and learn new ways of teaching.

3.2 Strategies for Advancing Teaching Practice and Reflection

3.2.1 A Cycle of Teaching Improvement Based on Action Research

To improve the main content of the development of teaching ability, continuous action research should be carried out. Action research can have teachers observe their own teaching from the perspective of a researcher, and then systematically plan, carry out, observe and reflect on problems that occur in the integration of curriculum-based political and civic awareness^[5]. Teachers can adjust and improve their teaching plans regularly according to the actual situation in the classroom to create

individualised learning paths. Action research can be used to solve practical problems in teaching, and by grounding the improvement work in systematic inquiry rather than solely on experience, it can also enhance teachers' sense of responsibility and self-study ability.

3.2.2 Establishment and Application of a Multi-dimensional Reflection Framework

Organise all kinds of reflections to enhance students' sense of learning in class. The above framework should cover some content, such as the selection of teaching materials, the design of teaching activities, the process of classroom interaction, and the results of student learning. With the help of teaching journals, video case studies and analysis of student feedback, teachers can be guided to carry out an organised and in-depth investigation of their own teaching. At this time, teachers should be able to consider the connection among all the methods of value guidance in teaching, students' responses and teaching results more thoroughly, and thus continuously improve the rationality and educational value of their teaching plans. Thus, it can be promoted from technical practice to reflective practice professionally.

3.2.3 The Construction of a Collaborative Professional Development Model

Building a collaborative professional development model is now a good way to promote teaching practice and reflection. Establish cooperative organisations for classes and teams of teaching innovation to make full use of teachers' reflections and foster collective professional wisdom. The teachers in the collaborative group will jointly observe the class, discuss teaching cases, talk about problems in teaching, and draw inspiration from all kinds of places. Together we will share teaching knowledge and improve it; together we will build a professional discourse system for teaching curriculum-based political and civic literacy through continuous professional dialogue, and together we will provide strong social support for the all-round development of teachers' professional abilities.

3.3 Development Mechanisms for Institutional Guarantee and Resource Support

3.3.1 Construction of an Organised Evaluation and Incentive Plan

An organised system of assessment and motivation should be established to promote the development of teaching ability in the subject of Political and Civic Education. The teaching ability of this system should be added to the assessment standards for teachers' professional development and given more weight in the process of promoting professional titles, performance appraisals and honour awards. The two parts of the evaluation should be the teaching process and the results of teaching; they need to consider the quality of teaching innovation and the degree of student growth, rather than just quantitative indicators. Institutions can grant official recognition and offer incentives for teachers who excel in teaching the Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness course; thus, these teachers will believe that improving their teaching ability is the conscious aim of their careers and will be motivated to learn throughout their lives. Therefore, at the institutional level, the development of professional ability will be promoted and sustained^[6].

3.3.2 Construction of an Independent Resource Support Service Website

Build a reasonably comprehensive and varied resource-support system to provide material and technical assistance in improving the professional quality of teachers. There will be several modules in the system, such as curriculum development support, construction of a teaching resource repository, teaching technology assistance services, etc. Pay more attention to building a good case library, material repository and instructional design database to provide teachers with excellent reference materials for teaching. At the same time, a team of subject matter experts and educational specialists should be established to provide personalised professional support for teachers. All of the above will help reduce the workload of teachers and improve the quality and efficiency of teaching innovation.

3.3.3 Shaping the Mechanisms of Long-term Development and Organizational Culture

To continue to improve the teaching ability of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness, a long-term development system and a good organisational culture need to be built. All sorts of measures have been taken to build a good organisational culture that values the scholarship of teaching and encourages teaching innovation, such as organising special teaching reform projects, holding teaching achievement exhibitions and exchanges, establishing teaching innovation incentive mechanisms, etc. At the same time, the institution should also strengthen strategic planning by integrating the development of teaching ability in curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness into the overall framework of faculty training to ensure the stability of related investment and support. By jointly creating a good

institutional environment and organisational culture, teachers will have wide development space and continuous professional motivation to foster a healthy ecosystem for the development of their teaching competence in Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness.

Conclusion

The main problems in the development of teaching ability for college English teachers in curriculum-based political and civic education are theoretical construction, competence reform and institutional innovation. Clarify the theoretical basis and practical path for integrating Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness in English teaching, develop a competence structure model with value cognition at its core based on the above, make teaching transformation the main link, and devise implementation guidance as its external form. In addition, it proposes that the teaching professional qualities of teachers should be enhanced by means of organised training, reflective practice communities and institutional support. In the future, further research can explore all the various paths of teacher competence development in different institutional environments, discover new ways to integrate elements of political and civic awareness with English teaching in the era of digital transformation of education, and conduct detailed assessments of the actual impact of competence development on the all-round growth of students. This will help to continue improving the theoretical foundation and practical model for the development of college English teachers.

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