



Nurturing all Things Subtly and Silently — Construction and Exploration of Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in Public English Courses for Graduate Students

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Abstract: As a language subject, Public English for graduate students has certain instrumental and humanistic characteristics. In the process of public English teaching for graduates, it is very necessary to integrate ideological and political elements and give full play to their synergistic effects. This approach can not only improve students' English application and practical operation skills but also enhance their political literacy, thus achieving the true purpose of "cultivating people with virtue." This paper mainly discusses the construction of ideological and political theories teaching in Public English courses for graduate students. In the practical implementation of teaching, it is essential to first clarify the teaching objectives. Then, according to the specific goals, it is very necessary to determine how to integrate English teaching with ideological and political theories teaching, which makes the course teaching more comprehensive and diverse, ultimately improving the effectiveness of education.

Keywords: the ideological and political theories teaching in all courses; Public English for graduate students; teaching

1. The Background of the Proposal of Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses

Public English for graduate students, as a language subject, has certain instrumental and humanistic characteristics, and it plays a crucial and significant role in the cultivation of high-level talents. The primary audience for Public English courses is non-English major graduate students. These courses have a high degree of universality, wide coverage, broad knowledge base, and strong practicality, which lays a solid foundation for the implementation of the ideological and political theories teaching in all courses. In December 2016, President Xi emphasized at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities that the central task is to adhere to the principle of "cultivating people with virtue" and integrate ideological and political work throughout the entire education and teaching process, achieving comprehensive and all-round education. The president pointed out that we should make good use of classroom teaching as the main channel, and that ideological and political theories teaching in all courses should be strengthened through improvement, enhancing their appeal and relevance to meet the developmental needs and expectations of students. All other courses should also contribute, ensuring that they move in the same direction as ideological and political theories teaching in all courses, creating a synergistic effect. To thoroughly implement President Xi's important discourse on education and the spirit of the National Education Conference, the reform of ideological and political theories teaching in Public English courses for graduate students is imperative and of great significance. This not only enables students to master comprehensive professional knowledge but also helps them establish correct values, promoting the all-round development of their physical and mental health. In the practical implementation of teaching activities, it is first necessary to establish a clear ideological and political theories teaching objective. Then, based on the actual teaching, the relevant aspects should be carried out step by step to truly achieve the educational goal of "cultivating people with virtue."

2. Establishing Clear Ideological and Political Theories Teaching Objectives

In the construction of ideological and political theories teaching in Public English courses for graduate students, the audience has crucial significance and importance, and their numbers are relatively large. In this context, it is necessary to closely integrate courses with ideological education and other aspects. Only in this way can the overall quality of teaching and education be ensured.[1] Language teaching is a dynamic process, and language teaching activities are essentially a process of cultural and ideological immersion. In terms of objectives, attention should be paid to the close integration of relevant methods and strategies, ensuring a close connection between them, focusing on combining the corresponding English teaching content with ideological and political content to cultivate students' ideological and political literacy. Only

through such methods and measures can the quality of teaching be improved, optimizing students' learning outcomes and contributing to their personal development and the enhancement of their literacy. In the teaching of Public English for graduate students, it is essential to clarify this objective. Under the guidance of corresponding ideological education, all participants should start from the characteristics and relevant perspectives of Public English, constructing a "grand ideological and political theories teaching" curriculum system, fully integrating a series of thoughts and related theories centered on the core socialist values into every teaching link and content. This ensures a high degree of integration and close connection between the two, ultimately achieving comprehensive education.

The question about how to closely integrate ideological and political theories teaching with basic English education for graduate students is worth pondering.

3. Implementation Pathways for Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in Public Graduate English Courses

3.1 Enhancing Teachers' Comprehensive Abilities and Building Excellent Teaching Teams

At the National Education Conference, President Xi stated: "The fundamental issue of education is what kind of people to cultivate, how to cultivate them, and for whom to cultivate them." Contemporary graduate students have active minds, strong learning abilities, and a preference for new things. It is the best opportunity for students to cultivate moral education. Graduate teachers play a crucial role as guides in this process. An ancient saying goes, "A teacher is a model for others." In the eyes of students, teachers set the standards for words and actions, profoundly influencing them. Every graduate teacher should be a promoter and practitioner of moral education, guiding students toward healthy moral development and the formation of correct values. Thus, it is essential to enhance teachers' comprehensive abilities and build excellent teaching teams. In the construction of ideological and political theories teaching in all courses, teachers must possess knowledge and character that command students' respect. With their ideals, moral integrity, solid knowledge, and loving hearts, teachers can influence students through both words and deeds.[2] How to organically integrate Public English courses for graduate students with ideological and political theories teaching is a question every teacher should ponder. Implicit education, as opposed to explicit education, aims to cultivate students' good morals, improve their moral qualities, and promote their all-round development.[3] Currently, in some universities, the teaching of graduate English courses still emphasizes intellectual education over moral education. The content of teaching is often monotonous, with weakened emphasis on Chinese culture and moral education. Graduate Public English course instructors should reflect on this. Teachers must not only improve their professional, cultural, and theoretical levels but also hold firm and correct ideological and political beliefs, as well as positive outlooks on life and values. In teaching, teachers should effectively combine their high teaching abilities, professional qualities, and educational literacy with ideological education and cultural edification. This ensures that the ideological and political theories teaching aligns with contemporary and national educational concepts. Through the dissemination of knowledge and skills, students will unconsciously develop a sense of recognition, achieving the "nurturing all things subtly and silently" effect of ideological and political theories teaching.

The construction of ideological and political theories teaching in Public English courses for graduate students relies primarily on the classroom as the main channel and the courses as important carriers. The design of teaching, assignments, and tasks acts as accelerators for course construction. First, teachers should independently study relevant ideological and political theories teaching content, continuously improving their professional qualities and vocational skills. They should integrate their values with ideological and political theories teaching during the learning process and pass on the correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values to students. Second, teachers should receive training from schools to enhance their teaching abilities. Teachers should work collectively, regularly discussing relevant teaching concepts, ideas, and materials within their departments to optimize teaching designs. They can share and discuss their teaching cases and materials, learn from each other's methods, keep up with the latest societal trends, and actively explore how to integrate ideological and political content into Public English courses for graduate students. By identifying moral education elements within teaching points, teachers can help students learn knowledge while embedding "ideological and political theories teaching in all courses" in their hearts.

3.2 Scientifically Constructing a Teaching System That Integrates Ideological and Political Functions

3.2.1 Scientific Teaching Methods of "Nurturing all things subtly and silently"

In June 2020, the Ministry of Education issued the "Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological and Political Theories

Teaching in Courses in Higher Education Institutions," which clearly states: "The effectiveness of cultivating people with virtue is the fundamental criterion for evaluating all work in colleges and universities. To fulfill the fundamental task of cultivating people with virtue, it is necessary to integrate value shaping, knowledge transmission, and ability cultivation into one inseparable whole." [4] Graduate Public English courses, as compulsory courses for learning language and culture, inherently possess potential ideological and political theories teaching functions. In constructing ideological and political theories teaching, classroom teaching serves as the "main channel." Whenever there are appropriate contents or topics in classroom teaching, we can link them with ideological and political theories teaching, finding effective entry points to integrate graduate English teaching with ideological and political theories teaching seamlessly. The design of ideological and political theories teaching in the classroom should be fragmentary and subtle. In the teaching process, it is crucial to go with the flow, without distinguishing between primary and secondary elements. It is essential to avoid "labeling" and "separating" ideological and political theories teaching from English teaching. Instead, ideological and political theories teaching should not be simply and forcibly added to graduate English teaching; scientific reconstruction and optimization of teaching content are necessary. The teaching content must combine students' interests with real-time hot topics to achieve the effect of nurturing talents and educating people simultaneously.

3.2.2 Scientific Teaching Models

To smoothly implement ideological and political theories teaching, the use of appropriate teaching methods is also crucial. The blended teaching model deeply integrates modern information technology with classroom teaching, blending learning environments and content. This model leverages the advantages of both online and offline teaching, extending the time and space for teaching and learning, stimulating students' learning enthusiasm and vitality, while also promoting innovative teaching methods and improving classroom teaching quality. [5] The core ideas of blended teaching include teamwork, harmony, inclusiveness, understanding, friendliness, respect, sharing, and mutual progress, which highly align with the core socialist values and the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, and intrinsically match the connotations of ideological and political theories teaching in courses. [6]

The blended teaching model is more likely to engage students' learning interests and enhance communication skills between teachers and students, fostering collaborative abilities during the learning process. It also allows teachers to better utilize new media and high-quality resources. Therefore, implementing a blended teaching model for ideological and political theories teaching in Public English courses for graduate students is both reasonable and necessary.

At the same time, it is essential to integrate the teaching models and utilize appropriate teaching methods and strategies, incorporating interactive elements. For instance, students can be encouraged to summarize aspects of Chinese culture in English or, after grouping, to choose an ideological and political topic that interests them. This approach allows students to continuously enhance their knowledge base during English learning and training, while also positively influencing their cultural confidence. Integrating ideological and political theories teaching into learning activities can improve students' ideological awareness and literacy, ultimately enhancing the quality of teaching.

4. Practical Implementation of Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in Graduate Public English Courses

At Hunan University, the Graduate Public English course is offered for one semester, consisting of 32 class hours. The primary textbook used is "Intensive Multidimensional Course — Approaching Proficiency," part of Graduate English Series. In this course, teachers engage in departmental activities and meetings to reflect on teaching ethics, explore the ideological and political elements within the textbook, and share insights on ideological and political theories teaching. The teaching of the course adopts an output-oriented approach, emphasizing student task output, integrating interpretations of traditional Chinese culture and contemporary politics with a value-oriented perspective. The blended teaching model is employed to achieve both English language learning and ideological and political theories teaching.

Below are some reflections on the practical implementation of ideological and political theories teaching in this course.

4.1 Relying on Textbooks to Uncover Real-Time Political Entry Points and Establish Grand Ideals

The current graduate English textbook was written before the construction of ideological and political theories teaching. However, it is based on the "English Teaching Syllabus for Non-English Major Graduate Students" issued by the Ministry of Education, tailored to the actual conditions of graduate teaching in China and the national requirements for advanced technical and management talents in the 21st century. This book emphasizes not only the cultivation of solid language skills but also the improvement of comprehensive application abilities. It focuses on both language education and quality education. The "Intensive Multidimensional Course" selections come from British and American original works from the

late 1990s, covering topics like current social politics, economics, culture, and technology. These selections are highly relevant and academic, while also being engaging and thought-provoking, stimulating students' thinking.

In classroom teaching, teachers can easily connect with reality and dig out ideological and political elements by using this textbook. For example, the first article, "From Competence to Commitment," with the theme of "How should universities and colleges enable students to apply their abilities to social education", talks about the current problems and phenomena in American universities, explores the reasons for the existence of the problems, and how to solve them. The conclusion is that undergraduates education is to enable students to step from ability to dedication. This article itself is highly relevant, allowing the integration of English language learning with contemporary politics, helping students understand the purpose of their learning. In the first part of the first paragraph, there is a key word "faith," leading students to discuss the theme of faith, and helping them understand the power of faith and its ability to overcome difficulties. At this point, the word "faith" becomes crucial, and teachers can refer to the "Core Socialist Values" and "Chinese Dream" mentioned by President Xi. If each student can remain true to their original aspiration and keep their mission firmly in mind, they can strive for the grand ideal of national construction despite conflicts between reality and ideals. In fact, much ideological education is embedded within English materials. Teachers need to guide students effectively, driving them to discover these elements, thereby integrating English language learning with ideological and political theories teaching, achieving the effect of "nurturing all things subtly and silently" teaching.

4.2 Integrating Chinese Culture and Focusing on Individual Development with the Goal of Cultivating People

In recent years, the number of graduate students in China has rapidly increased, which presents many new challenges in the process of cultivating these students, such as psychological issues and communication barriers and so on. Therefore, ideological and political theories teaching for graduate students is of paramount importance, and it must emphasize and focus on the individual growth of graduate students. Incorporating these elements into English classroom teaching is crucial. In the first article, "From Competence to Commitment," the second paragraph of the first part addresses how students can truly surpass themselves to meet the standards of undergraduate education. To elucidate this, the author quotes Reinhold Niebuhr: "Man cannot behold except he be committed. He cannot find himself without finding a center beyond himself." Based on this theme, teachers can guide students to relate it to their personal life experiences, helping them understand the importance of assuming responsibilities and teaching them to be courageous in taking on responsibilities in their studies and lives. Each act of assuming responsibility accumulates life experiences, which in turn enables individuals to discover their potential and truly surpass themselves.

This content aligns closely with the teachings of Confucius, the great Chinese educator and thinker, who summarized his life experiences: "At fifteen, I aspired to pursue learning; at thirty, I could stand firm in the world; at forty, I was able to understand principles; at fifty, I comprehended the laws of nature and destiny; at sixty, I could discern right from wrong and listen to various opinions with composure; at seventy, I could follow my heart's desires without breaking the rules." Students can first be introduced to this quote's English translation before class, then be guided to interpret it during class, and finally, extract the essence of the saying "at fifty, I comprehended the laws of nature and destiny" to help them truly understand its meaning and significance. The profoundness of Chinese culture necessitates its integration into teaching, both to preserve it and to meet the demands of the times. [7] Integrating Chinese culture into English language teaching not only helps students grasp the essence of Chinese culture but also achieves the goal of educating them holistically. This approach allows graduate students to grow not only in their language proficiency but also in their personal qualities.

4.3 Redesigning the Evaluation Methods for Graduate Public English Courses

The existing assessment method for English knowledge consists of 40% for regular performance and 60% for final exam scores. Regular performance includes attendance, classroom participation, and homework. While this assessment method can reflect students' mastery of basic English, it primarily focuses on evaluating language proficiency and falls short of achieving the educational goal of "cultivating people with virtue." How can we truly achieve the goal of teaching and nurturing students? This question deserves deep consideration. Given the limited class time for graduate English courses, how can we effectively integrate ideological and political theories teaching into English teaching within this constrained time and space? How can we comprehensively understand students' grasp of English knowledge and ideological and political topics? One way to address these issues is to incorporate the "Rain Classroom" platform into teaching. The platform allows for online discussions through its discussion area, where all students can participate and share their views simultaneously. Features of "Rain Classroom" can help address the shortcomings of traditional assessment methods. Additionally, combining teacher evaluations with peer evaluations changes the traditional single-faceted assessment approach. Peer evaluations can

break class boundaries and involve cross-class evaluations for specific projects or content. This approach encourages students to participate in the evaluation process, stimulating their interest in teaching, and developing their critical thinking and judgment skills. Furthermore, students are encouraged to participate in subject-related competitions. Engaging in English competitions is a key method for enhancing students' practical abilities. This allows students to master English skills while gaining additional knowledge and enhancing their ideological and cultural qualities through activities such as speeches. [8] The themes of these competitions can be closely linked to ideological and political theories teaching, encouraging students to use English as a tool to acquire more knowledge and improve their ideological qualities through competitive activities.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, many graduate students establish long-term development plans and goals during their studies. Teachers, as guides during this stage, should take proactive steps. By leveraging the unique features of their courses and exploring effective entry points for integrating ideological and political theories teaching with graduate public English teaching, teachers can purposefully infuse ideological and political elements into the curriculum. This approach facilitates the simultaneous development of English teaching and ideological education, achieving the effect of "nurturing all things subtly and silently". Ultimately, it helps students develop a well-rounded and outstanding character. Only by guiding students to form correct life views and values can we meet the educational goal of "cultivating people with virtue" and train talents that meet the needs of contemporary socialist construction.

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