

The Integration and Cultivation of Critical Thinking Ability in College English Reading Teaching from the Perspective of Ideological and Political Education in Foreign Language Courses

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Abstract: Ideological and political education should be integrated into the entire learning process of college students, and ideological and political education in colleges and universities must be firmly implemented. From the perspective of “ideological and political theories teaching in courses”, promoting the integration of College English reading teaching and ideological and political elements can help college students develop critical thinking and enhance their English reading abilities through subtle influence and immersion. This article explores the positive effects and integration strategies of integrating ideological and political theories into College English reading teaching.

Keywords: College English, reading teaching, ideological and political theories teaching in courses, critical thinking

Introduction

With the continuous development of urbanization and new media technology in China, the public ideological concepts, value choices, and learning methods have changed to varying degrees. College students have also realized the differences in thinking and customs between the East and the West, and reading can help them explore a broader world. Language is a cultural carrier, and College English reading teaching allows students to experience the differences in thinking patterns and language cultures among different ethnic groups through reading, and to form critical thinking through this experience.^[1] College English is a general education course that contains rich ideological and political elements. From the perspective of ideological and political education, College English teachers need to continuously explore the moral education factors in College English reading teaching, thus truly achieving the goal of “integrating morality into the curriculum”, and implementing the educational function of higher education.

1. The positive role of integrating ideological and political elements into College English reading teaching

1.1 Enhancing cultural confidence, and making students have the courage to criticize

The integration of ideological and political elements in College English reading teaching is often carried out through the discussion of Chinese characters, customs and other situations by foreigners. Through reading, students gain a deeper understanding and insight into Chinese customs and the deeds of great figures, enhancing their cultural confidence. The article *Let the world say goodbye to hunger* introduced to students how hybrid rice breeding expert Yuan Longping successfully cultivated excellent hybrid rice varieties through difficulties and obstacles, making outstanding contributions

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to world food security. Combining the English vocabulary used to describe Yuan Longping in the reading materials, College English teachers can help students expand their English vocabulary to describe Yuan Longping's deeds. Integrating ideological and political elements into College English reading teaching can make students understand foreigners' views of Chinese people and China's national conditions, encourage students to understand their own country, and critically think about the differences between the East and the West. With the continuous improvement of China's international status, college students can feel that the country is prosperous and the people live happily, and talents are emerging in the process of reading learning. Therefore, students are brave enough to critically read the author's arguments in the materials and draw their own conclusions.

1.2 Comparing multiple aspects, and making students be good at criticizing

There are differences in thinking patterns, language and culture among different ethnic groups, College English reading teaching must pay attention to these differences. In *Speaking Chinese in America*, there are explanations about the understanding of greeting language between the East and the West such as "Have you taken dinner?" and "What did you have for dinner?". Chinese regard them as friendly greetings, while the Westerners think these greetings touch on personal privacy. Taking the performance of family members in the family dinner as the introduction, this article describes the Western stereotype of Chinese people. Through reading, students discovered that the author had analyzed Chinese culture and American culture from the perspectives of two different cultures respectively,^[2] and then extracted the author's expressed thoughts, emotions, and values from details such as the central sentence and core words, achieving in-depth practice of reading skills. Teachers raise questions according to the author's viewpoint, while students provide critical explanations and suggestions based on the article's arguments, achieving critical thinking of the article.

2. The integration and cultivation strategies of critical thinking ability in College English reading teaching

2.1 Cultivating the critical analysis ability through deep reading

By definition, reading refers to the process of extracting information from a text content. Under the influence of the Internet, the channels for post-00s college students to obtain information are expanding, and their dependence on traditional reading methods is gradually decreasing. The various ways in which information is presented have further stimulated the imagination, thirst for knowledge, and desire for expression of college students, but have reduced their interest in deep thinking and self-exploration of deep information. Introducing ideological and political elements and guiding college students to understand the views expressed by the author of the article in conjunction with China's national conditions, situation, and policies can help students make reasonable evaluations and form new cognition. Taking the lesson of *Martin Luther King* as an example, College English teachers should first attract students' curiosity, raise some questions such as "Why Martin Luther King was awarded?" "What did Martin Luther King do?" to inspire students to think critically. Following the logic of the article and start from "Martin Luther King winning the Nobel Peace Prize", students sort out the overall efforts of Martin Luther King for racial equality, and match the author's arguments with the points. Based on the teacher's expansion of the national conditions of slavery and plantations in the United States at that time, students are able to purposefully observe and analyze the process of Martin Luther King leading the African-American Civil Rights Movement, and ultimately draw the conclusion that Martin Luther King should indeed be awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

Some students have weak reading and thinking abilities, and are unable to organize the logic of their writing. Teachers need to provide appropriate guidance for students' learning in a timely manner, such as guiding them to summarize Martin Luther King's deeds by using framework diagrams or analyzing his work progress by using fishbone diagrams according to timelines. Using visualization tools to analyze the author's arguments and evidence can help students maintain a critical attitude, transforming their intuitive understanding of the protagonist into rational deep reading. Afterwards, teachers organize students to have thematic discussions, such as "Why the African-American Civil Rights Movement must be carried out?" "Why was Martin Luther King assassinated?" Such questions can guide students to question the author's

viewpoints, and then enrich their self-awareness through in-depth reading while answering questions. College students lack understanding of American history, but are filled with righteous indignation towards China's oppressed history of semi-colonial and semi-feudal period. Combining the laws of historical development and social values, students realize that in order to achieve happiness, it is necessary to eliminate racial segregation. After critical thinking process, students truly understand the greatness of Martin Luther King Jr. and agree with the author's viewpoint.

2.2 Cultivating the critical thinking ability through situational discussion

Experiencing the learning process in real-life scenarios is useful for students to grasp the essence of reading materials through collaborative reading and research. Before studying *Friendship Across Gender and Border*, some students believed that there was no pure friendship between men and women; While the other students believed that we are all like brothers and sisters, regardless of gender. In order to enable students to understand the author's understanding of friendship, teachers can conduct situational discussions on "friendship", creating scenarios based on the author's friendship, students' own friendship, and the preservation of friendship. This method allows students' reading learning to move from the classroom to life, and then back to the classroom, making the concept "friendship across gender and border" deeply ingrained in their minds, and deepening their language reading skills. Students may question and refute the author's arguments based on their own life experience and online public opinion before reading *Friendship Across Gender and Border*. College English teachers should encourage college students to read the entire text with a critical attitude towards the author's argument, guide them to find evidence that confirms the author's argument from the text, and critically discuss whether the evidence in the article is sufficient and reasonable, and whether the real-life situation is different. This requires college students to think dialectically. In situational discussions, combined with their own life experiences, college students can critically analyze the author's arguments with concepts that conform to social morality, and evaluate the accuracy of the author's arguments, thereby forming their own values and enhancing their critical thinking abilities.

2.3 Cultivating the critical creation ability through practical exploration

Reading provides college students with a broader space for self-directed learning, it allows students to explore the mysterious world in the book, experience the diverse customs of different ethnic groups and understand the unique backgrounds of different periods through imagination and thinking. The practice after reading is a necessary process for students to further understand English logic and create their own language world. After studying *Firm Faith, Eternal Friendship*, students learned about the deeds of the Crook couple in dedicating themselves to the Chinese revolutionary cause and cultivating foreign language talents in China, which aroused great interest in the current situation of foreign language talent cultivation in China. Teachers can arrange a survey on the cultivation of foreign language talents in China during the revolutionary period, and student groups can conduct research on schools that offered foreign language courses, famous teachers, and overseas study opportunities at that time, so that students can develop critical thinking skills through summarization, sorting, and deep processing. They can even organize students to create scripts based on the deeds of the Crook couple, and students can design roles and lines based on historical materials. Teachers can also guide students to connect with China's national conditions according to the situation, and integrate ideological and political elements into English reading and creation. For example, at that time, China was poor and backward, and foreign language talents were scarce. It is hoped that advanced technology can be introduced from the West. The Crook couple responded to the call of communism and cultivated batches of foreign language talents in rudimentary classrooms. Students consulted numerous historical materials during script creation and critically analyzed the teaching work of the Crook couple. Finally, after multiple verification, students deeply perceived the scarcity of foreign language talents in China at that time and the reasons why Crook couple had contributed their life to the revolution, thus understanding the connotation of *The Communist Manifesto*. Starting from heroic deeds and combining them with texts and self-researched historical materials for critical creation is conducive to fully tapping into students' divergent thinking and enhancing their critical thinking abilities. At the same time, a teaching activity "peer review and evaluation" can be taken after practical activities, allowing students to read each other's works and share their understanding of the creative theme. For example, according to survey

methods and creative themes, students can judge whether each other's viewpoints, logic and design are clear and reasonable. Through repeated evaluations, students can reflect on themselves while assessing others, and effectively develop critical thinking.

3. Conclusion

Integrating ideological and political elements into College English reading teaching mainly helps students connect reading materials with the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics through in-depth analysis of reading materials, situational discussions, practical creation, etc., so as to enable students to correctly understand the world, transform the world, and realize themselves.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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