



On the Inner Connection Between English Teaching and Cultural Confidence Cultivation of College Students Under the Background of New Liberal Arts

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Fund program: Philosophy and Social Science Research Project of Jiangsu Higher Schools in 2020 “A Study on the Cultivation of College Students’ Cultural Confidence by English Education in the Context of New Liberal Arts” (2020SJA1626)

Abstract: As a new round of teaching reform policy formally proposed by the Ministry of Education, “new liberal arts” has caused great repercussions in the domestic academia and educational circles. The construction of new liberal arts in China shows the cultural confidence and the need of cultivating new culture. As a humanities course, college English teaching has its unique characteristics in cultivating college students’ cultural confidence, strengthening their cultural beliefs and exchanging culture. Based on the background of new liberal arts, this paper analyzes the connotation of college English course in cultivating students’ cultural confidence and the internal relationship between them.

Keywords: “new liberal arts”; college English teaching; cultivation of cultural confidence; cultural attributes

1. The English teaching under the background of “new liberal art”

The year 2019 is the start year of the construction of new liberal arts in China. The construction of new liberal arts should meet the new requirements of the development of philosophy and social sciences in the new era and build an advanced culture with Chinese characteristics, Chinese style and Chinese manner in the new era^[1]. The construction of our “new liberal arts” must be closely combined with the reality of China’s education and the reality of talent training, so as to truly achieve a new liberal arts based on China’s position and reflect Chinese characteristics.

The “new liberal arts” with Chinese characteristics should have the mission and responsibility of The Times. The education of new foreign language talents under the background of new liberal arts should emphasize the combination of global view and Chinese practice, stress holistic education combined with ability, knowledge and personality shaping. Students are required to tell Chinese stories well and spread Chinese culture, and it is necessary to cultivate foreign language talents with firm conviction, perfect personality and excellent specialty on the basis of promoting personalized development.

General Secretary Xi Jinping first proposed the concept of “cultural confidence” at a conference celebrating the 95th anniversary of the Founding of Chinese Communist Party July 1, 2016. Nowadays, cultural confidence has become a major social and cultural theme. College English is a humanities subject; it not only cultivates students’ language skills and cross-cultural abilities, but also promotes the dissemination of traditional Chinese culture in classroom teaching. By comparing Chinese and Western cultures, the course strengthens students’ sense of identity and firm belief in the excellent national culture from a critical perspective to help reach a general consensus on the core socialist values. The curriculum characteristics of college English have the related attributes of cultivating students’ cultural confidence, thus college English teaching opens a new perspective of cultivating students’ cultural confidence.

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doi: 10.18282/le.v9i8.1960

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2. The connotation attributes of college English course for cultural confidence cultivation

2.1 Instrumental nature of college English course

In the important speech at the conference celebrating the 40th anniversary of reform and opening up, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed that we should “promote the creative transformation and innovative development of fine traditional Chinese culture, carry forward revolutionary culture, develop advanced culture, and strive to create a Chinese culture to glorify times and the world” (Xi Jinping 2018b)^[2]. To let Chinese culture go abroad, foreign languages education plays an important role. As far as the instrumentality of English linguistics is concerned, college English teaching is characterized by strong language application and skill, which should be brought into full play. It is necessary to put the training of language application skills in an important position and gradually improve college students’ comprehensive language skills in cross-cultural communication.

2.2 Ideological and political nature of college English course

Language is the carrier of culture, and culture is the soul of a country and a nation. The teaching of language and culture is the most natural and close connection between college English curriculum and “ideology and politics of curriculum”. One of the objectives of college English course is to cultivate students’ intercultural communication competence, which is the two-way communication between target language culture and local culture, namely Chinese culture. At the conference celebrating the 95th anniversary of the Founding of the Chinese Communist Party, General Secretary Xi Jinping stated in clear terms, ‘To stay true to our original intention and keep going forward, we need to have confidence in the path, theory, system and culture in building socialism with Chinese characteristics. And cultural confidence is more fundamental, broader, deeper confidence.’^[3] How to understand the advanced science and technology and excellent culture of the West through English learning, and treat them objectively and dialectically, so as to spread excellent Chinese culture, tell Chinese stories well, spread Chinese voice well, and explain Chinese characteristics well, and to achieve cultural confidence, is very worthy of in-depth study and discussion. Therefore, college English teaching and “ideology and politics of curriculum” are completely consistent in their goals.

2.3 Cultural nature of college English course

The new arts have important cultural attributes. The development of new liberal arts will cultivate talents of humanities and social sciences for the establishment of cultural confidence, while the value goal of English teaching is to pursue higher quality of humanities.

In terms of the humanistic quality of English language teaching, the fundamental goal of college English teaching is to cultivate and improve students’ necessary humanistic quality and cross-cultural communication ability, so as to adapt to the humanistic quality requirements of innovative talents in the era of cross-cultural communication. The background of the globalization of cross-cultural communication determines that the college English teaching content must find a new balance between “humanistic quality” and “skill training”. In the context of globalization, the talents with all-round development of global cross-cultural communication are needed.

Secondly, from the perspective of the humanistic value goal of college English teaching, the humanistic value goal of college English teaching lies in striving to make college students become talents with comprehensive application skills of English and high quality people of all-round development. “College English education, like any language teaching, has language, literature and culture as its connotation. These three elements embody their professional characteristics and determine the unity of opposites between the instrumental and humanistic nature of college English education and teaching.”^[4]

Thirdly, the excavation of humanistic connotation in college English teaching fully embodies the spirit of cultural consciousness and cultural confidence in the sixth Plenary Session of the 17th CPC Central Committee, which contains the important content of exploring humanistic connotation in college English teaching. That is, college English teaching should consciously and confidently deepen their understanding of and respect for the language, culture, history and connotation of different ethnic groups, reflect The times of English cultural teaching, and grasp the laws of English cultural teaching.

3. Conclusion

From what has been analyzed above, it's not hard to see that college English teaching needs to be given the significance of the current times. As a humanities course, college English teaching must be incorporated with the spread and expansion of excellent Chinese traditional culture. With the three attributes of college English course, the course contributes to improving college students' English learning level and cross-cultural communication ability, deepening the students' recognition for traditional culture, helping build culture confidence, so as to raise the soft power of national culture from the whole body.

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