

Assessment of Ideological and Political Education in College English Courses from the Perspective of Confucian Educational Thought

Lili Zhang

School of Languages and Media, Anhui University of Finance & Economics, Bengbu, 233000, China

Abstract

Based on text interpretation of ancient Chinese classics of Higher Education, The Doctrine of the Mean, Confucian Analects, Xunzi Commentaries, and Mencius Translation, this study probes into Confucian Educational Thought in those books, which are summarized as "aspiration and devotion to morality", "paying equal attention to both learning and thinking", and "unity of inner knowledge and action". Drawing on this, the local Chinese assessment paradigm of ideological and political education in college English is designed, which characterizes in autonomy, differentiation in assessment, and higher order, so as to ensure "effectiveness" of ideological and political education in college English.

Keywords

Confucian educational thought; College English; Assessment; Ideological and political education.

1. Introduction

In May 2020, Chinese Ministry of Education issued and implemented the "Guidelines for Ideological and Political Construction of Curriculum in Colleges and Universities". In June of the same year, Chinese Ministry of Education organized an online conference to promote the ideological and political education in colleges and universities and schedule the "Guidelines" for implementation, the issue of the effectiveness of ideological and political education in colleges and universities has been put on an important agenda. Since assessment is an indispensable part in the ideological and political education of the courses in colleges and universities, and its fundamental purpose is to promote the development of university students' development in life, the assessment of the ideological and political education in college English courses should be oriented to "returning to life, facing life, and cherishing life", which reflects value orientation of the ideological and political education in college English courses.

Due to the fact that it has only been a few years for the implementation of the curriculum ideology and politics in Chinese colleges and universities, there are scarce literature on assessment of the ideological and political education in college English course. In addition, there are prominent problems, such as "insufficient theoretical preparation", "unclear understanding of value", and "improper grasp of the essence" in the implementation process of assessment of the ideological and political education in college English course. The above problems result in "lack" of overall planning, the "misunderstanding" of exploration and practice, and the "weaknesses" of teaching competence. It has been a pressing task to find an appropriate assessment approach to solving the above-mentioned problems in ideological and political education of college English.

In China's local context, Chinese Confucian educational thought contains rich and profound teaching assessment expositions, which to a large extent gives birth to the rational tradition of

Chinese ideological and political education assessment consciousness. The elaboration of Confucian educational thought is sure to provide some enlightenment on understanding and exploring the assessment purpose and implementation strategy of the ideological and political education in college English course.

2. Confucian Educational Thought

Confucian educational thought is centered on moral education, and in Confucius's view, only when people "Set heart on the truth" can they "seek relaxation and enjoyment in the six arts", believing that the process of teaching and learning is the integration process of mastering knowledge and perfecting personality. In addition, Confucius advocated inspiring people's inner self-consciousness and moral cultivation.

Confucius said, "The superior man has nine things which are subjects with him of thoughtful consideration.In regard to his countenance, he is anxious that it should be benign. In regard to his demeanor, he is anxious that it should be respectful. In regard to his speech, he is anxious that it should be sincere. In regard to his doing of business, he is anxious that it should be reverently careful." "When we see a man of virtue and talent, we should think of equaling them; when we see a man of a contrary character, we should turn inwards and examine ourselves". Its salient feature is to educate people on how to "behave". Under the influence of Confucius's educational ideology of attaching importance to moral education, Confucianism established an education system centered on moral education.

2.1. Aspiration and Devotion to Morality

Confucius believed that the "will" has great significance for people's practice, and he proposed "Stick to the truth you believe, broaden your knowledge about it, and be ready to die for its realization", which shows that the will and belief play an important and indispensable role in the formation of behavior. It is based on this understanding that Confucius put forward the concept of "will" be related to "aspiration", "faith", and "perseverance", emphasizing "aspiration to learning", "aspiration to morality", and "firm belief" and "perseverance" for morality, believing that only with a firm "will" can people achieve lofty behavior.

Mencius advocated "holding the will" and "fostering the moral character", together with "will, the steering of moral character; moral character, the power of a person". These beliefs reflect that in Mencius's system of thought, will is the most important spiritual cultivation of a person, which helps people to learn knowledge, while behavior is the external manifestation of will and knowledge, and the firmness of the will can regulate people's behavior, and the norm of behavior can also make people's will be further sublimated. Correspondingly, when assessing a person's learning, it is also necessary to focus on whether his behavior can reflect the virtues he has learned, so as to be able to make an accurate judgment on learning and moral cultivation.

Like Confucius and Mencius, Xunzi also attached great importance to the importance of the will in the formation of behavior, and he believed that it is necessary to "cultivate the will" in order to "act correctly". He believed that with a good moral will, man could not be burdened by worldly material desires, maintain his own personality discipline, and only a firm will could break through all obstacles and interferences and realize moral behavior.

2.2. Paying Equal Attention to both Learning and Thinking

In the Analects, it is said: "To learn without thinking is to be reckless, and to think without learning is to perish." "Thinking and learning are interdependent, and the two complement each other." "Paying equal attention to learning and thinking" is the traditional Confucian educational principle and method, which believes that learning is the condition and basis for a person to master knowledge and carry out self-cultivation. But the learning process is not only

a simple process of acceptance or indoctrination, this process should be a process of positive thinking.

Mencius's succession gave full play to the ideas of Confucius. Mencius said: "The function of the heart is to think, to think can be obtained, and it cannot be obtained without thinking". Therefore, only by "thinking" can people "learn the new from the past" and gradually understand the righteousness; "without thinking", people have no understanding, and it is difficult to understand morality after all. Therefore, it is said: "To learn without thinking is to be reckless."

"Reflection and trying to find fault in oneself" he advocated is the specific application of "thinking". There is also a famous saying in Encouraging Learning, "I once tried spending the whole day in thought, but I found it of less value than a moment of study."

This is exactly what Confucius said. In The Doctrine of the Mean, it goes like this, "Erudition, interrogation, discernment, and perseverance." Among them, "interrogation, contemplation, and discernment" is the process of "thinking". Those who are good at "thinking" begin by interrogating the truth, then carefully contemplating on their reasoning, and finally discerning their righteousness.

Confucianism believes that the integration of learning and thinking is an important way to internalize knowledge, and it is also a method to make learning more effective. Learning and thinking cannot be separated. During ideological and political education, college English teachers should not only encourage students to strive to accumulate language knowledge, but also guide students to think positively, cultivate thinking ability, ask more whys about the language and culture they have learned, and find out the facts and the reasons for the formation of this fact in the fusion and collision of Chinese and Western cultures, not only to know what it is, but also to know why it is so.

2.3. Unity of Inner Knowledge and Action

The principle of unifying knowledge and action is a combination of systematic theoretical education and practical practice in the process of Confucian moral education, and the combination of improving ideological understanding and cultivating behavioral habits. Confucius asked his disciples to be "slow of speech but quick in action", believing that it is shameful for those whose "words speak louder than actions". Different schools of Confucianism generally believe that in order to achieve the standard of goodness, people's knowledge and action must be unified, and the unity of knowledge and action is the foundation of human learning.

Confucius believed that people have three ways of learning, that is, "born to know, know through learning, and learn because of confusion" and advocated that "a gentleman would rather be quick in action than talk a lot", which actually advocates importance of action.

Zi Si quotes Confucius as saying on "knowing and acting": "Those who are eager to learn are close to wisdom, those who strive to do good are close to benevolence, and those who know shame are close to courage. Those who know these three know how to improve their own moral cultivation", which takes the issue of knowledge and action as the basis for self-cultivation and is an evident embodiment of the "unity of inner knowledge and action".

The curriculum assessment philosophy of "unity of inner knowledge and action" has always been advocated by Confucian scholars, who believe that education happens from the inside and can be found from the outside, with special emphasis on the unity of cognition and practice. The philosophy of unity of inner knowledge and action is constructed accordingly. Based on this, learners' cultivation is mainly reflected by actions, and only by practicing in accordance with moral norms can they continuously improve their self-cultivation. The best way to test a person's morality is not only to "listen to his words", but also to "observe his actions". The "unity of inner knowledge and action" has thus become the assessment concept of the Confucian

curriculum, and it has also become the most important indicator for Confucians to assess the learning results of learners or the cultivation results of moral cultivators. Exploring the curriculum assessment concept of unifying knowledge and action in Confucian curriculum philosophy can provide useful reference for promoting and improving the ideological and political assessment of college English courses in higher institutions.

3. Application of Confucian Educational Thought in Assessment of Ideological and Political Education in College English Courses

Confucian curriculum assessment philosophy carries profound people-oriented humanistic sentiment. Drawing on this, the ideological and political education assessment of college English should be constructed with an assessment orientation based on promoting learners' life-long development. This expands the function and value of curriculum assessment in a certain sense, aims to care for the development of students' lives, take students as the agent, and do everything for the development of students, reflecting the autonomy, openness, generativity, infinite possibilities and transcendence of students' life development.

3.1. Autonomy in Assessment

In order to establish the kind of ideological and political assessment in college English courses that promote development in life, autonomy of assessment should be prioritized. Life is an active existence, with the initiative and self-organization of development. Assessment of ideological and political education is directly directed at the development of students themselves, which pursues full development of each student from the original level, paying attention to cultivation and development of students' personality, potential, innovative spirit and practical ability. Therefore, from the perspective of life, autonomy of curriculum assessment is mainly embodied in respecting the subjectivity of students, committing to understanding of the evaluated rather than control of the evaluated, so that students can fully understand themselves through and self-assessment and assessment from others. Consequently, students can take the initiative to self-feedback, self-regulation, self-education, continuously enhance self-assessment awareness and self-assessment skills, and have deep understanding of the significance of self-existence and self-worth realization in self-assessment. By doing so, independent development can be achieved and assessment can be realized as a process full of life care, compassion and understanding.

3.2. Differentiation in Assessment

Confucius was the first educator in China's history to advocate teaching according to one's aptitude. The Confucian school of differentiated teaching based on learners' aptitude means that teachers should adopt different teaching methods according to the individual characteristics and individual differences of students, and endeavors to solve the contradiction between unified requirements and individual differences in teaching. The prerequisite for teaching according to aptitude is to recognize the individual differences between students and to understand the characteristics of students.

Therefore, the ideological and political assessment of college English should regard students as individuals with differences in cognition, emotion, dignity and unlimited development potential, pay attention to the growth process of students, and care for student innermost world. From the perspective of transcendence of the possibility of life, the transcendence of curriculum assessment mainly refers to the possibility of student development based on the current level of students, and possibility of students' future development, establish developmental assessment objectives, and take into account of students' learning and development to realize the role of formative assessment. At the same time, it should also be noted that there are differences in individuals. Students have different personalities and traits, so assessment

should also take into account of the differences of student development, provide specific and targeted feedback for different students and promote their continuous development.

3.3. Higher Order of Assessment

In order to promote assessment of ideological and political education in college English course and realize development of students' higher-order thinking, teachers should pay attention to the process of students' thinking, speculation and expression, focus on students' ability to raise questions and solve problems, and guide students to conduct critical inquiry and seek solutions to solve problems consciously.

Suggestions are as follows: First, define the characteristics and performance of high-order thinking in college English classes, and narrow down to the key elements of higher-order thinking, which can reflect the characteristics, key abilities and qualities of high-order thinking. Second, the outlined key characteristics should be set as the criteria through the whole learning process. Then, design performance assessment tasks that can elicit students' higher-order learning. Specifically, the tasks should have clear assessment goals, situations/contexts, outcomes and scaffolding. The key to the design of each element is to embedding high-order learning in it, so as to drive high-order learning activities effectively. In addition, the assessment framework should be established according to the higher-order thinking performance listed in its performance goals. Key indicators and assessment tasks of higher-order thinking should be specified accordingly.

4. Conclusion

At present, morality cultivation is placed in a more and more important position by institutions of higher learning. In addition, university students have increasingly diversified values and more choices in life and career. The present social context of China and the spiritual context of students make it a demanding task for college English teachers to explore innovative ways of assessment in ideological and political education in college English course. With enlightenment from Confucian educational thought, a diversified and student-involved assessment mechanism is constructed in this study. Hopefully, it will work in motivating students' desire for learning, enhancing learning confidence, obtaining learning satisfaction, promoting the formation of their sound personality, and then achieving the goal of ideological and political education, so as to ensure "effectiveness" of ideological and political education in college English course.

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