

Ideological and Political Teaching Design and Practice in TED Talks New Experiencing English Course —from the Perspective of PBL (Project-based learning)

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Abstract

TED Talks New Experiencing English (Viewing, Listening & Speaking) is a course which is characterized by popularity, diversity and originality of Ted Talks. How to exert its greatest value of moral education? Teachers should learn to design the course with ideological and political elements. The teaching design can combine PBL (Project-based learning) to realize. PBL model focuses on developing students' English output ability. These teaching practices are beneficial to improve students' moral education level and their ability for practical application.

Keywords: TED Talks New Experiencing English Course; Project-based learning; ideological and political teaching design, practice.

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INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of the times, the achievements of information technology revolution emerge. Meanwhile with the application of multimedia technology and mobile technology in the field of education, MOOC, micro class, flipped classroom and other new teaching models are constantly entering the College English classroom teaching. Contemporary college students are mainly "post-90s" and "post-00s". They are active in thinking, broad-minded, willing to explore new knowledge and easy to accept new things. This new development and new situation also put forward higher requirements for College English teaching. Therefore, English classroom teaching must conform to the development of the times and keep pace with the times.

Chinese chairman Xi Jinping put forward the concept of ideological and political education for the first time at the National Conference on ideological and political work in 2016 [4]. It emphasized the necessity and urgency of ideological and political work in universities. It is required that teaching should focus on educating students to strengthen the guidance of students' values, thinking and cultural views.

As a required course, College English not only enables students to master professional knowledge, but

also establishes cross-cultural thinking. In this multicultural context, students are vulnerable to be influenced by Western harmful ideas. They may produce moral confusion, make wrong judgment, and distort their value, which will affect their learning and growth. In the process of learning for application, it is necessary for teachers to guide the correct value orientation to strengthen students' patriotic spirit and national consciousness.

Introduction about TED Talks New Experiencing English (Viewing, Listening & Speaking)

Main teaching goal

TED is the abbreviation of Technology, Entertainment and Design. With the characteristics of diversity, novelty and education, it is suitable for the selection needs of College Students' English audio-visual learning according to the curriculum reform standards in the new era, and can add new impetus to the teaching of College English audio-visual course with its own open concept, the idea of keeping pace with the times and innovative and critical thinking ability.

The main goal of this course is to develop students' listening and speaking ability, language application and thought expression. The course also aims to help students improve other skills needed in the information age, including communication, critical

thinking, creativity & innovation and collaboration, which are regarded as the "21st century skills" advocated by the international education community.

Content arrangement

Each unit consists of four parts

Part 1 introduces the theme and speakers of the Ted speech in the unit, helps students preview some key words involved in the speech, and then introduces the relevant listening skills.

Part 2 presents the Ted speech in sections through a series of activities to help students understand the content of the speech from part to whole, and further consolidate relevant language knowledge and listening skills. Then through the interaction with other students, teachers can guide students to think deeply about the topic of Ted speech, and promote the cultivation of students' critical thinking ability. Next, it introduces the presentation skills involved in the related Ted speech, and conducts speech practice.

In Part 3, students first read an article related to the topic of Ted speech and learn a series of oral and vocabulary exercises based on the reading article, and then combine with the "core skills of the 21st century".

Part 4 is unit review and comprehensive exercise. This part focuses on a series of vocabulary knowledge and listening and speaking skills training, and then around the theme of this unit, language knowledge and skills, teachers ask students to design a scene or task that they will encounter in learning, daily life or future work. In the process of completing the task, students can use their knowledge and skills to complete the corresponding task or solve a practical problem, so as to effectively improve their English application ability.

Research status of PBL (Project-based Learning) teaching mode

PBL teaching mode is based on the theory of constructivism learning and social culture interaction [1]. It is found that the research and application of PBL in the West can be dated back to the 1990s, and now it is widely used in Europe and North America. The research on PBL in China started late. At present, most domestic articles on PBL focus on basic concepts, characteristics, elements and implementation, such as comprehensive research on PBL in college English and other teaching modes (blended teaching, flipped teaching, etc.) [2]; empirical research on PBL and different English courses teaching [1, 3]. These papers show that the introduction of PBL teaching mode in College English teaching can play a role in promoting the main role of students and guiding the cultivation of students' ability.

The research group found that PBL teaching mode bears the following feature "teacher-oriented, students-centered, project-driven, and ability-

cultivated". The outstanding characteristics of PBL can effectively solve the problems in the ideological and political construction of College English course: its practicability and reality are in perfect agreement with the educational goal of ideological and political education; its student-centered project design, team cooperation and other characteristics can well implement the ideological and political elements in practice; its standards and evaluation system can measure and test students' education effectiveness and so on. As a result, the combination of PBL and College English curriculum will greatly promote the ideological and political construction and put it into practice.

Therefore, PBL is proposed to apply to the College English teaching process. Through the organic integration of ideological and political education and project, the teaching mode can effectively solve many problems in current ideological and political curriculum, and carry out the corresponding ideological and political construction

Unit ideological and political teaching design

According to the main objectives of the course and the arrangement of teaching tasks in the fall semester, the teaching and research group selects five units as teaching contents. The core ideas embodied in the five units can be expressed in 4C: Compassion, Communication, Creativity, and Common wellbeing. These elements are included in the ideological and political teaching content and completed through classroom teaching and group activities.

The keynote speech of Unit 1 Working Life is "a life lesson from a volunteer firefighter" by Mark Bezos, describing his unexpected heroic deeds and one thing he learned from it, that is, "not every day is going to offer us a chance to save someone's life, but every day offers us an opportunity to affect one." (Selected from the speech) The story reflects the idea of compassion. In the design of classroom activities, students can tell about China's behavior, such as the Chinese government's "People First" and "Life First" principles in the fight against the new epidemic, and students can also be asked to share small things they did for others during the anti-epidemic period. In the practice after class, students can imitate to recite the first English inspirational speech "We Are All Fighters" in China. Through the design of activities in and after class, the individual elements of socialist core values "patriotism, dedication, honesty and friendliness" are skillfully integrated into the teaching.

The keynote speech in Unit 6 Communication is "Talk Nerdy to Me" by Melissa Marshall. She shared the methods on how to present advanced technology to the public in simple way. These methods include connecting the content with the audience, using less professional terms, and making it simpler. By mastering these methods, people can effectively communicate

their professional knowledge with the audience, and the audience can easily understand it. In this way, teachers can help students use the methods recommended in the speech to tell things with Chinese characteristics, such as traditional Chinese medicine, Chinese scenic spots, Chinese embroidery, etc., so as to spread Chinese excellent traditional culture and learn to tell Chinese stories in English.

The keynote speech of Unit 8 *Seeing the Future* is Sanjay Dastoor's "a skateboard, with a boost". He introduced a new type of portable and rechargeable skateboard. Through his speech and live demonstration in the video, he inspired the students' innovation in science and technology. Teachers can ask students to watch the advertisements of several Huawei's latest products, and enable students to express how to describe high-tech inventions in English. Students can fully feel the spirit of the times with reform and innovation as the core.

The keynote speech of Unit 12 *Well Being* is "How to succeed? Get more sleep" by Arianna Huffington. This unit focuses on healthy living. The output task is designed to allow students to conduct group interviews on "The Life You Yearn For". Just as General secretary Xi Jinping said, "our people love life and look forward to better education, more stable work, more satisfied income, more reliable social security, higher level of medical and health services, more comfortable living conditions, and a more beautiful environment. We look forward to working better and living better. The people's aspiration for a better life is our goal." The design accords with the national spirit with patriotism as the core, that is, the spirit of creation, the spirit of struggle, the spirit of unity and the spirit of dream.

The keynote speech of Unit 10 *The Environment* is "How can we eat our landscape?" by Pam War Hurst. This unit contains the ideological dimensions of the first four units, so it is taken as the final speech of the semester. The output task of the design is to put forward comprehensive suggestions on a certain problem.

To sum up, in the ideological and political design of the course, PBL (project-based learning) is closely combined with the Ted unit theme.

Teaching practice in class

TED Talks New Experiencing English Course is a compulsory course for freshmen in the second semester in North China Electric Power University. The class hour is 2 hours, and the class size is about 30-60 students.

The cooperative learning group is established according to the students' English foundation and output ability. 3-4 students form a study group. After

the project is determined, the division of work will be assigned by the group leader: interview, online-survey, PPT presentation and report writing. In order to ensure the fairness and effectiveness of classroom teaching, students' responsibilities and division of work should be exchanged in future projects.

Take Unit 1 *Working Life*—"a life lesson from a volunteer firefighter" as one example. Students are given one project entitled "Share small things you did for others during the anti-epidemic period". Students can combine the real interview and online survey. They need design the interview or survey questions in advance. For example: "When did you show your kindness to others? Could you describe it in detail? What can you learn from your experience? How do you comment on Chinese government's action towards epidemic?" Students group chooses a member to report in class what they have investigated. The report should include data analysis of online survey and real interview. In class, each group will pick out one member to be the judge. After each team's report, the judge board will write down their comments and give a mark to the group performance. The teacher will give a general feedback at the end of the class. The students' group should revise their work according to the feedback and hand in the final work before deadline. Students can understand deeply about the notion embodied in the Ted speech "not every day is going to offer us a chance to save someone's life, but every day offers us an opportunity to affect one," which echoes with Chinese saying "Never fail to do anything good which you deem as petty; never dare to do anything evil which you consider as trivial." (quoted from *Records of the Three Kingdoms* written by Chen Shou of Xijin Dynasty).

These teaching practices help to improve the classroom teaching effect and learning efficiency, and improve students' English output ability and practical application ability.

Evaluation & Conclusion

This paper introduces the main objectives, content arrangement and unit ideological and political teaching design and practice of TED Talks New Experiencing English (Viewing, Listening & Speaking). Ideological and political teaching design should first create the system framework of ideological and political course, and then strengthen the knowledge reserve and ideological and political education ability of College English teachers through individual learning and collective training, so as to change teaching methods, innovate teaching design, and gradually explore the main ways and means of ideological and political construction of College English Curriculum in teaching practice. The combination of PBL (project-based learning) and Ted into English teaching mode conforms to the cognitive characteristics of contemporary college students. It can stimulate students' interest in English learning, feel the connotation of English culture and the

charm of speech, and meet the objective requirements of the development of the times.

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