

A Study on the Application of “Telling China’s Stories Well” to Ideological and Political Education in College English Courses

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Abstract: *In the new era of deepening international exchange and cooperation, “Tell China’s stories well” is essential for enhancing the cultural soft power of the country and spreading Chinese culture to the world. How to implement “telling China’s stories well” is a mission for the foreign language education. As carrying out the basic task of fostering virtue through education is the mission of higher education, “telling China’s stories well” is also a good path for ideological and political education. This paper mainly explores the application of “telling China’s stories well” to ideological and political education in college English courses. It analyzes the significance of this application and discusses the practical teaching process and strategy. Based on the practical teaching, interview and questionnaire survey, it shows that students have high evaluation on this teaching strategy. It is suggested that the application of “telling China’s stories well” to ideological and political education in college English courses can be feasible and effective. The comprehensive abilities of students are been improved, whether their English language proficiency, morality, or practical abilities.*

Keywords: “Telling China’s stories well”, Ideological and political education, College English.

1. Introduction

In 2020, China’s Ministry of Education issued *the Guideline of the Construction of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities* to comprehensively promote the ideological and political education of all the courses in colleges and universities. Comprehensively promoting ideological and political construction of the curriculum is a strategic measure to carry out the basic task of fostering virtue through education. The ideological and political construction of the curriculum is an important task to comprehensively improve the quality of personnel. Therefore, it is quite necessary and essential to explore ideological and political education in college English courses.

What’s more, *the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China* stated that we should “speed up the construction of a Chinese discourse system and narrative framework, telling China’s stories well, spread Chinese voices, and show a credible, lovely and respectable image of China.” “Telling China’s stories well” is of great significance in the new era. It not only meets the requirements of the time, but also serves as a good approach for ideological and political education in college English courses. College English teaching should cultivate students to tell China’s stories well in a cross-cultural way and help the international dissemination of Chinese culture. Therefore, it is worthwhile to explore the application of “telling China’s stories well” to ideological and political education in college English courses.

2. Literature Review

Currently, scholars explore the research on the ideological and political education of college English curriculum under the background of “telling China’s stories well” from multiple perspectives, mainly including three aspects: educational strategies, practical paths and empirical research.

Regarding the educational strategies on the ideological and political education of college English curriculum from the perspective of “telling China’s stories well”, scholars have proposed specific methods from different dimensions. Xue Liping, Cong Haiyan, and Xu Lili (2022) discussed the educational strategies of integrating “telling China’s stories well” into the ideological and political education of college English curriculum from four aspects: the construction of teaching staff, the development of ideological and political resources, the establishment of teaching models, and the improvement of evaluation systems. Liu Yueyang (2025) also explored these four aspects and expounded on the principles of implementing “telling China’s stories well” in college English teaching.

For the research on practical paths of the ideological and political education from the perspective of “telling China’s stories well”, the exploration centered on “cross-cultural perspective” and “teaching reform”. From the cross-cultural perspective, Yue Hao and Zhuang Enping (2022) explained the connotation of “telling China’s stories well”, proposing that telling China’s stories well should start from five dimensions — “why to tell”, “what to tell”, “who tells”, “to whom to tell”, and “how to tell” — and took the coursebook *Intercultural Reading* as an example to explore the practical path of the ideological and political education from two important teaching issues: “what to teach” and “how to teach”. Li Yuxia (2023) analyzed the three dimensions of college students telling China’s stories well, and then discussed the practical path of telling China’s stories well through cross-cultural methods from the perspectives of clarifying teaching content, reasonably selecting teaching methods, enhancing students’ cross-cultural communication competence, and integrating national culture. From the perspective of teaching reform, Tian Yuan and Chen He (2022) proposed integrating the ideological and political elements into English teaching to improve the comprehensiveness of knowledge structure, innovating teaching methods and models, and innovating teaching content by connecting with current political news, so as to enhance the teaching effect of

ideological and political education in English curriculum. He Yanhong (2023) discussed strengthening theoretical learning to improve teachers' teaching competence, exploring ideological and political elements in teaching materials in combination with teaching content to determine story themes, and exploring the ideological and political teaching model according to the story themes.

Some scholars have also conducted empirical research on the ideological and political education in college English curriculum under the background of "telling China's stories well", and verified the feasibility and effectiveness of relevant teaching models through case analysis and teaching experiments. Based on the empirical research, Wu Wei (2021) proposed that teachers need to grasp three key points: exploring the ideological and political elements of "telling China's stories well" in combination with textbook content, adopting the discussion to stimulate students' learning enthusiasm and activate their thinking, and using the situational teaching method to enable students to apply what they have learned and tell China's stories well in English. Wang Ying and Mei Jie (2024) explored the effective integration methods by means of exploring ideological and political materials, innovating teaching methods, and emphasizing practical teaching. Taking "Zheng He's Voyages to the Western Seas" as a specific case, Yan Tianqin and Liu Sailian (2024) discussed the specific implementation case of integrating "telling China's stories well" in ideological and political education from three aspects of teaching objectives, curriculum design, and teaching feedback and reflection.

3. Significance of "Telling China's Stories Well" in Ideological and Political Education of College English Teaching

Firstly, "telling China's stories well" is the calling for the new era in our country. *The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China* stated that we should "enhance the influence of Chinese civilization" and "speed up the construction of a Chinese discourse system and narrative framework, telling China's stories well, spread Chinese voices, and show a credible, lovely and respectable image of China." Telling China's stories well plays a critical role in spreading Chinese civilization to other countries and increasing its influence in the world.

Meanwhile, "telling China's stories well" is also a new mission for China's foreign language education in the new era. Carrying out the basic task of fostering virtue through education is the mission of higher education. Introducing typical Chinese stories in the class and helping students learn from Chinese stories are the important part for ideological and political education.

What's more, conducting corresponding activities of telling China's stories well in English can be considered as the acceleration for cultivating talents with sound moral grounding and intellectual ability. As for the college students in the new era, "telling China's stories well" can help them gain a lot of benefits. By learning from the inspiring stories, they can become well-motivated and set higher goals, ultimately making more achievements both in their academics and personal growth. Additionally, they can also improve the

comprehensive abilities including material processing, public speaking, computer operating, problem solving, English language proficiency, communication skills and so on.

Many textbooks have been revised to cater to the requirements of talents cultivation in the new era. As in *New Horizon College English Reading and Writing* (4th Edition), there is a passage about stories of China added in Section C of each unit. These stories are all related to the theme of each unit, which means that learning those stories is a part required for English courses. Therefore, foreign language teachers should take advantage of that part and carry out the activity of telling China's stories well in English.

4. A Practical Study on the Application of "Telling China's Stories Well" to Ideological and Political Education in College English Courses

4.1 Research Question

Question 1: Is it feasible and effective to apply "telling China's stories well" in ideological and political education in college English courses?

Question 2: How to apply "telling China's stories well" in ideological and political education in college English courses?

4.2 Participants

Participants of this study were the first-year non-English majors from 4 classes in Yangtze University College of Arts and Sciences. The students are learning different majors in the college including law majors, primary education majors, Chinese majors, mechanical engineering majors which covers different fields.

4.3 Research Design

The practical study was carried out in the first year. The teaching materials were mainly based on two textbooks which were *New Horizon College English Reading and Writing 1 & 2* (4th Edition). There is one passage added in Section C in the textbook, which introduces the stories of China closely related to the theme of each unit. After learning the passages in the textbook of each unit, there would be one task assigned to the students, which was telling China's stories well in English. The students were divided into different groups, usually in group of four. They worked together to complete the task and present their work in the class. The best group would be voted after the presentation and that story would be shared for all the students to learn. The performance of the students' group-work would be taken into account in the final evaluation of this course. At the end of the practical study, the interview and questionnaire survey were conducted to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of the research.

4.4 Content of China's Stories

The content of China's stories covers a lot of topics, and they are closely related to the topic in the textbook, as displayed in the following table 1 and table 2.

Table 1: Content of China's Stories in Each Unit of *New Horizon College English Reading and Writing 1* (4th Edition)

Unit	Title	Section C: Stories of China
Unit 1	Fresh start	The post-00s looking forward to a colorful life
Unit 2	Loving parents, loving child	Bonds of love
Unit 3	Heroes of our time	Cering Dandar, a grassroots hero
Unit 4	Social media matters	Chinese people love their social media apps
Unit 5	Friendship across border and gender	Picture this: Friends forever
Unit 6	Winning is not everything	Lessons China can teach us about fitness

Table 2: Content of China's Stories in Each Unit of *New Horizon College English Reading and Writing 2* (4th Edition)

Unit	Title	Section C: Stories of China
Unit 1	Language in mission	What challenges learners of Chinese
Unit 2	Exploring college majors	From a security guard to a university teacher
Unit 3	The young generation: making a difference	Aiming to bring agriculture online
Unit 4	Mission and exploration of our time	The May Fourth spirit alive in China
Unit 5	Striving for financial health	Project Hope
Unit 6	Less is more	A boom in Shopping malls

Take Unit 3 Book 1 *Heroes of our time* as an example, there are three passages in this unit, the title of Section A is *To feed the world*, this passage is a story of Yuan Longping, widely known as the Father of Hybrid Rice. The passage tells us about Yuan Longping's achievements and devotion to super rice breeding. It gives us a clear picture of how he dedicated himself to developing hybrid rice and what achievements he made in feeding the world. While learning the text, the teacher played some video clips about Yuan Longping and his devotion to help the students better understand his story, and conducted the activity of telling the story of Yuan Longping according to the students' understanding to consolidate what they had learned. The second passage is *Heroes among us*, there are some inspiring stories of heroes mentioned in the text, some are ordinary people, but they are still regarded as heroes because ordinary people can do extraordinary things. Section C is a story about Cering Dandar, a grassroots hero, who helps collect the trash to protect the environment of Mount Qomolangma. After learning the stories of three passages, the group work task will be assigned to students, which is to tell a story of one hero in China. The heroes may be either famous people or ordinary people.

The content of stories is related to the theme of each unit, which can help the students gain a profound understanding of the theme. During the process of the task, some ideological and political elements are also involved, which is the important part of moral education in college English courses.

4.5 Approaches of "Telling China's Stories Well" in College English Teaching

The activities of telling China's stories well can be conducted in different forms to maintain the students' interests and enrich their experiences. During the practical teaching, four approaches are mainly applied, which are oral presentation, role play, interview and survey report. The approach applied should be suitable for the content of the story to a large extent.

1) Oral Presentation

As for the story telling, oral presentation is mainly applied. In the textbook, many stories are introducing many famous people, such as the heroes, mentioned in Unit 3 Book 1, who had made enormous contributions to China and the world, the patriots, mentioned in Unit 4 Book 2, who chose to come back to China and did pioneering work in many fields in China and helped China greatly narrow its gap with developed countries. The students can learn a lot from those heroes and patriots mentioned in the textbook. To help students learn better from their spirits, more examples need to be known and learned for the students, so the task of telling more similar stories of heroes and patriots is assigned, and the approach of oral presentation is the preferable for telling such stories.

2) Role play

To enrich the forms of this activity and attract students' interests, role play can be applied in some units. For example, Unit 2 Book 1 is about the parent-child relationship, the stories on the love between parents and children are stated in the textbook. There are also some daily conversations between parents and children. To help students get a direct and vivid experience of the parent-child relationship, role play is a good way. The scenario of daily conversations between the parents and children can be shown in the role play to evoke their thoughts on the parent-child relationship and they may make some efforts to improve the relationship with their parents.

3) Interview

What's more, interview can also be a good approach to directly interact with people and collect many people's opinions. As in Unit 1 Book 1, the passages are about the expectations and suggestions from the university president, parents, and the students themselves. Since students are not familiar with each other and they may worry about the college life, making an interview to collect opinions on how to live a successful college life can be a good approach. On the one hand, the students need to communicate with other people to know more about other classmates or teachers; on the other hand, they may learn from the suggestions of other students and teachers to make a clear goal for their college life.

4) Survey report

Survey report is also a practical approach for collecting information and reflection on certain topics. This approach is suitable for collecting opinions of large numbers of people. Unit 5 Book 2 is about the financial health, college students can be difficult to make sensible decisions on saving or spending with the society being full of tempting advertisements to persuade people to consume. To clearly understand the students' spending habits, the survey is quite suitable for finding out college students' spending habits. After finishing the survey, the groups need to give a report on the survey findings, analysis and give suggestions to students about how to make good use of their money and avoid financial trouble. Although this task is challenging, the students can learn a lot from it and their comprehensive abilities can be improved.

4.6 Results and Discussion

During the practical teaching, interview with the students about their feelings and gains from the activities of “telling China’s stories well” was conducted randomly. The students interviewed said that they had gained a lot from this activity. Not only did they learn some valuable spirits from the people mentioned in the story, but they also learned a lot in the whole process of the activity, from the material selection at the beginning to demonstration in class finally, such as the language proficiency, teamwork spirit, patience, tolerance, confidence and so on.

At the end of one-year practical teaching, the questionnaire was sent out to evaluate the effectiveness of this activity and the practical teaching. One survey was about how students perceived what they had gained from the series of activities “telling China’s stories well”. Among the 224 respondents, 113 respondents (50.45%) said they had gained a lot. 94 respondents (41.96%) considered they had relatively gained something. 17 respondents (7.59%) felt what they had gained was average. And none of the respondents felt they had gained nothing. This indicated that the activity as a whole had been widely recognized by the students and was of positive significance for the majority of students.

Another multiple-choice survey was about the useful aspects of the series of activities brought to the students. With 224 valid responses in total, “English knowledge application” accounted for 83.04% (186 respondents), “communication” took up 82.14% (184 respondents), “teamwork” accounted for 69.64% (156 respondents), “ideological improvement” took up 64.29% (144 respondents), and “office software application” took up 49.55% (111 respondents).

There was also a survey about the overall evaluation of moral education and the effect of talent cultivation in current college English courses. Among them, 131 respondents (58.48%) believed it was very good, believing that through moral education and the series of story telling activities in college English courses, they had greatly improved in their ideological understanding and values, and they also became more motivated in English learning. 82 respondents (36.61%) considered it “relatively good”, saying that it had a positive impact on their ideological concepts and promoted their English learning to a certain extent. 10 respondents (4.46%) rated it as “average”.

The above data suggests that it is feasible and effective to apply “telling China’s stories well” in the ideological and political education of college English courses. It not only improves students’ English language proficiency, but it also fosters their virtues, enhances their practical abilities, which are fundamental for their future growth. What’s more, there are many effective approaches of applying “telling China’s stories well”, they can be implemented in accordance with the unit theme to help students understand the ideological and political elements embodied in the text to a large extent.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the significance of “telling China’s stories well” in the ideological and political education of

college English courses from three aspects, which are for the calling for the new era in our country, a new mission for China’s foreign language education, and a task for the college students. It analyzed the practical study on the application of “telling China’s stories well” to ideological and political education in college English courses. The results of the study shows that it is feasible and effective to apply “telling China’s stories well” in the moral education of college English teaching, and there are many application approaches for carrying out the series of activities successfully.

However, there are some limitations in this study. There are only two ways applied in the practical study to evaluate the effectiveness, more methods needed to be used for measuring the effectiveness of the practical study. Moreover, more approaches needed to be explored and applied to enrich the series of “telling China’s stories well” activities. Therefore, further research on the application of “telling China’s stories well” to ideological and political education in college English courses can take the above two factors into consideration.

Acknowledgement

This paper is supported by the Project: Yangtze University College of Arts and Sciences Teaching Reform and Research Project 2024: An Innovative Study on the “Four-dimensional Integration” Teaching Mode of Ideological and Political Education in College English Courses (No.: WL202413).

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