Reflection on the Significance of the Integration of Humanistic Education into College English Teaching

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Abstract. Humanistic education means to impart knowledge of humanities to students, cultivate their humanistic feelings, attitudes and spirits, and enlighten them to understand the value of life and the true meaning of life. In order to meet the needs of the era of international knowledge economy in the twenty-first century, the cultivation of talents in higher education in China must strengthen the education of the knowledge of the humanities. Language is the carrier of literature and cultural knowledge. The imparting of humanistic knowledge and the cultivation of humanistic spirit in English teaching play a great role in developing students’ language skills, improving their cultural attainments, and broadening their thinking modes, thus to realize one of the colleges and universities’ teaching goals for cultivating high quality talents with comprehensive development. Furthermore, it makes great contributions to the cultivation of innovative talents in the new era and the continuous development and progress of the whole nation.

Introduction

Since the twenty-first century, the biggest challenge for higher education is how to cultivate talents with innovative spirit. Innovation is the soul of a nation and the motive force of a nation’s continuous development and progress. To create a good environment of humanistic education is the guarantee of cultivating the spirit of innovation. Humanistic education can not only improve the ability of human perception, but also enrich people’s image thinking. To cultivate talents in the era of international knowledge economy in the twenty-first century, it is necessary to strengthen the knowledge education in the humanities of higher education. Language is the carrier of literature and cultural knowledge, and it is the medium for people to understand the world. The Danish linguist Otto Jespersen points out that the essence of language is human activity, and it is also an activity to convey ideas. Learning a foreign language is to know, to understand, to experience and to absorb the culture of foreign country.[1] The main content of foreign language teaching is language knowledge, but language is not a pure word symbol, it is a part of the text, and it is the carrier of culture. To master a foreign language and to use a language cannot be separated from the way of thinking in it, so we should learn and grasp the cultural content of this language at the same time. In the course of foreign language teaching, we should pay more attention to the cultivation of cultural quality. It is one of the value goals of foreign language teaching to increase learners’ thinking angles, broaden their thinking space, improve their comprehensive and cultural competence, and cultivate high-quality talents. Foreign languages, like other courses in Colleges and universities, have their own specific educational goals. Foreign language is not only the content of teaching but also the tool of teaching. It has both the function of language teaching and the function of humanistic education. The aim of humanistic education in teaching means that foreign language teaching should move from the pure language knowledge teaching view to the big foreign language education view of inclusive language and humanistic education. It is not only to improve the language ability of students, more importantly, through teaching students to think more about their own social life, establish the correct basic quality of life and improve the ability to properly handle relations with
nature, society and others and the ability to cultivate noble ideological consciousness, ideal, personality, character, value concept and cultural attainment.

Significance of Integrating Humanistic Education into College English Teaching

**Dissemination of Humanistic Knowledge**

Humanistic knowledge is a human understanding of their own culture, is a field of Basic knowledge of the Humanities (mainly realm of spiritual life), such as historical knowledge, literary knowledge, political knowledge, legal knowledge, art knowledge, philosophical knowledge, religious knowledge, moral knowledge, and language knowledge. It is a knowledge and expression form of intelligence and culture formed and developed in the cognition and transformation of human in the world of cognition and handling. Humanistic knowledge is mainly evaluated by value standard, aesthetic standard and moral standard. It is mainly represented by literature, art, ethics and politics.

Foreign language is not only a language subject, but also carries rich human factors. Foreign language classroom is not only to impart foreign language knowledge, but also to spread a foreign culture, and spread a different kind of thinking. The foreign language and the cultural knowledge it carries have rich cultural connotation, which can affect the individual’s spiritual world. Foreign language teachers should exert their creativity in the teaching process, study deeper into the depth, breadth of the teaching materials and the ideological, emotional, artistic, emotional and other humanistic factors in the teaching materials, optimize the content of teaching, strengthen the explanation and imparting of cultural background, and actively integrate the humanistic knowledge into the classroom. Foreign language teaching should follow the rule of language teaching, pay attention to explaining the geography, history, development status, cultural tradition, customs and habits of foreign language countries, and incorporate ideological education into language teaching. Foreign language teachers should be able to excavate and integrate the content of humanistic and humanistic quality in foreign language teaching materials and infiltrate them into the teaching practice. According to the practice of different levels of students, the teaching emphasis and difficulties are rationally determined, subject knowledge and humanistic knowledge are selected, and the students are constantly nurtured by the students. At the same time, foreign language teachers should also pay attention to the social dynamics, contact the students’ life and ideological practice, and enhance the students’ humanistic quality. Teachers should combine teaching materials flexibly to infiltrate humanistic consciousness in any link of teaching, and take classroom teaching as a stage to cultivate students’ cross-cultural awareness and ability. At the same time, foreign language teachers should grasp the yardstick of humanistic infiltration, adhere to the practicality, and avoid being empty. Foreign language teachers should let students understand the different cultural backgrounds, respect cultural diversity, and cultivate students’ emotion attitude and values in the language learning.

The humanistic knowledge is integrated into the foreign language teaching, and it is also important to guide the college students to read some western literary history philosophic classics consciously. Philosophy can enrich people’s ideological soil, and can exercise people’s thinking ability. Western philosophy is very rich. It guides college students to read some western philosophy books. It enables students to achieve rational understanding from perceptual knowledge, from feeling to understanding. Different from the emphasis on ethics and morality in Chinese philosophy, western philosophy has always attached importance to knowledge argumentation. Seeking truth is the main goal of western philosophy, and in the pursuit of truth, Western philosophers attach great importance to logical argument. Studying these thoughts of Western philosophers can not only become keen and intellect, but also can temper the virtue, and guide college students to have a moral and humanistic care in their real life.

History takes the study of past society as its starting point and serves reality as its destination. Learning history can edify human sentiment and sublimate the spirit of people. The history of Western civilization is widely concerned with every aspect of Western civilization, from social structure, historical events to philosophical thinking, literature and art, and so on. From the ancient Greek
civilization—the foundation of Western civilization to modern culture in the internal conflict in Western Europe, culture, the culture, society and life are linked together to reproduce the historical moments of the development of the history of Western civilization and show the unique charm of Western civilization. It is necessary to guide students to understand the civilization history of some Western societies, not only to lead contemporary college students to have Chinese mood, but also to form a world vision.

The text education itself is a kind of aesthetic education and emotional education, which is the artistic expression of the individual in the history of literature. Although literary creation belongs to the writer’s individual activity, literary creation still has profound social significance. The classics of Western literature are gems in the history of world culture. Guiding students to read western masterpieces and read the classics of western culture can enrich the students’ humanistic quality, which makes them better meet the needs of the society in the future. Reading these literary works can not only help them understand the differences and similarities between different cultures, but also further arouse their deep thinking on human nature and values. Literature is not divided into different countries. By guiding college students to read and appreciate some western literary classics, they can feel foreign cultures and get the enjoyment of beauty, the joy of their hearts, and the edification of their sentiments and the purification of their souls.

Cultivation of humanistic spirit

Humanistic spirit is a kind of value intention that human beings take life, humanity and personality as its original intention. It is the process and realm of pursuing truth, goodness and beauty and realizing human dignity and value from human being. Humanistic spirit is a universal human self-concern. It is highly valued for all kinds of spiritual and cultural phenomena left over by human beings and the affirmation and shaping of an ideal personality of all-round development. “The humanistic spirit is the soul of culture, the soul of the intellectuals and the soul of the foreign language education. Whether we can cultivate all kinds of talents with humanistic spirit is the decisive criterion to measure the success or failure of the foreign language education.”[2] The humanistic spirit takes the subject of existence as the highest value and ultimate goal, giving human beings a high ideal and standard social behavior and norms. This in turn can be transformed into a powerful driving force and ideological weapon for human beings to recognize society and transform society, and point out the right path for the development of human society and the direction to benefit mankind. Foreign language education only for learning a language or neglecting the humanistic spirit must be innovated.

Chomsky, an educationist, has pointed out that language learning is essentially a kind of cultivation and growth from the inside to the outside. Foreign language teaching should not only enable students to understand and master the language knowledge and skills of foreign language well, but also form certain language proficiency. The cultivation of the spirit of the main body of the language learning itself is also the spiritual subject of the language learners. The cultivation of humanistic spirit in foreign language teaching is a very rich concept. It includes the inculcation of humanistic knowledge contained in teaching contents, as well as the cultivation of humanistic spirit in caring for people, respecting people and enhancing people in teaching. Therefore, foreign language plays a very important role in the cultivation of college students’ humanistic spirit.

The cultivation of humanistic spirit has put forward urgent demands on higher education. The cultivation of humanistic spirit in the process of foreign language teaching is an integral part of higher education and an important part of the reform of foreign language teaching. The reform of foreign language teaching must be adapted to the requirements of the diversified and individualized times of higher education, and embodies the development strategy of cultivating the humanistic spirit of higher education. The reform of foreign language teaching should bring the cultivation of humanistic spirit into the program of foreign language teaching, break the traditional concept of language, combine the content of teaching materials with the cultivation of humanistic spirit, improve the students’ humanistic quality and aesthetic ability, and pay attention to the cultivation of contemporary
college students with broad mind, rich knowledge, high moral and perfect personality. Foreign language teachers are not only the implementers of the cultivation of the humanistic spirit, but also the practitioners of the humanistic spirit. To improve the humanistic spirit of the foreign language teachers is to integrate the humanistic spirit into the foreign language teaching. Foreign language teachers should have rich humanistic knowledge, noble humanistic feelings, distinctive personality charisma, and inspire students’ motivation and interest in learning foreign languages, so that college students can receive edification of humanistic spirit.

Teaching is the process of emotional activities between teachers and students. The most important and valuable embodiment of teaching is the participation of students. Therefore, in foreign language teaching, we should pay more attention to the implementation of humanistic teaching mode. The whole teaching process should fully embody the edification of the students’ humanistic spirit, strengthen the learning of western humanistic knowledge, cultivate the students’ idea of self-realization, respect the dignity of the student, develop students’ personality, potential, creative consciousness and ability, and enable the students to become fully developed individuals of the need of society. There are many humanistic resources in foreign language teaching materials, which contain profound humanistic spirit, advocate the beauty of human nature and humanistic care. The teachers should study deeply into the humanistic spiritual resources in the foreign language teaching resources, actively guide the students, sublimate the ideological level of the students, get the students to be nurtured in the spirit, and promote the formation of students’ healthy and perfect personality.

Creation of Sound Personality

Personality generally refers to the unified body of the psychological characteristics of the social subjects. It is a relatively stable structural organization, and affects the internal and external psychological characteristics and behavior patterns of the subjects in different regions, environments and time. Personality education is to promote the promotion of individual human nature, the molding of ideal personality and the realization of value, that is, the education of learning to be a man. University education is the period of individual soul development. The current university education mostly puts professional teaching in the first place, but it is far from enough concern and devotion to the mental aspects of college students. To sum up: “Three much and three little”. Too much micro education and too little macro education. Too much skill and knowledge education and too little personality education. Too much education to teach doing things and too little education to teach being a decent person.[3] This phenomenon is very worth paying attention to. If higher education neglects the harmonious development of students’ mind, there will be no noble personality in the future society. Its ending will not benefit the society, nor will it benefit the individual. Therefore, colleges and universities should enhance their healthy personality education, make full use of foreign language teaching, increase students’ foreign language knowledge and cultural awareness, lead students to think deeply, and help students form better self-consciousness and perfect personality.

As established in the respective systems in different cultural backgrounds, western civilization purport in the pursuit of value and ethics orientation are different, so that real people with different personality characteristics. It is generally believed that the Chinese and Western personalities have their own advantages and disadvantages, and each has their own advantages and disadvantages. “China attaches importance to the whole, and the West attaches importance to the individual; China seeks identities, and the West seeks differences. China attaches great importance to stability, and the West likes to take risks.”[4] As a foreign cultural ideographic system, the characteristics of independence, equality, freedom and dignity in western personality are the spiritual wealth shared by all mankind, and the valuable resources of contemporary college students’ personality cultivation. Under the current educational situation, strengthening the training of above personality traits can make up for the deficiency of traditional Chinese personality in these areas, and is beneficial to social progress and personal development.
Conclusion

It is the actual requirement for every educator to train the students to become all-round development. Humanistic education with a wide range of humanistic knowledge and profound humanistic spirit can effectively promote the improvement of college students’ human nature, the shaping of ideal personality and the realization of personal and social values. The study of humanities knowledge should not only stay at the level of acquiring humanistic knowledge, but also enhance the spirit of humanism and improve students’ self-consciousness and humanity level. College English teaching should also achieve the educational goal of improving the basic quality of college students, cultivating people with all-round development through enriching the knowledge of humanities, nurturing the atmosphere of elegant culture and cultivating excellent traditional culture.

References


