
Research on the Construction Path of Three Classrooms Ideological and Political Education Systems for Foreign Language Majors in Higher Normal Universities from the Perspective of OBE

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Abstract: Taking the three classrooms of foreign language majors in higher normal universities as the research object, this paper elucidates the value expectations of ideological and political education across the three classrooms under multiple subjects stakeholders, including the government, society, and students from the perspective of OBE, analyzes the necessary forms of ideological and political education in the three classrooms, and proposes the construction path of the ideological and political education system in the three classrooms.

Keywords: OBE; Education system; Three classrooms; Path

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1. Introduction

The “Outline of the Plan for Building an Education Powerhouse (2024-2035)” issued in January 2025 pointed out that “the spirit of educators should be integrated into the entire process of teacher training and education, running through all links of classroom teaching, scientific research and social practice, building a favorable ecosystem for teacher development featuring daily infiltration, project empowerment and platform support”, which has pointed out the direction for talent cultivation in higher normal universities. Foreign language majors in higher normal universities combine the characteristics of both foreign languages and teacher education. They are an organic combination of higher education nurturing the present and basic education nurturing the future. They are of great significance in promoting the construction of an education power, enhancing China’s international communication and influence, and facilitating cultural exchanges and mutual learning between China and foreign countries.

2. Research Status and Existing Problems

2.1. Research Status

The outcome-based education (OBE for short) concept proposed by William^[1] in 1994 was introduced to China. Subsequently, many educators in China have explored its application in talent cultivation within higher education, and attempting to extend the OBE - an educational concept native to the engineering field - to the design and evaluation of the

second classroom in humanities, social sciences, economics, management and other majors^[2].

In terms of educational methods, the second classroom and the first classroom in China jointly form a complete overall framework for college education^[3]. Meanwhile, researchers closely integrate classroom teaching, the “second classroom” on campus and the “third classroom” in society to optimize the path of ideological and political education for students^[4]. However, there is no consensus in the academic circle on the definition of the “third classroom”, or it is believed that the third classroom refers to extracurricular social practice based on the objective world^[5-6]; Or consider the third classroom as a network new media platform based on cyberspace^[7]; Nevertheless, scholars generally agree that implementing third classroom education is essential for enhancing the higher education system, and the three classrooms have the same direction and commonality.

In terms of educational targets, foreign scholars believe that “Generation Z” (the youth group born between 1995 and 2009) is highly planned, independent, eager to prove themselves and in need of immediate feedback^[8]. He Shaohui^[9-10] further summarized the group characteristics of “Generation Z”.

In conclusion, the existing research literature on ideological and political education in the three classrooms mostly proposes designs from the perspective of the demands of the educational subjects, with few considering designs from the perspective of the demands of the educational objects, especially lacking consideration of the practical demands faced by the current Z-generation educational objects. In view of this, from the perspective of OBE, this paper proposes three paths for ideological and political education in the classroom: the first classroom based on classroom teaching, the second classroom based on campus activities, and the third classroom based on off-campus practice.

2.2. Existing problems

2.2.1. The implementation path lack clarity

The theoretical teaching content in the first classroom is not closely integrated with reality and fails to respond promptly to students’ development needs. The second classroom lacks systematic connection with the talent cultivation goals, and some activities are merely formalities. Scholars’ definition of the “third classroom” is still not clear enough, and at the same time, the role of the third classroom needs to be further strengthened.

2.2.2. The evaluation mechanism needs to be optimized

Contemporary young college students possess the universal characteristics of the “Generation Z” group, but researchers have not considered the impact of these universal characteristics on the educational effectiveness of the three classrooms. Furthermore, the existing literature lacks a systematic review of the ideological and political education goals of the three classrooms, nor has it proposed a relatively complete multi-evaluation system.

2.2.3. The educational systems are not well integrated

Although the educational goals of the three classrooms are the same and they play an important role in the ideological and political education of college students, due to the incomplete system, especially the need for further improvement in the construction of the second and third classroom systems, the mutual integration among the three classrooms is limited, making it difficult to achieve complementary advantages among the three classrooms and consolidate the synergy of education.

3. Elements and Current Situation of Ideological and Political Education in Three Classrooms of Foreign Language Majors in Higher Normal Universities

3.1. Elements of ideological and political education

3.1.1. In terms of cultural confidence and national security

A central goal is to develop students’ competence in analyzing linguistic contexts—political, economic, and cultural—

enabling them to become proficient narrators of China's stories and steadfast guardians of its national and discursive security. By integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into translation practice and cross-cultural communication courses, students' cultural identity can be enhanced.

3.1.2. In terms of ideological and political education in courses and professional teaching

A key task is to draw upon the ideological and political potential of teaching materials, including the moral values in classic literature and the national accomplishments showcased in contemporary political discourse. Through the "Three Minutes Before Class", we should share current political hotspots at home and abroad to guide students to cultivate a deep sense of patriotism and broaden their global horizons.

3.1.3. Practical education and social responsibility

To foster a sense of social responsibility and national service, students ought to participate in activities like rural revitalization, international exchanges, and grassroots teaching. This exposure encourages them to integrate their professional goals with the country's developmental needs, pursuing careers at the grassroots level or within the Belt and Road framework, which helps instill a profound sense of purpose in serving their homeland and communities.

3.1.4. Regarding teachers' ethics and conduct as well as the characteristics of normal education

Through courses such as educational psychology and educational practice, the concept of "a teacher should have high knowledge and a good character" is strengthened. While guiding students to enhance their professional skills, attention is paid to the cultivation of professional ethics, educational sentiments and the spirit of an educator among normal school students.

3.2. The Current Situation of Education and Nurturing

Foreign language majors in higher normal universities are exploring distinctive development paths for ideological and political education amid the tension between value guidance and cultural immersion. To properly handle the explicit and implicit relationship in ideological and political education, some institutions have established a two-classroom ideological and political education system of "ideological and political education and compulsory professional courses + extracurricular competitions", while others have explored and attempted a three-classroom ideological and political education system of "ideological and political education and compulsory professional courses + extracurricular competitions + social practice". It should be noted that the second classroom and the third classroom do not have fixed teaching locations, contents, objectives or syllabus, and they vary among different universities and departments.

4. Value Expectations for Ideological and Political Education in Three Classrooms of Foreign Language Majors in Higher Normal Universities

Education is a priority of national and Party strategy. Colleges and universities need to closely revolve around the fundamental task of fostering virtue and nurturing talent, and focus on cultivating socialist builders and successors who are well-rounded in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics and labor. This provides a fundamental guideline for the value expectations of talent cultivation in colleges and universities in the new era.

4.1. Government Perspective: Serving national strategies and strengthening ideological security

4.1.1. Serving the strategic demands of the country

Foreign language talents should possess the ability to serve the "Belt and Road Initiative" and the "going global" of Chinese culture, and become compound talents capable of shouldering the responsibility of national rejuvenation and good teachers of the new era.

4.1.2. Strengthening ideological security

As the forefront of cultural exchanges between China and the West, the foreign language discipline needs to guide students to correctly distinguish the differences between Western and socialist cultures with Chinese characteristics and resist the risk of cultural infiltration.

4.2. Social Perspective: Inheriting China's Fine traditional Culture and Undertaking Social Responsibilities

4.2.1. Promoting cross-cultural exchanges and the dissemination of Chinese culture

Compared with several decades ago, the current expectation is more about “accelerating the construction of a Chinese discourse and narrative system, telling China’s stories well, spreading China’s voice well, and presenting a trustworthy, lovable and respectable image of China.”

4.2.2. Serving the local social and economic development

Foreign language teacher training talents should be based on local demands and contribute to regional economic and educational development. For instance, some universities guide their graduates to participate in rural revitalization, the Western Plan, and serve grassroots basic education.

4.2.3. Building a community that assumes social responsibilities

Society expects normal universities to cultivate teachers with the spirit of educators through ideological and political education, thus forming a virtuous cycle of “education giving back to society”.

4.3. Student Perspective: Self-actualization and Value Recognition

Generation Z students favor highly interactive teaching methods. This generation is often defined by its quest for cultural confidence, social recognition, interest-based communities, personal identity, and the cultivation of practical and innovative capabilities. Some “Generation Z” are more in pursuit of future stability than the previous generation.

5. Construction Paths of Three Classroom Ideological and Political Education Systems for Foreign Language Majors in Higher Normal Universities from the Perspective of OBE

5.1. Clarifying the outcome-oriented approach and establishing a three-classroom ideological and political education goal system

Based on the underlying logic of OBE, which is “outcome-oriented and with the end in mind”, foreign language majors in higher normal universities need to design and precisely position the ideological and political education goals of the three classrooms in a stratified manner around the overall goal of cultivating new era foreign language teachers. At the same time, to ensure the measurability and evaluability of the educational goals, it is necessary to formulate specific and scientific observation indicators from dimensions such as knowledge acquisition, ability improvement, and value shaping. By regularly collecting big data for comparative analysis, a scientific basis can be provided for the continuous improvement of the educational system.

The first classroom emphasizes knowledge transmission while fostering the deep integration of disciplinary knowledge with ideological and political elements. It sets core goals such as the ability to spread Chinese culture in a foreign language and the formation of critical cross-cultural comparative thinking, helping students improve their language skills while establishing correct ideals, beliefs and values. The second classroom should adhere to the guidance of the Party’s innovative theories, take cultural infiltration and internalization of values as the core, and use various forms of campus activities as the carrier to cultivate students’ more firm faith in Marxism, belief in socialism with Chinese

characteristics, and confidence in realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, enhancing students' ability to practice the core socialist values and their willingness and practical ability to disseminate fine traditional Chinese culture. The third classroom should integrate the small ideological and political classes within the school with the large social practice classes, guide students to actively participate in off-campus practical activities with the characteristics of teacher education and foreign languages, and help students correctly understand the development trends of the world and China in a cross-cultural field, constantly strengthening their political discrimination and ideological determination.

5.2. Strengthening top-level design and innovating the implementation paths of ideological and political education in the three classrooms

5.2.1. Deepening the main channel of the first classroom and strengthening the high-quality construction of ideological and political education in courses

Based on the "National Standard" and the "Teacher Education Curriculum Standards (Trial)", by systematically sorting out the ideological and political education points in professional courses, developing a resource library for ideological and political education in foreign language courses, collecting teaching resources such as translation cases of red literature and analysis of international communication hotspots, an integrated curriculum system of "professional courses + ideological and political modules" is constructed. For instance, in the "Intensive Reading" course, classic texts related to cultural confidence and ideals and beliefs are selected to conduct comparative discussions between Chinese and foreign cultures. The "Teaching Materials and Methods" course integrates the topic of "Course-based Ideological and Political Teaching Design" to cultivate students' ability to incorporate ideological and political elements into the classroom. Meanwhile, by leveraging laboratory resources and applying virtual simulation technology, teaching scenarios such as ideological analysis in cross-cultural communication are created to enhance students' practical experience and improve their value judgment ability.

5.2.2. Innovating new platforms for the second classroom and creating a distinctive campus cultural education ecosystem

Led by brand activities, with teacher education as the base color and foreign languages as the feature, it is essential to infuse campus culture with exemplary traditional Chinese, revolutionary, and advanced socialist cultures to achieve pervasive value immersion and holistic student development. This can be achieved by organizing events like foreign language festivals, vocational skills competitions, and multilingual recitation contests of red classics. Through these platforms, students can interpret Chinese narratives, including classic stories and foundational texts like The Communist Manifesto, in multiple languages. Furthermore, they provide opportunities to articulate Chinese initiatives such as the "Global Civilization Initiative" and "A Community with a Shared Future for Mankind," and to share stories of intangible cultural heritage like Chinese martial arts and shadow puppetry. These efforts collectively foster a dynamic two-way exchange and mutual learning, thereby strengthening cultural confidence. At the same time, by leveraging student organizations and youth leagues, we will strengthen the construction of club bases, guide clubs to establish multilingual propaganda teams, new media studios, etc., open up special columns for cultural dissemination and mutual learning among civilizations, and encourage students to create multilingual posters, short videos, micro-films and other works in innovative forms, further enriching the new forms of characteristic campus cultural education.

5.2.3. Expanding the practical field of the third classroom and deepening the collaborative education mechanism between the school and the local area

It is essential to actively expand off-campus internship and practical platforms, strengthen cooperation with primary and secondary schools, communities and rural areas, foreign-related enterprises, and foreign affairs departments, and jointly build practice bases such as on-the-job teaching support, educational internships, professional internships, and holiday practices. Students should engage in practical projects such as volunteer services for major international events (e.g., the

World Games), publicity campaigns for rural revitalization, and domestic and overseas exchange programs. These projects serve as a deliberately designed “foreign language + ideological and political education” platform. Within these vibrant cross-cultural settings, students can enhance their professional competencies while consistently strengthening their cultural confidence and sense of responsibility.

5.3. Improving the guarantee mechanism to continuously optimize ideological and political education in the three classrooms

5.3.1. Building a diversified evaluation system and strengthen dynamic feedback

An evaluation system should be established, incorporating feedback from students, universities, internship providers, employers, and government bodies, namely “on-campus evaluation + off-campus evaluation”. The forms of evaluation include process-based evaluations such as regular assignments, quizzes, and growth profiles, as well as outcome-based evaluations like final exams, teacher qualification exams, and professional level 4 and 8 exams. The evaluation covers the evaluation system of the three classrooms. The evaluation results are incorporated into the students’ comprehensive quality files and serve as a crucial basis for award and honor selection, recommendation for further study without taking the entrance examination, and employment recommendation. Through big data analysis, a quality report on ideological and political education is formed to provide continuous and strong support for subsequent improvement.

5.3.2. Strengthening the collaborative construction of teaching staff and enhancing the ability to educate and nurture students

A cross-disciplinary teaching and research team of “professional teachers + ideological and political teachers + counselors + industry mentors” should be formed. Through special training, teaching discussions, and inviting ideological and political experts and foreign language subject experts to provide joint guidance, teachers’ ability to explore ideological and political elements and design ideological and political teaching activities should be enhanced. Jointly developing multi-language ideological and political micro-lessons, virtual simulation teaching cases, school-based teaching materials, ideological and political projects, brand activities and other ideological and political education resources, and incorporating the effectiveness of ideological and political education into the statistics of teachers’ performance assessment, professional title evaluation, and award selection, to stimulate teachers’ enthusiasm for participating in ideological and political education.

5.3.3. Optimizing the integration and allocation of resources to consolidate the foundation for nurturing talents

Institutions should enhance resource integration, built digital teaching venues such as smart classrooms and multilingual virtual simulation laboratories, provided hardware support for ideological and political education in the three classrooms, developed school-based teaching materials and digital resource libraries, and achieved the co-construction and sharing of high-quality resources among the three classrooms, forming a collaborative force for education. Meanwhile, through the ideological and political education big data platform, the data resources of the three classrooms are integrated to achieve precise assessment and decision support for the educational effect. Outside the school, by deepening cooperative relations with red education bases, primary and secondary schools, foreign-related enterprises and foreign affairs departments, the platform for practical education is expanded to promote the exchange and cooperation of ideological and political education resources for foreign language majors in higher normal universities, achieve the joint construction and sharing of high-quality resources such as course cases, expert lectures, and practical projects, and promote the in-depth development of the ideological and political education system in the three classrooms.

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