

Article

Research on Innovative Approaches to Ideological and Political Education of Foreign Language Majors Based on Projects

Yan Zhang ^{1,*}¹ School of International Education, Jilin Engineering Normal University, Changchun, Jilin, China

* Correspondence: Yan Zhang, School of International Education, Jilin Engineering Normal University, Changchun, Jilin, China

Abstract: This study explores the integration of ideological and political education into foreign language majors, proposing an innovative, project-based approach to enhance students' moral and political awareness. By utilizing three main types of projects—imagery, audiovisual, and hypertext—it aims to foster high-quality foreign language professionals with a strong sense of patriotism, international perspective, and the ability to engage in cross-cultural communication. This approach not only enriches students' understanding of key ideological concepts but also encourages them to apply these values in real-world contexts. Through project-based learning, students are actively involved in creating content that merges professional language skills with ideological education, providing a comprehensive educational experience that cultivates both academic knowledge and personal values. The study highlights the significance of combining knowledge acquisition with value education, aiming to produce well-rounded individuals capable of contributing to both domestic and global society.

Keywords: foreign language education; ideological and political education; project-based innovation

1. Introduction

At the 2016 National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities, the importance of moral education as a central component was emphasized, and the integration of ideological and political work throughout the entire educational process was advocated. Since then, the concept of "ideological and political education" has evolved from a political term into a comprehensive educational concept and practice. At the 2018 National Education Conference, it was reiterated that moral education should be incorporated into ideological, moral, cultural, and social education at all levels, including basic education, vocational education, and higher education. This goal should guide the development of curriculum systems, teaching methods, textbooks, and management systems, with both teachers and students focusing on it. In June 2020, the Ministry of Education released the "Guidance Outline for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in Courses in Higher Education," which emphasized the integration of value education, knowledge transfer, and skills development to help students form correct worldviews, life philosophies, and values. The 2022 report further reinforced that the primary purpose of education is moral cultivation.

The essence of ideological and political education in courses lies in the development of "moral education within disciplines," which focuses on fully utilizing the ideological and political elements and educational value within different professional courses. This approach requires fulfilling the educational duties of each course and instructor, embedding ideological and political content such as theoretical knowledge, value systems, and spiritual aspirations into every course. By doing so, it subtly shapes students' ideological awareness and behavior. The core idea of ideological and political education within

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courses is to align with the curriculum, respect the principles of knowledge transmission, emphasize ideological guidance, leverage the classroom as the main educational channel, and enhance the quality of talent development in the new era.

Project-based instruction originated from the experiential learning and action-based learning concepts advocated by early 20th-century American educator John Dewey and his followers [1]. Its theoretical foundation is rooted in constructivism, Dewey's "learning by doing" educational theory, and Bruner's discovery learning theory. Project-based instruction is an effective teaching method centered around "learners' wholehearted and purposeful learning activities" [2], advocating that students learn through inquiry projects, using authentic materials to explore real-world themes or issues [3]. This teaching approach embodies student-determined process and outcome orientation, spanning more than just a single class period, encouraging the natural integration of various skills, striving for both language learning and content learning, requiring both independent and collaborative learning among students, tasked with collecting, processing, and reporting information from target language resources, taking responsibility for their own learning, demanding new roles and responsibilities for both teachers and students, resulting in a tangible final product, and concluding with students reflecting on the learning process and outcomes [4].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Overview of Research on Ideological and Political Education in Foreign Language Courses

Research on ideological and political education in foreign language courses mainly focuses on three aspects.

Some scholars have examined the design of ideological and political education in foreign language courses from a top-down perspective, analyzing its implementation in a broader context. For instance, one study highlights that the guiding principle for ideological and political education in foreign language courses is "implicit education, cultivating virtue subtly, and teaching morality in a quiet manner" [5]. Another study suggests that the framework for implementing ideological and political education in foreign language courses includes "vertical dimensions: the scope of ideology and politics, key tasks, and strategies, and horizontal dimensions: content chain, management chain, evaluation chain, and teacher behavior chain" [6]. These studies contribute to the theoretical foundation for the development of ideological and political education in foreign language courses, offering valuable insights for other researchers to explore its practical application from a more detailed, micro-level perspective [7].

Research on the practical application of ideological and political education in foreign language courses primarily focuses on individual courses. For instance, one study examines how to incorporate ideological and political education into the American Literature course [8]. Another study explores the implementation of ideological and political education in the Fundamentals of English-Chinese Translation course through teaching practices [9]. A further study develops a theoretical framework for integrating ideological and political education into the Business English course, considering both ideological education and professional talent development. Their framework includes five key dimensions: moral character, Chinese identity, modernity, foundational skills, and professional skills [10].

Some scholars propose various countermeasures and suggestions for ideological and political education in foreign language courses. For example, one study suggests methods for implementing ideological and political education at multiple levels, including teachers and students, explicit in-class activities, and implicit extracurricular engagement [11]. Another study advocates for integrating peace education into foreign language teaching through curriculum design, teacher training, and practical teaching approaches [12].

2.2. Overview of Research on Project-Based Instruction

Project-based learning was introduced to China at the end of the 1990s, although research on project-based courses remains limited. These studies mainly fall into three categories: First, extracurricular practical research based on projects, such as the comprehensive quality practice course at Nanjing University's School of Foreign Languages and the computer-assisted project teaching research at Soochow University. Second, research on project curriculum integration, such as the ETP course at Nankai University. Third, course projectization research, exemplified by the project-based English-speaking countries research course at Dalian University of Foreign Languages.

In summary, research on ideological and political education in foreign language courses primarily focuses on top-down design, offering macro-level guidance for its implementation. The practical application of ideological and political education in foreign language courses tends to emphasize language and cultural courses, with limited attention given to practical courses. Most research presents teaching experiences in ideological and political education, often lacking empirical data, focusing more on classroom teaching design and neglecting extracurricular activities and students' personalized needs. Consequently, this study explores innovative approaches to project-based ideological and political education in foreign language majors, focusing on practical courses to assess its effectiveness.

3. Innovative Project-Based Pathway for Ideological and Political Education of Foreign Language Majors

The theoretical foundation of project-based instruction is rooted in constructivism, experiential learning, and action-based learning. This teaching method embodies process and outcome orientation, naturally integrating various skills, achieving dual acquisition of language and content learning, assigning new roles and responsibilities to teachers and students, and ultimately resulting in a tangible project outcome.

The project-based innovative pathway for ideological and political education in foreign language courses relies on projects, sets different themes and types of practical projects, fully taps into various online, offline, and off-campus resources, and enhances students' language skills, professional knowledge, research abilities, cooperation awareness, and higher-order thinking skills.

The project-based innovative pathway for ideological and political education in foreign language courses encompasses four aspects: objectives, content, projects, and evaluation. Based on goal orientation, this study aims to cultivate foreign language learners with a sense of patriotism and international vision who master autonomous, localized, and systematic foreign language knowledge systems. The ideological and political content encompasses history and culture, politics and economy, ecological civilization, and international exchanges.

Driven by projects, the project types set in this study are mainly divided into imagery projects, audiovisual projects, and hypertext projects. Imagery projects focus on using imagery as a medium of communication to present domestic and foreign stories and legends to readers in the form of "paper movies." Typical imagery texts include comics, picture books, manuals, newspapers, and magazines. Audiovisual projects emphasize the combination of auditory and visual modalities, converting flat static texts into visual representations and disseminating them externally through videos in an intuitive and three-dimensional manner. Hypertext refers to the construction of texts together through computer technology, forming hyperlinks among text, images, sounds, and videos. Hypertext projects emphasize the translation and adaptation of traditional texts into digital texts, with the most widely used field of hypertext being web pages. Web hypertext has the advantages of strong timeliness, rapid dissemination, and strong interactivity, making it the main channel for understanding and reading information domestically and internationally.

The evaluation of ideological and political education embodies the characteristics of diversity, process-orientedness, and ideological and political relevance. Diversity refers to the diversification of evaluation subjects. Process-orientedness is reflected in the evaluation covering the entire project process. Ideological and political relevance aims to achieve a unified ideological and political effect that integrates understanding (verbal expression), identification (thinking), and practice (action).

4. Conclusion

This study adheres to the principles of project-based, goal-oriented, and practice-centered design, and has devised three major project categories: image, audio-visual, and hypertext. This project not only seamlessly integrates ideological and political education with foreign language education but also encourages students to apply their solid professional foundation knowledge and skills to quickly grasp new field knowledge across disciplinary boundaries. During the project implementation, students plan and execute various projects themselves, enabling a virtuous cycle of "learning by doing" and "doing by learning," which effectively promotes the construction of the knowledge system, the enhancement of ability and quality, and the shaping of values.

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