

Moral education in teacher education ESP course—taking *English for Teaching and Teacher Education* as an example

Nana Jing^{1*}

¹School of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Chongqing Normal University, Chongqing, China

Abstract. Present ESP research focuses more on ESP teaching mode, online and offline ESP course practice, ESP teaching practice and teacher development, ESP textbook compilation and so on. There is still limited study concerning how moral education could be integrated with ESP teaching. Based on the school-based curriculum *English for Teaching and Teacher Education*, the current case study takes Unit 6 as an example to explore how moral education could be realized in the teacher education ESP course from four dimensions of unit teaching objective design, teaching content design, teaching method design and teaching evaluation design.

1 Introduction

Being one of the philosophical concerns of education, moral education invites public attention. It has been described with other terms like “values education”, “ethics and education” and “character education”.^[1] In general, moral education focuses on how education could make us good human beings. Therefore, courses of various types become a major channel for conveying social moral values.

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) differs from EGP (English for General Purposes) and it has been growing as a single discipline since the 1960s.^[2] Hutchinson and Waters (2002) divided ESP into EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and EOP (English for Occupational Purposes).^[3] In this study, the course *English for Teaching and Teacher Education* focuses on classroom and curriculum practice and therefore it belongs to EOP.

Compared with ESP studies abroad, a rather complete ESP theoretical system has not yet been well-formed domestically.^[4] In addition, moral education practice and research in teacher education ESP courses have been rarely mentioned in previous researches. Teacher education, being one of the advantages and priorities of teacher’s colleges, is an important way for them to build core competitiveness. Therefore, based on the school-based curriculum *English for Teaching and Teacher Education*, this study explores how moral education could be realized through ESP course design in teacher’s colleges.

2 Unit teaching design for *English for Teaching and Teacher Education*

The school-based curriculum *English for Teaching and Teacher Education* is closely related to teacher education and classroom teaching. It is offered as one of the

selective courses of College English IV series. The target students are therefore mainly non-English majors who are interested in teaching and teacher education or who are to contribute to bilingual teaching in primary or middle school in future. Based on continuous in-class teaching practice, and a wide range of related survey, there comes this unique school-based curriculum. The selected topics cover teacher quality, teacher’s professional development, teaching philosophy, teaching mode, lesson preparation, teaching methods and tools, teaching evaluation, interdisciplinary teaching, integration of modern educational technology, etc.. For each topic, adequate case studies are provided for students’ analysis and inquiry. The course is featured by an integration of Chinese educational wisdom with moral education elements. It is also featured by the emphasis on combining technological advances with classroom teaching.

In the preceding five units, topics such as teacher quality (how to be a good teacher), teaching philosophy, and teaching skills of designing a lesson plan and setting clear teaching objectives (with ample practices) have already been dealt with. Bloom’s Taxonomy (different versions) is also explained with examples and teaching cases. In the current study, Unit 6 is chosen as an example for analysis of moral education. The topic is *Visual thinking tools*. The unit focuses on visual thinking tools of mind map and thinking maps, including the definition, classification, scope of application and techniques in map designing. In the following sections, we focus on explaining how moral values could be integrated in the unit teaching from four dimensions of teaching objective design, teaching content design, teaching method design and teaching evaluation design. In the teaching content and evaluation design part, students’ works are shown.

* Corresponding author: 18983450647@163.com

2.1 Teaching objective design

Ideological and political courses are not the only platform for the realization of moral education. Rather, moral education and core social values run through all courses. College English, a course for non-English majors, is featured by the double attributes of being instrumental and humanistic. *The Guidelines for Integrating Moral Education into College Foreign Language Teaching* (China) states that college English courses are to fully tap moral elements and moral values embodied in the curriculum, on basis of which, subtly and flexibly integrate moral education into language teaching to realize the effective combination of value shaping, knowledge imparting and ability training in language teaching activities. College English courses include general English courses, special English courses and cross-cultural courses. Therefore, realization of moral education should take into account different course types, various students' needs, students' cognitive level and the corresponding teaching objectives.

In general, ESP courses aim to enhance students' ability to use English in specific situations such as academic communication and professional work, and to enhance their academic and professional qualities. In such courses, moral elements such as scientific spirit, professional ethics, innovation and entrepreneurship could be fully tapped and subtly integrated.^[5] The school-based course *English for Teaching and Teacher Education* is designed with reference to the characteristics and needs of teacher education in teacher' colleges, focusing on the cultivation of high-level educational talents. Unit 6 focuses on the teaching tool of mind map/thinking maps. As far as knowledge and ability objectives are concerned, students are able to make distinctions between mind map and thinking maps, especially focusing on when and how to use them. Elements such as training in thinking style and teamwork spirit can be set as moral targets for students. Besides, based on adaptation of the course content and supplement of additional teaching materials, moral elements of establishing cultural self-confidence and responsibility consciousness are also established as moral objectives for the unit.

2.2 Teaching content design

Arrangement and display of teaching content are not at random and it does not necessarily follow sequence in the teaching material. Rather, it should conform to teaching objectives. In this unit, the teaching generally follows APAR (Awareness-Presentation-Application-Reflection) model, and subtly integrates moral education into the course teaching.

In the Awareness session, students were asked to explore the quote 'a picture is worth a thousand words' and therefore to roughly catch the unit theme. To help students more vividly perceive the use of mind map, two life cases of 'supermarket shopping list' and 'defining a good book' were also designed to introduce the unit topic, in which students were invited to brainstorm and a rough mind map was drawn. The Presentation section is

composed of two excerpts of topic-related English readings, which introduce mind map and thinking maps respectively. Students were required to preview the reading materials in advance to complete the related exercises including answering questions, filling blanks as well as drawing a mind map for the reading material and submit it to the online platform 'mosoteach'. The first reading excerpt explains mind map from four aspects of history & figures, benefits, scope of application, and techniques in drawing mind maps. The structure of the reading is quite clear and content is not that difficult to understand. Students have all completed the personal assignment of drawing the mind map well except for some missing information or inaccurate keyword extraction (Fig.1 and Fig. 2). Even though this was the first time for most students to get to know different maps, they still chose software like Xmind and iMindmap for the personal task, which to a certain extent indicates their awareness of combining modern technology with course learning.

In the classroom Q&A session, the first paragraph of the first reading excerpt (definition of the mind map) was selected as in-class practice for a more detailed mind map. In the Application session, students were guided to draw their group mind map on basis of what they have learned through the unit. Meanwhile, more English excerpts were provided for practice. Reflection was usually done after class. Questions like 'what are the similarities and differences between mind map and thinking maps' and 'In terms of the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, what thinking skill(s) would be involved in applying each of the eight Thinking Maps' are provided for students to think in more depth about the topic and also to build connection with what was lectured in the previous unit.

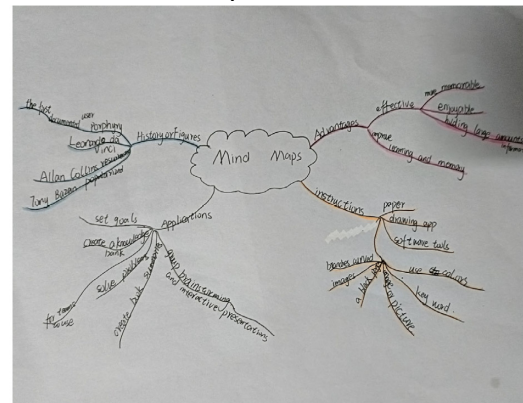


Fig. 1 Student mind map for reading excerpt one

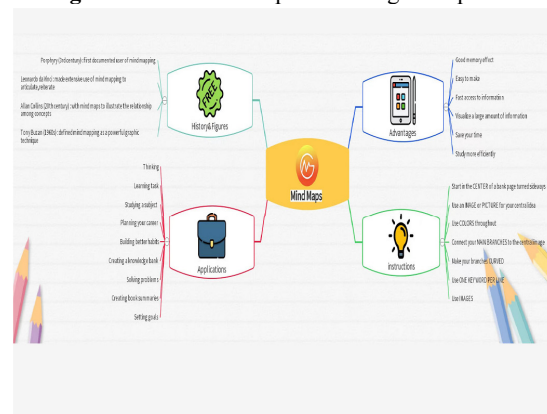


Fig. 2 Student mind map for reading excerpt one

2.3 Teaching method design

Teaching method refers to the ways of realizing corresponding teaching objectives. It explains how the teacher lectures and how students learn. There are certainly a variety of teaching methods. It is therefore important that teachers should choose suitable ones with reference to factors such as course type, course content, objectives and the students. The practice of moral education requires that teaching adhere to student-centeredness, which means teaching should take into account the personal needs and psychological characteristics of students, and innovatively apply multi-dimensional teaching methods to achieve teaching objectives. [5] In accordance with students' English language proficiency, teaching contents, teaching objectives and different tasks, this unit mainly adopts the teaching methods of in-class lecture, case analysis and group discussion.

In-class lecture was needed for the teacher to further elaborate key concepts and principles of the reading materials and also to explain certain cultural background of the given cases. In the case study part, two excerpts entitled *Forensics* and *A Community of Shared Future for Mankind* were used. Since students are of both science and humanity majors, two excerpts for provided for their options. Group discussion was realized mainly in brainstorming and mind map design. Overall, the unit teaching methods bear the following characteristics: 1) Student-centeredness. The English language proficiency of students in the teaching class is around level-5 according to China's Standards of English (CSE for short); they have passed the College English Test-Band 4 (CET-4 for short), which means they have already mastered basic language use, so the design of classroom activities focuses on development of students' learning ability and higher-order thinking skills. The teacher more acts as a guide to build scaffolding for students and provide necessary help; 2) Flexible methods. In line with different tasks, corresponding teaching methods are selected. Teaching methods are flexible and aim to fully mobilize students. 3) Effective combination of online and offline resources. In the moral education part, modern educational technology is resorted to not only in teaching material revision and update, but also in the use of online teaching platform.

2.4 Teaching evaluation design

For the course of College English, usually a combination of formative and summative assessment is employed and this school-based curriculum is no exception. Summative assessment is usually shown in the final written examination, while formative assessment covers items including students' attendance, oral English practice, writing practice, preview assignment, classroom performance as well as group work (twice), each item with different proportion. For each in-class task, either an instant evaluation or delayed assessment is used.

The final group task for this unit is to draw a mind map for the English passage entitled *Bats* (Fig.3). Students are free to choose either a mind map or one of the thinking

maps for the task. The submission and scoring of the group task are completed on the 'mosoteach' (online) platform. For this group work, an instant evaluation is provided by adopting a multi-evaluation model, including teacher's evaluation, students' inter-group evaluation, students' self-evaluation, etc. Since student groups all work on the same reading material *Bats*, in the class, they were invited only to present to the whole class what was special about their map and we were all supposed to do the instant evaluation on the 'mosoteach' platform. The full score for the group task is 10 points. The teacher sets the scoring ratio in the 'mosoteach' system: 50% for teacher evaluation, 40% for inter-group evaluation and 10% for student' self-evaluation. The weighted score is the final score for the group task. Students actively participated in the process and they were willing to compare and comment on each other's works.

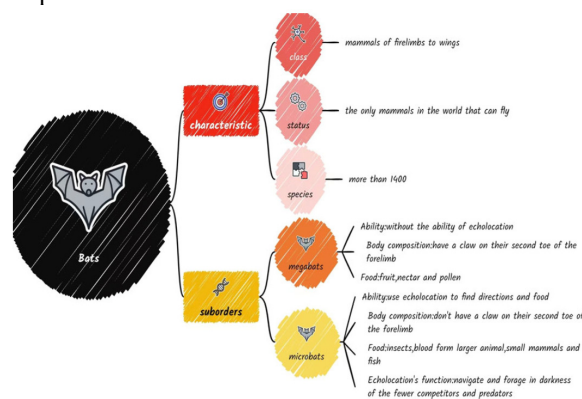


Fig.3 Student group mind map/thinking map

3 Conclusion

In this study, one teaching unit in the school-based curriculum *English for Teaching and Teacher Education* is taken as the case. It shows how moral education might be integrated into teacher education ESP course through the design.

Three features stand out in design of the unit teaching. To begin with, students are taken as the centre. In that case, the teacher tries best to provide scaffolding to facilitate students' output. Secondly, the course is product-oriented. Knowledge of mind map/thinking maps is only a portion of the unit content, while the focus is on usage. Therefore, drawing a map for the English passage is set as the final product. Taking into account students' English proficiency and needs, guidance is provided when necessary. Thirdly, making full use of information technology. The unit content is adapted by supplementing online sources as well as online platform, which aim to expand students' learning channels, empower students to combine autonomous learning with deep classroom learning, and comprehensively promote students' knowledge, ability and quality.

However, this case study focuses more on the course design and practice. In future, more quantitative and qualitative studies are needed for more in-depth analysis of students' degree of acceptance, learning outcomes evaluation and others. Theory abstraction is also of significance.

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