

The New Teaching Form of 'Ancient Chinese Literature' Course in Applied Undergraduate Universities Based on General Education

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Abstract. This paper aims to construct a new form of ancient literature teaching in application-oriented undergraduate universities. A case study method is adopted, combined with participatory observation, questionnaire, and interview methods, to study the ancient literature classroom in an application-oriented undergraduate university. The research team has introduced the concept of general education into the teaching of ancient literature in this application-oriented undergraduate university. The course focuses on humanistic goals and application goals, constructing a new teaching form with 'cloud textbook classic reading classroom' as the core and 'four-classroom connected practice classroom' as the characteristic. The effectiveness of this teaching form has been studied, the research result shows that students have a good evaluation of the ancient literature classic reading classroom, and the practical classroom has enhanced students' innovation ability and comprehensive quality. This study reveals that the teaching of ancient literature in applied undergraduate universities should downplay professional education and adopt a development path of combining general education with specialized education and highlighting characteristics.

Keywords: General education; Applied undergraduate universities; Ancient Chinese literature; Teaching form

1. Introduction

Ancient Chinese literature is a fundamental course in the Chinese language department of Chinese universities. This course plays an important role in inheriting excellent traditional Chinese culture, enhancing students' aesthetic appreciation ability, improving students' humanistic quality, and shaping students' healthy personalities [1]. So far, research has analyzed the problems and solutions in the teaching of ancient literature courses, but further exploration is still needed [2]. In 2015, with the introduction of the national transformation policy for application-oriented undergraduate universities [3], application-oriented undergraduate universities began to explore their own unique educational positioning and development path. The ancient literature courses of these universities also shifted from cultivating traditional academic and teacher-oriented talents to application-oriented talents. In 2019, with the implementation of the 'Double Ten Thousand Plan' for first-class undergraduate courses [4], the country put forward higher requirements for the cultivation of high-quality applied talents, In the new situation, the ancient literature curriculum in applied undergraduate universities still needs further reform and research.

This paper takes the 'whole-person' concept of general education as the research perspective, adopts a case study method, and takes the ancient literature course teaching reform of Xi'an Technology and Business College, an applied undergraduate university in Shaanxi, as the research object, with the purpose of exploring a new form of ancient literature teaching that meets both humanistic and applied goals. This paper focuses on two issues: firstly, how to build a classic reading classroom for ancient literature; the second is how to carry out practical teaching of ancient literature.

In terms of research significance, this study is based on applied undergraduate universities, exploring the teaching forms of ancient literature courses, analyzing their effects, and providing reference experience and theoretical support for the teaching reform of humanities and the

implementation of general education in applied undergraduate universities.

The main content of this paper is that we first reviewed the literature on the reform of ancient literature teaching in applied undergraduate universities. Secondly, we proposed a theoretical framework from the perspective of general education. Thirdly, we outlined the research methods of this paper. Finally, we discussed a teaching form of ancient literature that meets the talent cultivation goals of applied undergraduate universities and analyzed its effectiveness.

2. Chinese Ancient Literature: A Review

Since the beginning of the new century, the ancient literature curriculum in application-oriented undergraduate universities has been facing new challenges and many difficulties, such as emphasizing theory over application, outdated teaching content, being far from modern life, single teaching mode, and low student interest in learning. The reform of ancient literature teaching is urgent [2,5,6].

In recent years, researchers have conducted teaching reform research on ancient literature in application-oriented undergraduate universities from multiple perspectives. These studies have identified two pain points in the teaching reform of ancient literature: firstly, how to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese literature [7], thereby narrowing the gap between ancient literature and contemporary life; The second is how to coordinate the contradiction between the non-utilitarian orientation of ancient literature discipline and the utilitarian orientation of talent cultivation goals in applied undergraduate universities [8].

However, previous studies have generally focused on ancient literature as a professional education from a research perspective, lacking a more comprehensive and integrated research concept. On the one hand, application-oriented undergraduate universities have formed a mindset of emphasizing professional education in the formulation of talent cultivation plans, which has led managers to pay particular attention to the practicality of courses. On the other hand, under the influence of traditional academic talent training mode and the discipline-based thinking, teachers tend to regard ancient literature teaching as a highly theoretical professional education, thus strengthening its academic nature. Influenced by these two types of professional educational thinking, there are two tendencies in ancient literature teaching: instrumentalization and theorization. The humanistic concept has not been highlighted, which can not give full play to the due role of the humanistic course.

The goal of general education is to cultivate the ‘whole-person’ [9], which can provide a more comprehensive and inclusive perspective. The combination of general education and professional education is also a trend in the development of general education in applied undergraduate universities [10]. This study introduces the concept of general education into the curriculum of ancient literature and conducts a case study on the reform of ancient literature teaching in an applied undergraduate university. Our research objective is to explore and construct a new form of ancient literature teaching that adheres to both humanistic and practical goals, combined with modern educational technology.

3. General Education, New Form of Classroom Teaching: A Theoretical Perspective

Research from a historical perspective suggests that general education originated from the ‘liberal education’ of ancient Greece. In 1829, Professor A.S. Packard of the Bowdoin College in the United States first introduced the concept of general education into university education [11]. He defined general education as a ‘classical, literary, and scientific education that is as comprehensive as possible’ [12]. General education corresponds to professional education, which is an educational concept and curriculum practice that cultivates the ‘whole-person’.

The course of ancient literature, as a humanities discipline, is an important part of the ‘whole-person’ concept of practical general education. The teaching of ancient literature in application-oriented undergraduate universities can follow two approaches: firstly, the teaching of ancient literature should break free from the constraints of professional education concepts,

abandon the two tendencies of instrumentalism and theorization, and focus on the ‘humanistic goal’ of cultivating a sound personality. It should cultivate students' strong sense of social responsibility, independent personality, strong moral consciousness, and noble aesthetic value pursuit. Secondly, the teaching of ancient literature in application-oriented undergraduate universities should be characterized by application goals, explore distinctive teaching forms, to cultivate students' innovation ability, problem-solving ability, team collaboration ability, etc.

Based on the above two ideas, this study integrates the concept of general education into the education of ancient literature majors, exploring new forms of ancient literature classroom teaching through research hotspots such as classic education, innovation and entrepreneurship education, academy system, and regional culture.

Classroom teaching form refers to the teaching organization form that is manifested through practice based on the implicit attribute positioning, connotation structure, basic model, etc. of classroom teaching under specific conditions [13]. The new form of classroom teaching is the reform and innovation of classroom teaching practice, which is mainly reflected in: firstly, compared to the traditional teacher centered and knowledge centered teaching form, the new form of classroom teaching is student-centered interactive teaching, reconstructing teaching objectives and content, combining digital technology with teaching methods, and transforming the teaching process into an integrated educational activity of ‘cognition practice’ to promote the all-round development of students and return classroom teaching to the essence of educating people. Secondly, compared to traditional on-site teaching, the new form of classroom teaching realizes an organic combination of online and offline, in-class and extra-class, virtual and real in time and space, forming a borderless teaching method and personalized learning methods, which is conducive to personalized talent cultivation and realizing the true sense of individualized teaching [14].

In order to achieve the research goal of constructing a new form of ancient literature classroom, this article focuses on two issues: firstly, based on the humanistic goals of general education, how to use new technologies to build a ‘student-centered’ ancient literature classic reading classroom. The second is how to carry out practical teaching of ancient literature based on the application goal of talent cultivation in application-oriented undergraduate universities. Through practical exploration, we have constructed a teaching pattern with ‘cloud textbook classic reading classroom’ as the core and characterized by the ‘four-classroom connected practice classroom’.

4. Methodology

This article aims to construct a new form of ancient literature teaching in application-oriented undergraduate universities. It adopts a case study method, combined with participation observation method, questionnaire method, and interview method, to study the ancient literature classroom of an application-oriented undergraduate university. The collected data is analyzed using content analysis method.

Firstly, using the participatory observation method, the researcher, as an applied undergraduate university ancient literature teacher with 16 years of teaching experience, participated in the entire teaching reform and conducted in-depth observation and personal experience of the curriculum characteristics, teaching difficulties, and teaching reform of ancient literature. Secondly, using the questionnaire method, students from one grade were selected to conduct a survey on the teaching effectiveness of ancient literature classrooms. 244 questionnaires were published on online teaching platforms, and 237 were collected, all of which were valid questionnaires. Thirdly, the interview method was used to conduct interviews on the effectiveness of practical classroom teaching in ancient literature. The interviewees were selected from students who participated in the four practical classrooms of ancient literature at the same time, with a total of 9 people selected. The interview lasted for 0.5 hours, and the main purpose of the interview was to understand students' feelings about the practical classroom of ancient literature.

The research object selected is the ancient literature course of Xi'an Technology and Business College, an applied undergraduate university, based on observation and research on the ancient

literature teaching reform of the school from 2021 to 2023. The reason for choosing this sample is that Xi'an Technology and Business College is one of the application-oriented undergraduate universities that place greater emphasis on humanities education. The major of ancient literature courses, the Chinese Language and Literature major, was recognized as a first-class major in Shaanxi Province in 2020, the ancient literature course was recognized as a first-class course in Shaanxi Province in 2021, and was recognized as a demonstration course and teaching team for ideological and political education in Shaanxi Province in 2023. After 16 years of exploration, the course has been developed; it has formed distinct course characteristics and has played a certain exemplary role in applied undergraduate universities.

5. The New Teaching Form: Cloud Textbook Classroom and Practical Classroom

5.1 Humanities Goal: Cloud Textbook Classic Reading Classroom

Based on the humanistic goals of general education, the first issue that this study focuses on is 'how to create a classic reading classroom for ancient literature', which is also a response to the first pain point in the reform of ancient literature teaching, 'how to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese literature'.

Humanities education at renowned universities both domestically and internationally places great emphasis on classic reading, especially the reading and discussion of original texts [15,16]. For example, the characteristic of general education at the University of Chicago is its continuous emphasis on interpreting classic works [17]. The biggest difference between ancient literature and other classics is that there is a significant gap between ancient language and life and modern readers, which leads to students refusing to read or not understanding. So, how to bridge the gap between classics and readers and make students willing to read them? As an important carrier of general education, university humanities general education textbooks need to develop new forms of textbooks that integrate innovation [18]. For this purpose, we have designed a 'cloud textbook classic reading classroom', which consists of an online classroom and an offline classroom.

In the online class, we have developed the cloud textbook *Selected Works of Ancient Chinese Literature*. Cloud textbooks are an interactive teaching material different from traditional digital textbooks. Based on learners' personalized learning needs, they provide students with a situational, visual, interactive, and trackable learning experience [19]. This textbook selects famous works that have been passed down through generations in the history of ancient literature, interprets works from three perspectives: human nature, aesthetics, and culture, and follows the fundamental logic of humanistic education, that is, humanism. Each work consists of five parts: 'Author's Biography', 'Original Works', 'Translation Works', 'Works Appreciation', and 'Extended Reading', integrating text, images, audio, video, MOOCs, micro classes, and interactive exercises through rich media. Teachers will release the 'cloud textbook' reading tasks and discussion topics before class, and students will self-study and conduct group discussions in collaborative exploration groups to prepare for offline classes.

The offline classroom consists of three forms: flipped classroom, large class teaching, and small class discussion. The flipped classroom is when the teacher hands the class over to the students, allowing them to showcase their research results. Large class teaching means that teachers collect questions that students are generally confused about in advance and explain them in the form of Q&A or lectures. Small class discussion refers to the collision of teachers and students expressing their opinions on topics with discussion value, forming diverse perspectives. Effective general education requires teachers and students to explore together, with the aim of helping students better achieve active learning and self-education [20]. The theme of the discussion focuses on modernity, and teachers carefully design the discussion theme to explore the meeting point between ancient times and the present, enhance the sense of the times and adaptability of the curriculum, and eliminate students' sense of strangeness and distance [21].

Regarding the effectiveness of the 'cloud textbook classic reading classroom', we conducted a questionnaire survey on first grade students in the Chinese Department of Xi'an Technology and

Business College. 244 questionnaires were distributed and 237 were collected. A survey shows that 70% of students are willing to read ancient Chinese literary works, and their learning habits of neglecting reading works have improved in the past; 77% of students believe that offline guidance from teachers is very important; 86% of students believe that the difficulty level of the study role assigned by the teacher is moderate; 98% of students believe that the study assignments assigned by the teacher are very rewarding; 95% of students' learning experience of ancient literature is 'very fruitful'; 95% of students generally feel 'very like' or 'like' about ancient literature courses. These data indicate that the cloud textbook classic reading classroom has a novel form, convenient learning, and can meet the needs of students' autonomous learning. Students have a good evaluation of the ancient literature classic reading classroom.

5.2 Application Objective: A Practical Classroom with Four-Classrooms Connected

Based on the application objectives, the second issue that this study focuses on is 'how to carry out practical teaching of ancient literature', which is also a response to the second pain point in the reform of ancient literature teaching, 'how to coordinate the contradiction between the non-utilitarian orientation of ancient literature discipline and the utilitarian orientation of talent cultivation goals in applied undergraduate universities.'

Strengthening the applicability of basic liberal arts education is a train of thought for the reform of basic liberal arts teaching [22]. There are two main ways to enhance the applicability of basic humanities: one is to reform in an extended sense, strengthen practical teaching, and strengthen the training of practical knowledge and skills, which is currently a common method adopted by many universities. The other is the reform in terms of connotation, which strengthens the union with other disciplines, achieves through the intersection and integration of disciplines, weakens majors, strengthens courses, and cultivates versatile talents. This is the development trend of strengthening the applicability of basic humanities [23].

The practical classroom of ancient literature integrates two approaches: skill training and interdisciplinary integration, relying on the four platforms of 'classroom + community + academy + studio' to form a practical classroom of 'four-classes connecting'. Among them, the first classroom practical course relies on formal classrooms to carry out basic practical training that matches the teaching of ancient literary theory, including three major sections: the production of poetry score recitation videos, the adaptation and reproduction of ancient Chinese classic poetry, and the production of ancient style creative works. The campus club activities in the second classroom rely on student clubs to carry out activities related to ancient literature, including literary club activities mainly focused on original literature, drama club activities mainly focused on drama adaptation and performance, and art club activities mainly focused on classical music and dance and traditional etiquette; The third classroom research classroom relies on Jingye Academy to carry out cultural research activities and characteristic activities, such as local folk culture research, museum research, reading and writing salons, etc. The fourth classroom integrates industry and education. The classroom relies on the mentor's studio to establish an interdisciplinary and interdisciplinary learning community for teachers and students, with the aim of solving the real problems of local 'intangible cultural heritage' cultural protection and dissemination. Project based teaching is implemented, such as the construction of the Gaoling Dongxiao art inheritance platform, the cultural and creative design of the Jingwei River legend, and the construction of the Gaoling Quzi short video dissemination platform.

Regarding the effectiveness of the practical classroom, we selected 9 students for interviews. The reason for choosing these 9 students is because they have fully participated in the four practical classrooms of ancient literature. Han Nini said, 'Practical classes make me feel novel and interesting.' Liu Yepai said, 'In the process of practice, not only does it bring students closer together, but it also allows every student to personally feel the connotation behind literature.'

Research has found that practical classrooms enhance students' innovative abilities and comprehensive qualities. This is mainly reflected through the number and quality of competition awards, paper publications, original works, and innovative projects. In the past two years, students have won 81 competition awards at all levels, of which 4 have achieved zero breakthroughs in the

school. They have led 10 innovation projects in Shaanxi Province, published 7 papers, 73 original poems, 132 advertising copies, published 1 original literary work collection, and filmed 16 ancient style creative videos. The number and level of awards for works and projects exceed those in the past. The innovation project has achieved a certain social impact. Li Siyang, the head of the 'Gaoling Dongxiao Art Inheritance Platform', said, '*The initial idea of establishing this platform was only to promote local culture for public welfare. I didn't expect some parents of elementary school students to consult me recently, hoping to let their children learn Dongxiao. For the first time, I felt that my major could serve the country, which was surprising and very fulfilling.*'

In summary, the practical classroom is based on the forefront of the discipline, with a teacher-student learning community as the main body, projects as the carrier, and problems as the core. It adopts the perspective and methods of relevant disciplines, and aims to cultivate practical innovation ability and problem-solving ability. Teachers are no longer authoritative, and students develop their strengths based on different tasks, which is in line with the characteristics of humanistic education that prioritize 'experience' and 'people'.

6. Summary

This paper examines a new teaching form of ancient literature courses in an applied undergraduate university from the perspective of general education, with the core of 'cloud textbook classic reading classroom' and the characteristic of 'four-classroom connected practical classroom'. It reveals that the ancient literature teaching in applied undergraduate universities should downplay professional education and take a development path of combining general education with specialized education and highlighting characteristics.

Research has found that firstly, the ancient literature curriculum in applied undergraduate universities should introduce the concept of general education, with humanistic goals as the core goal, classic literary works reading as the main content, digital technology, the development of rich media cloud textbooks, flexible use of offline teaching forms, and promotion of the modernity transformation of ancient literature. Secondly, ancient literature courses should also be characterized by application goals, focus on the development of hidden classrooms, and be guided by practical problems. They should strengthen the integration of industry and education and project-based teaching, and construct practical classrooms from the perspectives of practical training skills and interdisciplinary intersection. In particular, innovative progress should be made at disciplinary intersections.

At the empirical level, this study focuses on humanities courses that are generally marginalized in application-oriented undergraduate universities. Existing research still focuses on theoretical teaching in teaching practice exploration, and the exploration of practical teaching also leans towards explicit skill training. This study focuses on constructing practical classrooms from an internal interdisciplinary perspective, and has made good solutions to the two pain points in the reform of ancient literature teaching, this provides reference experience for the teaching reform of ancient literature and the implementation of general education courses in applied undergraduate universities.

At the theoretical level, existing research focuses on treating ancient literature courses as professional education from a theoretical perspective. Influenced by professional educational thinking, ancient literature teaching tends to be both instrumental and theoretical, deviating from the goals of humanistic education. Based on this research deficiency, this study integrates general education into professional education and proposes a theoretical framework that emphasizes both humanistic and applied goals, further promoting the shift of ancient literature courses in applied undergraduate universities from professional education to general education.

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