

The Ideological and Political Education and Enlightenment of the Course “Etiquette and Folk Culture of ASEAN Countries” Empowered by Databases

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Abstract

Curriculum ideological and political education is the essence of various curriculum constructions. Empowering the course “Etiquette and Folk Culture of ASEAN Countries” with databases can help solve common problems in the training of undergraduate Chinese international education professionals in some universities. Empowerment refers to assisting students in learning the curriculum and improving their learning quality. The databases are involved as an important cultural resource. The integration of ideological and political education in the course of “Etiquette and Folk Culture of ASEAN Countries” includes etiquette, taboos, food, festivals, weddings, funerals, and folk culture, etc. Empowering databases is beneficial for students to have a multidimensional understanding of the cultures of ASEAN countries. Finally, relevant insights can be extracted to objectively view and explain some special features of ASEAN countries, including specific beliefs, political systems, traditional customs, ethnic clothing, etc.

Keywords

Database, ASEAN Countries, Course Ideology and Politics, Folk Etiquette, Cultural Database

1. Introduction

Curriculum ideological and political education is an overall requirement for curriculum teaching in the current country. As a featured course, “Etiquette and Folk Culture of ASEAN Countries” is no exception. There is the course in Lingnan Normal University. The Chinese International Education major at Lingnan Normal

University has always focused on talent cultivation for ASEAN countries. For many years, the school has collaborated with relevant institutions in Thailand to carry out internships and short-term exchange programs for students majoring in Chinese international education.

This situation not only exists in Lingnan Normal University, but also in universities located relatively close to ASEAN countries that offer undergraduate programs in Chinese international education, such as many universities in Guangxi, Guangdong, Hainan, Yunnan and other provinces and regions. These schools have encountered some difficulties in cultivating undergraduate talents in Chinese international education for ASEAN, such as:

1) Mainly theoretical knowledge from books, with limited expansion. In the past, undergraduate cultural courses in Chinese international education were mainly taught based on textbooks, with a focus on theory and insufficient expansion and balance. In addition, relying solely on theories without intuitive understanding can create barriers for students to comprehend and affect teaching effectiveness. Furthermore, theories are often dull and can gradually make students lose interest.

2) A considerable number of students lack on-site experience in ASEAN countries and have not experienced it firsthand. Due to objective limitations, according to our investigation, a considerable number of students majoring in Chinese international education trained for ASEAN countries have not had the experience of visiting ASEAN countries and often have no on-site experience of ASEAN culture, without emotional understanding. This often leads to a feeling of scratching the surface when teaching the course.

3) Many students have a limited understanding of the cultural similarities and differences within ASEAN countries. Some students have certain misconceptions about the similarities and differences within ASEAN countries, such as thinking that durian and rambutan are only found in Thailand, but in fact, there are also rich in durian and rambutan in Malaysia, Indonesia and other countries. For example, it is believed that rice is only abundant in Thailand, but in fact, neighboring Laos also produces rice.

4) Previously, the academic community lacked a database of ASEAN cultural resources available for teaching purposes. Previously, we searched on China Knowledge Infrastructure using the titles and keywords “ASEAN Cultural Resource Database” and “ASEAN Cultural Database”, but did not find any papers. Of course, it cannot be concluded from this that there are no papers. Perhaps some papers have not been included in China National Knowledge Infrastructure, but at least it can be said that there are still quite few papers in this area. Establishing a similar database can provide support for Chinese international education students in ASEAN oriented universities.

The previous COVID-19 has brought unprecedented challenges to the training of Chinese language international education professionals: almost all exchanges with ASEAN countries have been suspended for many years. Even after the end

of the epidemic, undergraduate students majoring in this field cannot all go to ASEAN countries for on-site experience, or have only been to a few ASEAN countries, and cannot go to all ASEAN countries for on-site experience. For this purpose, we have developed the “ASEAN Countries Cultural Database”, which can be found at the website <http://106.55.187.122/>. It can realize online access to the Internet, which helps students to appreciate the culture of ASEAN countries without going abroad, and to some extent resolve this challenge.

In order to better explore, we have reviewed previous research on etiquette and folk culture in ASEAN countries, including Chen Limao, Zhang Hong (2022), Chen Limao (2023), etc. There are mainly studies on ideological and political education in undergraduate courses of Chinese international education, such as Zheng Yu (2020), Chen Xinyan (2022), Chen Yunping (2024), etc. However, the latter almost exclusively focuses on exploring the ideological and political aspects of courses that foreign students should pay attention to when learning Chinese, or discussing the ideological and political aspects of courses in Chinese international education at a macro level, rather than addressing the issue of Chinese students learning cultural courses from ASEAN countries in order to carry out Chinese international education. There are currently few achievements specifically exploring this area. So, with the empowerment of databases, what issues should be paid attention to in the ideological and political teaching of the course “Etiquette and Folk Culture of ASEAN Countries”? This article attempts to answer this question. In the early stage, we conducted on-site research in ASEAN countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. On this basis, we combined the developed cultural database of ASEAN countries for analysis and gained some insights from it.

2. Integration of Course Ideology and Politics with Teaching of Etiquette and Folk Culture in ASEAN Countries

In our teaching practice of the course “Etiquette and Folk Culture of ASEAN Countries”, we consciously focus on the following points:

1) Guide students to understand the etiquette language and costumes of ASEAN countries, and in combination with China’s “the Belt and Road” initiative, explain to students how to learn from the architectural characteristics of ASEAN countries, and encourage students to actively participate in China’s private foreign exchanges when conditions permit after graduation.

2) Guide students to understand some taboo cultures of ASEAN countries, and help them establish a good image of our citizens in foreign exchanges. Guide students to identify some folk beliefs and cultures in ASEAN countries, promote their understanding of the spread of Chinese culture in ASEAN countries, and enhance their sense of pride in the Chinese nation.

3) Guide students to understand the unique cuisine and flavors of ASEAN countries, and help them quickly adapt to local customs when conducting international Chinese education in the future. Enable students to understand the culinary culture

of ASEAN countries, such as soup, and guide them to compare it with relevant cultures in China, deepening their understanding of the cultural connections and differences between China and ASEAN countries.

4) Understanding the unique fruits and beverages of ASEAN countries together with students, and comparing them with fruits produced in China. This can help students build confidence in China's vast territory and abundant resources.

5) Explain the traditional festival culture of ASEAN countries such as the Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival, and promote students' understanding of Chinese long history and culture and the spillover effects of ASEAN countries' culture in history. Leading students to understand some of the unique festivals in ASEAN countries can help them increase their confidence in pursuing their majors.

6) Introduce some wedding rituals and customs of ASEAN countries, broaden students' knowledge, and deepen their understanding of traditional Chinese culture through comparison. Lead students to view the emotional concepts of ASEAN countries from a dialectical perspective, and help them establish correct emotional values after graduation. Lead students to understand some of the birth customs and traditions of ASEAN countries, and in turn promote students' support and endorsement of Chinese "three child" birth policy.

7) Explaining the knowledge of cremation in ASEAN countries to students can help deepen their understanding of Chinese advocacy for cremation and establish correct concepts. Teaching students about other funeral customs in ASEAN countries can help them understand some unexpected situations that may occur while in ASEAN countries, such as seeing objects burning and thick smoke rising in temples.

8) Guiding students to understand the beliefs of people in some ASEAN countries can help them strengthen their Marxist materialist dialectical stance. Guide students to understand the influence of certain beliefs in ASEAN countries on local education and other aspects, in order to better support and endorse Chinese socialist education system.

We are based on the developed cultural database of ASEAN countries, guiding students to have a comprehensive experience through text, images, audio, videos, etc., which is more vivid and vivid than just reading dry words in books. When collecting materials, we fully indicate the sources of the materials cited in the database to avoid disputes over intellectual property rights as much as possible. The cultural database of ASEAN countries that we have built includes 14 columns. It includes "festival customs, language culture, dietary customs, religious customs, marriage and childbirth customs, taboo customs, funeral customs, tourist attractions, social etiquette, clothing and attire, historical culture, architectural culture, other aspects, and practice exercises". We asked the students to write about their experience using a database. The students fully affirmed the introduction of the database into the course of "Etiquette and Folk Culture of ASEAN Countries". The ideological and political construction of the course "Etiquette and Folk Culture of ASEAN Countries" has been better guaranteed under the empowerment

of the ASEAN Countries Cultural Database.

3. The Insights Gained from It

1) It is difficult for folk culture courses in ASEAN countries to bypass religion, and attention should be paid to maintaining a certain degree. Due to the significant presence of religious beliefs in ASEAN countries. These beliefs have a significant impact on the local population, such as the profound influence of Islam on countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei, and the extensive influence of Buddhism on countries like Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Vietnam. Indonesia is still the most populous Muslim country in the world. When explaining this section, teachers should pay attention to treating the religious beliefs of ASEAN countries with an objective attitude and always adhere to the value scale of dialectical materialism.

2) The folk culture courses of ASEAN countries sometimes involve some pictures that are not easily accepted by ordinary people and require certain technical processing. Some pictures from funeral customs, such as the practice of sky burial in Bali of Indonesia, and the excessive treatment of the deceased by the main ethnic groups in Thailand. These pictures may cause discomfort to some students, so they cannot be displayed publicly.

3) Do not make unfounded comments on the political situation of ASEAN countries. In ASEAN countries, besides Vietnam implementing a socialist system, there are also countries with monarchs such as Thailand, Brunei, Malaysia, etc. There are also presidential systems, such as Indonesia, and those that are partially in a state of war, such as Myanmar. When discussing these political systems, teachers should adhere to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence advocated by our country and not blindly comment on their correctness.

4) We should also try to objectively view some traditional and special practices of ASEAN countries. Many local ethnic groups in ASEAN countries still have the habit of eating by hand without using utensils, which still exists today, such as Indonesia and Malaysia. When conducting teaching, we should approach it objectively.

5) Respect should also be given to the ethnic traditional attire of some ASEAN countries. Men from the main ethnic groups in Myanmar also wear slippers and skirts on formal occasions. For example, people in Malaysia and Indonesia may also wear brightly colored shirts in formal occasions. Teachers should teach students how to encounter similar situations in the future and show respect to others when explaining.

4. Conclusion

At present, the country is paying increasing attention to international Chinese education and has established a master's degree program in international Chinese education. With the continuous improvement of China's national strength, more and more foreign friends want to learn Chinese, especially ASEAN countries that

are geographically close to China. To carry out international Chinese education, it is necessary to cultivate teachers. It is necessary to guide students to learn the etiquette and folk culture of ASEAN countries when cultivating teachers in this field for ASEAN countries. In this process, we should also pay attention to the ideological and political issues in the course of “Etiquette and Folk Culture of ASEAN Countries”. Although the course of “Etiquette and Folk Culture of ASEAN Countries” is a characteristic course of Chinese international education, it also requires ideological and political construction in the curriculum. How to better promote the construction of ideological and political education in the curriculum needs to be jointly explored and promoted by colleagues from various schools.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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