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Integrating Moral Education in Workplace English: Practices and Strategies

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Abstract: This study examines the integration of moral education into workplace English teaching, a critical endeavor in the contemporary educational landscape. The primary objective is to explore practical strategies for seamlessly embedding moral and ideological elements into workplace English courses. Utilizing a case study approach at Zhaoqing University, the research comprehensively analyzes curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and instructional materials. Key findings reveal that integrating moral education enhances students' ideological awareness, cultural understanding, and professional ethics, enriching their learning experience. This integration is achieved through innovative teaching methods, including using current events and cultural content, and focusing on developing students' practical communication skills. The study underscores the importance of educators' pedagogical skills in effectively conveying moral education within the context of language teaching. The implications of this research extend to the broader field of higher education, highlighting the necessity of moral education in curriculum development and the potential of workplace English as a medium for this purpose. The findings contribute to a better understanding of how moral and academic education can be effectively combined, fostering the holistic development of students in a globalized world.

Keywords: Workplace English; moral education in courses; teaching process; teaching case design.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by heightened global interconnectivity and cultural diversity, the prominence of English as a workplace lingua franca has notably escalated, prompting a critical reexamination of its pedagogical approach in academic institutions, particularly in colleges and universities. Historically centered on enhancing proficiency in core communication skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking, English language education now confronts the imperative of integrating moral education to align with the dynamic landscape of global exchanges and the increasing significance of ethical conduct in professional domains. This integrative approach strives not merely to develop linguistic aptitude but also to instill a profound sense of ethical awareness and cultural comprehension among learners. The dual responsibility vested in educators to equip students with both language skills and moral values for the global workplace forms the crux of this exploration, with a specific focus on the methodologies, challenges, and advantages of this amalgamated approach within the Chinese higher education milieu.

A. Policy Background and Curriculum Content: Integrating Moral Education in Workplace English Teaching

In late 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities that it is necessary to persist in the central link of fostering virtue through education, and let ideological and political work run through the whole process of education and teaching, so as to nurture students in the whole process and in an all-round way (Xi Jingping, 2016). Subsequently, in December 2017, the Ministry of Education

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issued the "Implementation Outline of the Quality Improvement Project of Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities", proposing to "vigorously promote the classroom teaching reform with the goal of 'integrating moral education into courses', optimize the curriculum, revise the professional textbooks, improve the teaching design, standardize the teaching management, sort out the ideological and political elements contained in each professional course and the moral educational functions carried by them, integrate them into all aspects of classroom teaching, and realize the organic unity between moral education and knowledge system construction" (The Ministry of Education, 2017). "College English Curriculum Requirements" promulgated by the Ministry of Education in 2017 also put forward explicit requirements for the educational function of college English courses, "College English courses are a part of humanistic education in colleges and universities, and are both instrumental and humanistic. Students learn and master English as a communication tool. In addition to learning and exchanging advanced scientific technology or professional information, they also need to understand foreign societies, enhance their understanding of different cultures, their awareness of the similarities and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures, and cultivate their intercultural communication ability. The essence of humanism is to take people as the foremost, carry forward the values of the society, and focus on the comprehensive quality training and all-round development of people. The core socialist values should be organically integrated into college English teaching. Therefore, it is necessary to deeply tap the rich humanistic connotation of college English courses and reach the unification of instrumentality and humanism (National Foreign Languages Teaching Advisory Committee in Higher Education, 2020)."

For a long time, college students have universally take a negative attitude towards ideology and politics. They have strong self-awareness and no interest in learning politics, which directly leads to the deviation of their outlook on life and values, their weak sense of social responsibility, and their lack of professional ethics. Many college students talk eloquently about British and American culture, but know little about the excellent traditional Chinese culture. College students lack Chinese cultural awareness as well as confidence and pride in their national culture. Therefore, teachers needs to integrate moral education into English courses to improve students' ideological and political awareness. From the curriculum theory perspective, any curriculum is not value-free, but embodies value orientation and carries educational goals in terms of knowledge, ability, emotional attitude, and values (Bloom et al., 1964). The curriculum is divided into explicit curriculum, also known as invisible curriculum, latent curriculum or informal curriculum, is a curriculum that is presented in a latent, indirect, non-explicit way in school situations (Jackson, 1968). The English course contains numerous hidden ideological and political contents, such as traditional culture, environmental conservation, and patriotism. By meticulously extracting these elements from textbooks and designing teaching procedures that subtly influence students, teachers can effectively elevate students' ideological consciousness and assist them in forming correct life, world, and value perspectives. Therefore, integrating moral education into the college English course is not only feasible but also essential.

According to the "College English Curriculum Requirements" issued by the Ministry of Education in 2017, and the "Management of Public Courses in Zhaoqing University" and "Implementation Plan of College English Curriculum of School of Foreign Languages" revised in 2018, the college English curriculum at Zhaoqing University comprises general English, Intercultural Communication English, and English for Specific Purposes. General English is a mandatory course for first-year undergraduates, Intercultural Communication English is offered to sophomores in their first semester, and English for Specific Purposes, which includes workplace English, tourism English, academic English, mass media English, and business English, is an elective for sophomores in their second semester.

Workplace English, a foundational course of quality education provided to second-year non-English majors at Zhaoqing University, addresses students from diverse majors with extensive content. The course effectively combines knowledge impartation, skill training, and value guidance. In alignment with students' professional characteristics, educators integrate ideological and political elements such as professional ethics, skills, corporate culture, and craftsmanship spirit into the curriculum. This integration not only equips students with fundamental knowledge of workplace English and enhances their communication abilities in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation but also develops their communication strategies, professional competencies, qualities, and abilities in independent learning, problem-solving, and teamwork. Moreover, it fosters in students an awareness of intercultural communication, respect for Western culture, and a bolstered confidence in Chinese culture.

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B. Theoretical Foundations of Moral Education

In the realm of educational studies, moral education is a fundamental component that extends beyond imparting basic moral concepts and values to students (Solovtsova et al., 2021). It involves a deep understanding of social responsibility, civic morality, and professional ethics, aiming to play a pivotal role in the holistic education of students, cultivating strong moral fiber and comprehensive development (Joseph & Mikel, 2014). Its objective is to play a pivotal role in the holistic education of students, cultivating them into individuals with strong moral fiber and comprehensive development. Historically, moral education has been an inseparable part of educational systems across various cultures and societies, with each possessing unique methods and practices of moral education.

The development and implementation of moral education are underpinned by various educational theories. Hand (2014) discusses the formulation of a theory of moral education, emphasizing the need to locate the project within the wider conceptual landscape. Additionally, Zhang & Hu (2017) provide an analytical overview of Kohlberg's theory of moral development and its application in college moral education in Mainland China, highlighting the significance of this theory in educational settings. Cheung & Lee (2010) contribute to the discussion by emphasizing the need for changes in the form and practice of moral education along the lines of the cognitive-development approach to moral development. Furthermore, Callery (1990) explores the usefulness of cognitive-developmental and social learning theories in moral learning, providing insights into the application of these theories in educational contexts. Shook (2004) presents Dewey's moral-education theory of punishment, offering an alternative to traditional approaches to punishment and highlighting the role of education in moral development.

These references collectively support the claim that educational theories, such as cognitive development theory and social learning theory, provide a framework for understanding and implementing moral education. They emphasize the significance of education in the moral and ethical development of individuals, highlighting that education influences the formation and development of moral beliefs and behavioral patterns. Educators can effectively sow the seeds of morality and ethics in students' minds, guided by these theories, fostering their growth and evolution in personal and professional lives over time.

In today's world, marked by increasing globalization and cross-cultural exchanges, the role of workplace English teaching has become particularly crucial. It transcends the mere teaching of a language skill and becomes a significant medium for the exchange of cultural and moral values. By integrating moral education into the teaching process of workplace English, educators can assist students in better understanding and adapting to the professional ethics and social responsibilities within different cultural contexts. This integration not only enhances students' language skills but also fosters their moral and ethical development in a multicultural environment. Combining moral education with workplace English teaching is an innovative and necessary pedagogical strategy. This approach not only promotes the development of students' language abilities but also aids in their effective communication and collaboration in a globalized professional environment. More importantly, it facilitates the comprehensive development of students in a multicultural context, including their moral beliefs, values, and professional ethics. Through this method, we can cultivate a new generation of professionals who are not only proficient in language skills but also possess a strong sense of moral responsibility.

II. OPTIMIZING STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING MORAL EDUCATION INTO WORKPLACE ENGLISH

The successful integration of moral education into English classroom teaching hinges on a holistic approach to curriculum design. This process encompasses every aspect of the educational journey, including curriculum design, selection of teaching materials, and actual classroom instruction, ensuring that ideological and political elements are seamlessly woven into the content of workplace English. This integration aims to maximize the effectiveness of workplace English as a medium for moral education.

A. Building the Project Team

Adequate research on teaching materials, methodologies, syllabus revision, and teaching plans necessitates a collaborative effort from a dedicated project team. This team, functioning at the grassroots level of teaching organizations, actively engages in collective lesson planning and teaching plan revision, striving to incorporate moral education seamlessly into their teaching. By collaboratively studying textbooks and discussing curriculum design, teachers share their experiences in Page | 36

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imparting ideological and political values. This collective preparation not only leverages the collective wisdom of the faculty but also allows for an in-depth exploration and resolution of challenges inherent in integrating moral education into courses. The shift in teaching plans from focusing on language knowledge and ability to including traditional Chinese culture, patriotism, and core socialist values, particularly those derived from Xi Jinping's theoretical education on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era, marks a significant evolution in classroom teaching. This approach notably enhances the capabilities of young educators and fosters overall teaching excellence.

B. Revising the Syllabus

Underpinned by theories of human holistic development, teaching process optimization, production-oriented approach, and situated cognition, the ideological and political objectives, content, methods, and strategies of workplace English are meticulously planned and designed. The course teaching plan, tailored to meet students' professional needs, guides the revision of the course syllabus. Teaching objectives and content, aligned with the focus of application-oriented universities, emphasize the features of application-oriented college English courses. By regarding core socialist values as a guiding principle, the syllabus harmonizes knowledge transfer and value guidance. It rationalizes the teaching process, creates suitable learning environments, and skillfully blends moral education into the authentic language learning context. This approach facilitates active and enjoyable student participation without overburdening teachers or students. In terms of content, the syllabus not only delves deeply into the current textbook but also integrates ideological, political, and moral education elements, including the cultivation of ideals and beliefs, traditional Chinese culture education, innovation spirit, professional ethics, and social responsibility. Assessment methods, tailored to the unique characteristics of applicationoriented colleges, increase the emphasis on formative evaluation, focusing on nurturing students' commitment to family and country, entrepreneurial and craftsman spirit, thereby deeply embedding core socialist values in their minds. The syllabus accurately reflects the specific goals and requirements of the curriculum, aiming to cultivate high-quality talents with excellent humanistic qualities and intercultural communication skills capable of effectively disseminating Chinese culture and narrating Chinese stories in English.

C. Selecting Excellent Teaching Materials

In the process of selecting teaching materials, considerable emphasis is placed on adhering to the following principles: Firstly, materials should be ideological and nationalistic, embodying the country's dominant ideology and reinforcing the instruction of core socialist values. Such materials not only stimulate students' alignment with mainstream values but also enlighten them on the importance of these values for their personal development, thereby bolstering their confidence in the unique path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Secondly, materials should be scientific and contemporary. Incorporating timely resources into the curriculum such as English-language news on current events, the ongoing battle against COVID-19, and Sino-American trade disputes can augment students' engagement, foster critical thinking, and guide their value systems and civic consciousness in the right direction. Thirdly, materials should be comprehensive. Educators strive to balance the representation of Chinese and foreign cultures, incorporating more content related to traditional Chinese culture, contemporary societal development, and people's livelihoods in China, thus addressing the cultural imbalance frequently observed in many textbooks. This approach not only enhances students' cultural selfconfidence but also nurtures their practical abilities. After extensive evaluation and discussion of various workplace English textbooks from multiple publishers, 'Workplace English' by Yang Anwen and Jiang Jing, published by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, was selected as the primary textbook. This textbook stands out due to its focus on practical applications, covering topics such as job interviews, business communication, meeting minutes, telephone etiquette, and interpersonal relationships, all set against a backdrop of real-world workplace scenarios. Its simplicity, clarity, and practicality make it an ideal resource for teaching specific-purpose English, aligning well with the actual needs and situations of the students. The textbook aims to assist students in addressing fundamental challenges like job applications, interviews, and workplace communication in English-speaking environments. It aims to enhance their English application skills in professional settings, develop their capacity for independent learning and teamwork, broaden their international perspectives, and cultivate their professional competencies and intercultural communication skills.

D. Teaching Methods and Approaches

Teaching workplace English is grounded in a comprehensive understanding of students' learning needs and the continual refinement of teaching design and methods. It aligns ideological and political education goals with students' learning

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objectives, eschewing the monotonous style of political teaching to subtly and effectively impart moral values. Teachers engage with students' interests, focusing on current social issues and phenomena, and utilize resources like news reports, documentaries, and celebrity speeches to design teaching tasks that incorporate ideological and political elements related to cultural knowledge, values, and professional qualities. This approach not only enhances student engagement and initiative but also hones their language skills and guides them to keenly observe the development of Chinese society, fostering critical thinking and establishing upright values, cultural perspectives, and professional outlooks. It also benefits in cultivating a sense of identity, pride, and confidence in Chinese culture. The use of information-based teaching methods resonates well with students. Teachers leverage various teaching platforms such as Tencent, Chaoxing, Group Classroom, along with English learning apps, complemented by online resources like micro-lectures and MOOCs, to create a blended learning environment that seamlessly integrates online and offline moral education. This approach is guided by a production-oriented methodology, employing heuristic, communicative, and task-based teaching methods to form a comprehensive moral education model. This model involves identifying the ideological and political essence of each unit and integrating these elements into both the subject matter and the language teaching process. The result is a teaching method that not only imparts language skills but also instills moral and ideological values, effectively preparing students to navigate both their professional and personal lives with a strong moral compass and cultural awareness.

III. EXAMPLES OF INTEGRATING MORAL EDUCATION INTO WORKPLACE ENGLISH TEACHING

The practical application of curriculum design is vividly demonstrated in classroom teaching, which serves as the primary venue for college students to acquire knowledge and skills. Additionally, classroom teaching is a crucial conduit for instilling core socialist values. An exemplary case is the teaching of Unit Two, titled "*Attending an Interview*".

A. The First Five Minutes' Preparation Stage

In the first five minutes of class, students were engaged in a structured discussion on the theme "My Ideal Job" where they reflected on their aspirational career paths and prepared for their prospective professional endeavors. This exercise, orchestrated by the instructor, involved creating a realistic and potent learning environment in which students were prompted to articulate their thoughts through speeches. This method not only facilitated dynamic student-teacher interaction but also served as an effective tool for knowledge dissemination, skill development, and moral education. Regularly, students are motivated to proactively present brief speeches on contemporary issues at the beginning of the class, fostering a vibrant learning atmosphere. These presentations offer a dual advantage: they enable students to express and develop their perspectives, while also allowing instructors to gauge and respond to the students' ideological inclinations, emotional shifts, and overall development. This interactive approach not only enhances students' proficiency in oral English but also embeds moral education within the learning process. Consequently, students swiftly acclimate to the topic at hand, constructing a robust framework for their learning journey, which effectively sets the stage for future instructional activities.

B. The Effective Lead-in

In the initial phase of the class, the instructor addressed the queries that had emerged during the students' independent preclass study. Subsequently, the students engaged in a collaborative brainstorming session, focusing on the significance of understanding a company prior to a job interview. They were tasked with identifying and listing crucial information relevant to job applicants. Following this exercise, the students viewed a video about TMEIC (Toshiba Mitsubishi Electric Industrial Systems Co. Ltd.) to gain insights into its corporate culture. The instructor elucidated the concept of corporate culture, describing it as the aggregate of shared consciousness, values, professional ethics, and behavioral codes shaped through social practices and adhered to by members within specific social and economic contexts. This culture embodies the organization's mission, vision, values, and business philosophy, reflected in its operational and management practices, employee conduct, and external representation. The instructor emphasized the foundational role of corporate mission, vision, and values, likening them to the roots of a tree that nourish and sustain its growth.

Many students perceive corporate culture merely as a superficial slogan, lacking an understanding of its more profound implications. Hence, the instructor's detailed explanation played a pivotal role in enhancing their comprehension. Additionally, the class delved into the corporate cultures of prominent Chinese companies, notably Huawei and its founder Ren Zhengfei. Ren's vision for Huawei, aiming to be among the top global industry players and to harness global talent, has

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driven the company's relentless pursuit of innovation. Huawei's advancements, particularly in 5G technology, have not only revolutionized the industry but also elevated China's position in global scientific and technological research and development. Despite international challenges, notably from the United States, Huawei's resilience in transitioning Hisilicon from a reserve entity to a regular operation and the development of HarmonyOS are testaments to its commitment to protecting national interests and digital sovereignty. These narratives provide inspiration and national pride for the students, fostering a deeper connection with their cultural heritage and identity.

C. Textbook Teaching

The essence of classroom teaching lies in textbook instruction. In this phase, students' language competencies—listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating—are honed through interview simulations. The instructor prompts students to reflect profoundly on the following questions: 1) What is your primary consideration in job hunting: opportunity, challenge, or salary? 2) What skills do you possess that would contribute to your success in a job application? 3) What are your most significant weaknesses? These inquiries are designed to foster critical thinking and encourage students to contemplate key factors that influence job-seeking and interview processes. Through self-assessment, students gain a clearer understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, shaping a more accurate worldview, life perspective, and value system. This introspection enhances their ideological consciousness, nurtures professional ethics, and aligns with the education of core socialist values.

Based on dialogues between interviewers and job seekers from the textbook, group role-play activities allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts, thereby boosting their workplace competitiveness. Diverse tasks and interactive classroom exercises enable students to fully showcase their abilities, enhancing their professional and innovative skills.

Moreover, the integration of significant national and international news and emergency scenarios into the curriculum serves to cultivate moral character. For example, learning from the dedication, responsibility, and national loyalty demonstrated by medical professionals like Zhong Nanshan during the COVID-19 crisis offers valuable lessons. The incorporation of such timely and relevant topics into language instruction enhances students' engagement and emotional connection with the material.

D. Writing Assignment

Writing plays a crucial role in language education, testing students' proficiency in language usage and serving as a medium for expressing personal thoughts and emotions. For this assignment, students were instructed to research and compile information on prominent companies using the Internet. Their task was to present details in English, including the company's name, corporate culture, main products and services, achievements, and competitors. This activity not only required peer review and collaborative learning but also fostered a comprehensive understanding of corporate culture, preparing students for future employment opportunities.

Through this exercise, students learned to articulate their ideas in precise English, deepening their grasp of corporate culture. This not only lays the groundwork for successful job hunting and career development but also cultivates their humanistic qualities and intercultural communication skills. Students effectively disseminate Chinese culture by narrating Chinese stories in English, thereby contributing to the global cultural dialogue.

IV. THE TEACHING ACHIEVEMENTS

Using Zhaoqing University as a case study, this research has made significant strides in integrating moral education into workplace English teaching. This integration has not only enhanced the caliber of teaching staff but has also elevated the quality of teaching and fostered comprehensive development in students. The outcomes have yielded a set of replicable and adaptable strategies and practices, instrumental for reforming moral education in college English courses.

A. Enhancement of Teachers' Quality

Adhering to the adage, "The preacher himself should first understand the preach and believe it" the successful incorporation of moral education into courses and the promotion of virtue through education pivot on the quality of teachers, which asks for a higher level of ideological and theoretical understanding, educational awareness, and professional competence from teachers. As college English educators, they must be proficient in English and well-versed in Marxism-Leninism, Mao

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Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the "Three Represents" Scientific Outlook on Development, and Xi Jinping Thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era. Teachers participating in this study exemplify the ideal blend of teaching provess and educational mentorship.

B. Improvement of Teaching Quality

Aligned with the university's talent development objectives, the college English teaching team has revised the syllabus, enhanced the teaching plan, content, and methodologies, and integrated critical ideological and political elements related to the Communist Party of China, traditional Chinese culture, and core socialist values into the teaching process. This integration achieves a harmonious balance between English language instruction, cultural knowledge transfer, and proper value orientation. A diverse array of teaching methods, including situational, task-based, role-playing, and case analysis, along with digital teaching resources like micro-lectures, MOOCs, and multimedia, are employed to enrich classroom dynamics and extend learning beyond traditional boundaries. Teachers facilitate learning both inside and outside the classroom and employ a mix of online and offline tools for student assessment and supervision, thereby comprehensively enhancing the quality of instruction.

C. Promotion of Students' All-Round Development

Student interviews unanimously reveal that the integration of Workplace English teaching with their specific academic disciplines and real-world job requirements significantly enhances their engagement and motivation in learning English. The majority of students concur that teachers employ a diverse array of stimulating and educational activities tailored to various pedagogical objectives. Such activities, including presentations, role-playing, and situational enactments, allow students to fully showcase their talents while concurrently honing their English language skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation to varying extents. The collaborative learning environment, characterized by effective communication and teamwork among group members, robustly fosters each student's capabilities in independent learning, group collaboration, problem-solving, and team spirit. Moreover, the design of project tasks rooted in professional contexts encourages students to apply their knowledge actively and enhances their innovative capacities. Importantly, students language curriculum. This integration enables students to appreciate the career trajectories and craftsmanship ethos of distinguished entrepreneurs, thereby cultivating their awareness of the craftsmanship spirit and innovation. Additionally, this educational approach instills an intercultural communication consciousness in students and bolsters their confidence in traditional Chinese culture, substantially enriching their professional and overall personal development.

D. Records of Prizes

Throughout the research process, team members have been proactive in incorporating more moral elements into their teaching, significantly enhancing their teaching effectiveness. This improvement is evidenced by the students' achievements in various competitions. In the "Guangsi Cup" college students' English course ideological and political theme competition, under the guidance of Professor Tong Shuhua, Liu Huixian secured the third prize, and Professor Tong received the Excellent Guide Teacher Award. Similarly, Feng Shengyun and Gao Jiancheng, under the tutelage of Dong Lirong, achieved the third prize in the non-English major category of the 9th "League Cup" undergraduate college English writing competition in Guangdong Province, with Dong Lirong being honored with the Excellent Guide Teacher award. These accomplishments underscore the tangible impact of integrating moral education into workplace English teaching, both in terms of teaching quality and student achievements.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has thoroughly examined the integration of moral education into workplace English teaching, an approach of significant import within higher education. The case study of Zhaoqing University exemplifies the strategic alignment of educational goals with the principles of moral and ideological enrichment. This initiative, echoing the directives from General Secretary Xi Jinping and the Ministry of Education, emphasizes the critical role of virtue in the educational process. Through a meticulously planned and executed integration, which includes holistic curriculum design, selective teaching materials, and innovative teaching methods, the initiative ensures a seamless incorporation of moral education into workplace English instruction. The effectiveness of this approach is manifested in the enhanced teaching quality, improved

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instructional standards, and the comprehensive development of students. This synthesis of linguistic skills and moral values is instrumental in preparing students for professional life, equipped with a strong moral compass and cultural awareness.

The successful outcomes of this integration are observable in the achievements of both students and educators, as seen in the recognition received in various academic and ideological competitions. These achievements affirm the effectiveness of merging moral education with workplace English teaching and highlight the potential for applying these strategies in diverse educational settings. The integration at Zhaoqing University serves as a pioneering and exemplary model, showcasing a harmonious and synergistic blend of language education and moral cultivation. This model heralds a new era of holistic, value-driven education in China and emphasizes the crucial role of educators in developing not only competent professionals but also morally responsible individuals, ready to make positive contributions to society and the global community.

In summary, the necessity of integrating moral education into workplace English is unequivocal, and the course itself provides a conducive environment for educators to implement this education. It remains a long-term commitment for teachers to unearth more ideological and political elements in workplace English teaching. This endeavor is pivotal in enhancing the quality of educators, elevating the teaching standards of the course, and fostering the all-round development of students. This integration represents a significant stride towards creating an educational landscape where moral and academic growth are interwoven, ensuring the cultivation of well-rounded individuals in a globalized world.

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