

# An Effective Exploration of Integrating Ideological and Political Theories Education into College English Course

**Xuan Zhao**

*International Programs Office, Shanghai Normal University Tianhua College, Shanghai 201815, China*

**ABSTRACT.** *College English is a compulsory basic curriculum for college students. Because of its wide audience, large span and long class hours, it has become an significant front of 'ideological and political education', and also a significant component of education and teaching reform of the 'ideological and political education'. Starting from the College English Teaching Guide, this paper attempts to seek the effective ways of integrating the elements of 'ideological and political education' into college English curriculum from the perspectives of teachers and students, class and extracurricular practice.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Ideological and Political Theories Education, College English, Course Teaching, Path*

## 1. Introduction

Xi Jinping pointed out at the National Conference of Ideological and Political Work in Colleges: 'Ideological and political work in colleges and universities has close relationship with the fundamental problem of what kind of people colleges and universities cultivate, how to cultivate people and for whom. We should persist in taking moral cultivation as the central link, implementing ideological and political theories throughout the process of education, and striving to bring about a new situation for the development of higher education in China'. The proposal of 'ideological and political education' is a positive response to the requirement of General Secretary Xi to 'foster virtue through education' and 'cultivate people throughout the process'. College English teaching needs to get the core connotation of 'ideological and political education' and its new tasks, explore new paths, accept new ideas, set up new goals, and reconstruct teaching content, so that practical teaching can play a catalytic role in transforming theoretical knowledge into theoretical belief.

## 2. The Idea and Research Status of Ideological and Political Education of College English

Ideological and political education in college English teaching belongs to the reform of 'ideological and political education'. The term 'ideological and political education' was first raised by Shanghai government in 2014. It aims to 'take moral education as the basic task of education, deeply explore the ideological and political education resources in all kinds of courses, make ideological and political courses integrated into all kinds of courses and form a synergistic effect, and build a comprehensive education idea of all staff participating in the whole process', which emphasizes that in apart from imparting knowledge, each course also should have ideological and political functions[1]. The idea of 'ideological and political education' indicates that the theory and practice of higher education in China have got a new development and reached a new height. The most important education method and realization path of 'ideological and political education' is to adopt recessive education, emphasizing that 'the teaching content that students are exposed to in the specific learning process does not have a clear plan and purpose'[3]. Besides receiving professional and general education courses, students also receive the ideological and political education implemented in a silent way.

With 'ideological and political education' as the key word, the author retrieved 6,252 related papers from CNKI, while only 335 papers were retrieved with 'college English, ideology and politics' as the key word, taking 5.4% of the total. At present, the research on the integration of 'ideological and political education' into college English mostly focuses on the theoretical level. Scholars have

discussed the feasibility, existing problems, effective strategies and training paths of 'ideological and political education' in college English from different perspectives. For example, An Xiumei analyzed the ideological and political functions of *College English*[1]. Shen Yi explored the effective ways of integrating 'ideological and political education' into *College English Course*[2]. Wang Hui conducted a research on the integration path of 'ideological and political education' in college English under the ubiquitous learning environment[3]. In general, recently, most of the studies on college English ideological and political education have analyzed the implementation paths of college English ideological and political teaching in many aspects from a macro perspective, such as textbook reform, teachers training, curriculum assessment, etc., but have not explored the detailed implementation plan. Thus, this paper will emphasize the four elements of 'teacher, student, class and extracurricular practice' to elaborate the practical path of integrating 'ideological and political education' into college English teaching, so as to make college English and ideological and political education play a synergistic and complementary effect.

### 3. Feasibility Analysis of College English 'Ideological and Political Education'

As a general course, English is an important public compulsory course in college, covering almost all majors. Students are involved in a wide range, and the teaching time span is long, especially in the freshman and sophomore period, which is also the key period of the formation or transformation of students' values. At this stage, the students will also take part in college English test or campus English activities, and English input will occupy most of their learning time. English teachers are also one of the teachers they contact more, and accompany students for a long time. Thus, the characteristics of wide coverage, large span, long class hours, and long contact time between students and teachers determine that college English class is an effective place for ideological education besides ideological and political class, which provides the possibility for integrating ideological and political education into the teaching process and giving play to the invisible educational function of English course. It's feasible to find the combination of value content and value guidance, explore the ideological and political theory teaching resources of college English course, and introduce them into the ideological and political education of colleges as a useful supplement.

#### 3.1 The nature of College English courses coincides with the essence of 'ideological and political education'

In 2015, the Committee of College English Teaching Steering gave a very specific description of the nature of college English courses in the *Teaching Guide*: 'English courses are an important part of humanistic education in colleges, which have both instrumental and humanistic attributes. Therefore, we should fully explore the various humanistic connotation of college English courses and realize the organic unity of instrumental and humanistic nature.[4]' This means that college English curriculum not only has the instrumental function of imparting language knowledge and skills, but also has the humanistic function. It undertakes the task of cultivating students' cultural literacy and shaping their correct outlook on life, values and world view. The core of humanism is people-oriented, elevating the value of people, and focusing on the cultivation of people's overall quality and all-round improvement[5]. We should grasp the dual nature of college English course, fully explore the rich humanistic connotation of it, carry out subtle ideological and political education for college students, enhance cultural self-confidence and comprehensively improve their humanistic quality in the process of imparting language knowledge, training language application skills, broadening international vision and cultivating cross-cultural communication awareness.

There are lots of excellent materials for ideological and political education in various versions of college English textbooks, which are of practical and educational significance, and can arouse students' strong ideological and emotional resonance, exert a subtle influence on students, and improve students' ideological taste and personality cultivation [6]. Taking the textbook *New Edition of College English* of a certain publisher as an example, the theme of text B in Unit 2 is 'Friends'. The touching story of 'Never abandon a friend no matter how hard it is' tells the great friendship, which teach students to cherish friendship and never abandon friends when in danger. Furthermore, taking the second volume of *Comprehensive Curriculum of College English* as an example, the first unit A reflects the basic connotation of Confucianism in China's excellent traditional culture by telling Americans how to understand 'harmony' and 'benevolence' in the essence of Confucianism, and to stimulate students' understanding of the importance of cultural communication, and to build students' confidence in

Chinese culture. We should train students' language skills and elevate the excellent Chinese culture simultaneously, so that students can be influenced imperceptibly, form a sound personality and noble sentiment, and make an all-round development.

### ***3.2 the function of College English course is consistent with the function of 'ideological and political education'***

All courses in college have the dual function of imparting knowledge cultivating ability and ideological and political education, bearing the function of cultivating students' outlook on life, values and world view. Ideological and political education is not a course, but a concept covering ideological and political theory, which is also a way of thinking. In the teaching process, teachers should carry out ideological and political education intentionally, organically and effectively. In other words, in the teaching planning at the top level, students' ideological and political training should be taken as the course goal and should be combined with professional development education. The idea of 'ideological and political education' emphasizes the ideological and political functions of the curriculum, and make the core values of Chinese socialism throughout the teaching process. As general secretary Xi Jinping said at the National Conference of Ideological and Political work in Colleges, 'we should take full advantage of the main channel of classroom teaching to improve the ideological and political theory course, enhance the pertinence and affinity of it, and meet the requirement and expectation of students' improvement. Meanwhile, other courses should take good responsibility to make the ideological and political theory course better integrate with them and form a synergistic effect'.

The *Teaching Guide* also emphasizes the function of college English courses: college foreign language education is of great importance to the higher education in China, which plays an important role in promoting the harmonious development of knowledge, capability and comprehensive quality[4]. As an integral part of higher education, college English plays an irreplaceable role in talent training and embodies the overall value of college education. The educational function of higher education is reflected in the process of students' learning cultural knowledge, expanding international vision and cultivating cultural literacy. It is the potential educational function of college English curriculum itself that can facilitate the formation and growth of students' excellent moral quality, achieve the ultimate goal of students' all-round improvement, and realize the humanistic value orientation. It has incomparable advantages in the cultivation of students' humanistic quality, which provides the necessary foundation and possibility for 'ideological and political education'.

## **4. The Current Situation of College English Ideological and Political Education**

### ***4.1 The existing teaching material content can hardly meet the 'ideological and political' needs***

Taking the common college English textbooks published by FLTRP, FLTRP and higher education society as an example, none of the existing textbooks explicitly put forward the guiding principle of carrying forward China's splendid traditional culture, nor did any set of textbooks clearly put forward that its compilation purpose and contents are to serve moral education and 'ideological and political education' [7]. These textbooks are edited with full consideration of the study life, current and future situation of college students, as well as various customs and practices of western countries, while the content of ideological and political education is relatively small, and the overall content is lack of systematicness and standardization [8]. This is mainly reflected in the serious inadequacy of the proportion of Chinese culture and scientific and technological content. For example, in a certain version of *College English*, there are very few Chinese national hero stories, literary works of famous Chinese writers, China's scientific and technological progress, China's poetry and painting or places of interest in more than 60 articles in four volumes. Textbooks ignore and weaken Chinese culture at the source of content selection, resulting in an imbalance between Chinese and western cultures. College students are excessively influenced by western culture and ideology, which is very unfavorable for them to spread Chinese culture and build up confidence in Chinese culture.

### ***4.2 The absence of college English teachers' ideological and political awareness***

As early as 2010, some scholars conducted a survey on the ideological and political education in a university in China, and found that more than 70% of professional teachers only focused on

professional teaching and ignored ideological and political education. Less than 30% of teachers integrated it into the classroom. Obviously, there is ideological and political vacancy in professional teachers [8]. Some college English teachers have insufficient understanding of the importance of carrying out ideological and political course, lack of initiative and consciousness, who only focus on imparting professional knowledge, professional teaching and professional improvement, while regardless of students' ideological political work. They take it for granted that the ideological political education is the work of other teachers and counselors. To a large extent, this deviation in the understanding of responsibility hinders the effective expansion of ideological political education channels and carriers for the students and the coordinated development of ideological and political courses and professional courses, and also affects the goal of 'three integrity education'[9]. Furthermore, in English teaching process, some English teachers mainly pay attention to the students' language skills in terms of the design of teaching objectives and the evaluation indicators. Therefore, in the teaching process, too much emphasis is put on the teaching of language knowledge and western culture, focusing on the improvement of students' language skills, while the ideological and political education of students is relatively less considered or involved, which tells that the ideological and political function of English course is ignored in subjective consciousness [10].

## **5. Practical Paths to Promote 'Ideological and Political Education' in College English Curriculum**

### ***5.1 Teachers: the key to the integration of 'ideological and political' elements***

Apart from the teachers of ideological and political theory courses, college English teachers are the most decisive group for the smooth promotion of 'ideological and political education', and can implement the goals well [5]. Whether the teachers can recognize the ideological and political elements of the courses and dig out the moral value contained in the course fundamentally determines whether the courses can achieve the educational goal of 'ideological and political education' [11]. Therefore, college English teachers should grasp the core concept of 'ideological and political education', fully understand the intrinsic value and social value of the subject, strengthen the sense of mission and social responsibility of education, and enhance the ideological and political education consciousness. They should be aware of the task of ideological and political education they undertake, regard 'fostering virtue through education' as the sacred mission of educators, and enhance the consciousness and initiative of 'ideological and political education'. It is necessary for them to adhere to the socialist core values in the process of education and, and become practitioners and disseminators of advanced culture [9]. Furthermore, as college English teachers, they must constantly enhance their political acuity and discrimination, and rationally treat the cultural differences between China and the west, and have to have firm belief and solid theory, act as a teacher and act in accordance with their words, and be able to infect students with their noble personality charm, stimulate students' moral feelings, and enlighten students' ideals and beliefs [6].

### ***5.2 Students: the core of the integration of 'ideological and political' elements***

The cultivation of talents is the key point of the promotion of 'ideological and political education' in colleges [12], so the core of 'ideological and political education' in college English is to comprehensively improve the ability of talent cultivation and adhere to student-oriented principle. Students' principal role in learning needs to be emphasized, and their cognitive, emotional and ideological development demands need to be addressed. First of all, it is necessary to change students' cognition of the nature of college English courses and make them realize that this course has rich humanistic connotation rather than being a pure language tool. Secondly, teachers should pay attention to the emotional cultivating of students rather than just preaching in teaching, and make them feel humanistic care and emotional resonance. Finally, teachers should also strengthen the ideological and political construction of students, constantly improve students' ideological level and political awareness, cultivate students' good ideological and moral quality and improve students' cultural knowledge and literacy, thus make students become builders and successors of socialist cause with all-round development of morality, intelligence, health and beauty.

### ***5.3 Class: the carrier of the integration of 'ideological and political' elements***

The themes and language can be combined with each other in college English teaching content, that is, the combination of macro and micro. From the point of macro themes, the hot topics of interpersonal relationship, science and technology, globalization, etc., involved in college English teaching materials can be extended to 'ideological and political' elements such as honesty and friendliness, scientific and technological innovation, and cultural self-confidence. College English teachers can also explore the ideological and political points suitable for the growth of students according to their majors, English foundation and interests, and skillfully integrate the spiritual guidance of ideals and beliefs in the language teaching process [5]. At the micro level, teachers should choose the examples and teaching materials related to 'ideological and political education'. They should grab the right opportunity, grasp the real time and appropriateness, so as to truly integrate ideological and political education into every step of teaching and implement it into the main channel of classroom teaching.

### ***5.4 Extracurricular practice: the extension of the integration of 'ideological and political' elements***

The construction of 'ideological and political education' requires in-class education to be integrated with that of out-class. While taking full advantage of the main channel of class and establishing the main position of 'ideological and political education', ideological and political education should also be integrated into the whole process of college students' extracurricular practice. It is necessary to build a three-dimensional practice mode of education, integrate and extend the 'ideological and political' elements into the 'second classroom', give full play to the supplementary role of the 'second classroom', maximize the educational function of extracurricular practice, and promote the effectiveness of that. The college English teaching team can cooperate with the student affairs department to carry out positive, optimistic and elegant campus cultural activities in various forms, such as the report translation competition of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the English corner or speech competition with the theme of ideological and political education, so as to stimulate students' stronger interest in learning and sense of participation. Only when students' extracurricular activities, ideological and political education and language learning resonate with each other, can they have a deep understanding of ideological and political education and finally explore the ideological and political education function of 'extracurricular position'.

## **References**

- [1] Xiumei An(2018). A research on the function of "ideological and political education of course" in college English. *Comparative Study of Cultural Innovation*,vol.2, no.11, p.84-85.
- [2] Yi Shen(2019).An effective way to integrate course ideology and politics into college English curriculum . *Comparative Study of Cultural Innovation*,vol.3, no.4, p.121-122.
- [3] Hui Wang(2019). A study on the integration path of college English curriculum thinking and politics based on ubiquitous learning environment.*Education Teaching Forum*,vol.1, p.54-55.
- [4] Foreign Language Teaching Steering Committee of Higher Education Institutions of the Ministry of Education(2015). *College English Teaching Guide (Draft for Review)*
- [5] Junping Lu(2019). An effective exploration of integrating ideological and political education into college English curriculum. *Journal of Shanghai Polytechnic University*, vol.36, no.2, p.129-133.
- [6] Juwu Zhang(2020). Research on "ideological and political theories education". *Journal of Xi'an University (Social Sciences Edition)*,vol.23, no.1, p.94-99.
- [7] Zhenguang Liu and Manman Yue(2020). Resetting the educational philosophy and restructuring learning content to implement morality cultivation in foreign language course instruction.*Journal of Foreign Languages*,vol.43, no.5, p.21-29.
- [8] Wei He(2019).Research on integration of "ideological and political education of course"into the teaching path of college English course.*Journal of Zhongzhou University*, vol.36, no.6, p.96-100.
- [9] Yuegang Du and Ruijuan Sun(2019).Methodology research of "ideological and political theories education" in college English course. *Journal of Yan'an University(Social Sciences Edition)*,vol.41, no.4, p.122-126.
- [10] Qilan Xie(2018). Ideological and Political Elements in College English Classroom.*Read and Write Periodical*,vol.15, no.11, p.8.
- [11] Yueqi Wu(2018).Three focal points of efficient promotion of "ideological and political theories education".*The Party Building and Ideological Education in Schools* ,vol.1, p.67-69.
- [12] Xiwen Gao(2017).Research on the mode of ideological and political theories education of

university curriculum based on collaborative education: Taking Shanghai University Reform as an Example. The Party Building and Ideological Education in Schools ,vol.24, p.16-18.