

# Research on College English Teaching Reform from the Perspective of Ideological and Political Education

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## ABSTRACT

With the convening of the 2016 National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities, the idea of “Ideological and Political Education” has gradually been integrated into the teaching of various courses. College English is a basic and compulsory course with long hours of study, which almost covers students of all majors. However, some teachers still adopt traditional teaching methods to lay more stress on the transmission of knowledge, ignoring the ideological and political education, so it is imperative to carry out teaching reform. This paper, taking the course “College English” as an example, illustrates the necessity and concrete proposals of implementing ideological and political education, aiming to achieve the goal of moral education in the process of imparting knowledge, help students to shape the right outlook on world, life and values, cultivate socialist builders and successors with confidence in Chinese culture, and finally realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

**Keywords:** *Ideological and political education, College English, Necessity, Moral education.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of “Ideological and Political Education” was first proposed by Shanghai Government in 2014, aiming at taking moral education as the fundamental task in teaching, deeply exploring ideological and political theories education resources in all courses, so that those courses and ideological and political theories education are in the same direction and form a synergistic effect [1]. In December 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities, “The ideological and political work in colleges and universities is related to the fundamental question of what kind of people to train, how to train people and for whom to train people. We must continue to take moral education as the central link, carry out ideological and political work throughout the whole process of education and teaching, realize whole-course and all-round education, and strive to create a new situation for the development of higher education in China[2].” After the convening of this conference, the concept of ideological and political education in all courses is gradually known to people, indicates the direction of ideological and political education in colleges and universities and soon becomes the focus of scholars’ research. Ideological and political education is

a new project and mission for all educators in China. It is not a specific course, but a kind of educational idea and thinking mode, which takes various courses as the carrier, integrates ideological and political education theories, transforms subject knowledge into educational resources, and realizes the organic unity of knowledge transmission and value guidance [3].

## 2. THE NECESSITY OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN COLLEGE ENGLISH

In May 2020, the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China issued *The Guidelines for Ideological and Political Construction of Higher Education Courses*, which points out that talent cultivation in higher education is a process of unifying intellectual education and moral education. To build a high level of talent training system, it is essential to integrate the ideological and political work into teaching, pay attention to the ideological and political construction in all courses, and solve the problem that academic education is separated from ideological and political education. The effect of moral education is the basic standard of testing all the work in colleges and universities. To carry out the fundamental task of knowledge and moral education, educators must

combine value shaping, knowledge imparting and ability training into one. To comprehensively promote the ideological and political construction in all courses needs to put value guidance into knowledge imparting and ability training, so as to help students shape the correct outlook on world, life and values.

In order to achieve this goal, all higher institutions, all teachers and all courses should bear the responsibility of educating people, make all kinds of courses and ideological and political education in the same direction, unify explicit education and implicit education to form a synergistic effect, and build a grand framework of full-range education. It is necessary to build an ideological and political education system with comprehensive coverage, diversified types, progressive levels and mutual support according to the needs of national and regional development, the orientation of higher institute development and talents training objectives. Teachers are supposed to explore the ideological and political education resources contained in various courses and teaching methods, make the student all-round socialist builders and successors with rich knowledge, healthy body and high morality.

The College English course is mainly taught to non-English majors in Grade 1 and 2. Because of its wide coverage and long teaching time, there are many opportunities for teachers to interact with students. Therefore, College English classroom is an important place to conduct ideological and political education. Most college English teaching resources come from western countries, and some texts in textbooks are even in original English. When learning these English materials, young students are easily influenced by western thoughts and may blindly worship other cultures and abandon our own excellent culture. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen ideological and political education in College English teaching. Under the concept of ideological and political education in all courses, College English, as a general education course, should be designed to integrate ideological and political elements and give full play to its synergistic effect, so that students can view the differences dialectically in the collision of two languages and cultures, and cultivate their cultural confidence and correct values.

### 3. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN COLLEGE ENGLISH

Courses are the basic carriers of ideological and political education construction. In combination with the characteristics of college English, this section explores how to organically integrate the ideological and political elements into teaching from the aspects of teaching content, teaching methods and textbook compilation, so

as to achieve the effect of nurturing students naturally and effectively.

#### 3.1. Selecting Proper Teaching Content

*Applied College English* textbooks, published by Dalian University of Technology Press, are used in the college where the author works. Taking the *Applied College English Integrated Book* (Advanced 1, third edition) as an example, this textbook consists of eight units designed for one semester. But in general, the contents of these 8 units cannot be completed in one semester. Therefore, the teaching team have a meeting to discuss and select four units that are easier to associate with ideological and political elements, and formulate corresponding teaching syllabuses and plans in order to achieve better teaching effects. Table 1 below shows the selected teaching units and the expected ideological and political objectives of the course.

**Table 1.** The Selected Teaching Units and Expected Objectives

Selected Units	Ideological and Political Objectives
Unit 1 Maximize the Rationality in Thinking	To develop students' critical thinking ability and correct values
Unit 2 Meet China	To make students realize the harmony between humans and nature, and Chinese Philosophy
Unit 3 Career Choices for Your Type	To help students find the direction of life and a truly satisfying career
Unit 8 Transportation	To be proud of the rapid development of China's transportation and the enhancement of national strength

Proper teaching content is the foundation of carrying out ideological and political education. And then, ideological and political elements are inserted in the teaching process appropriately and skillfully, for example, when explaining the difficult words in the text: ...While technology is **revolutionizing** many facets of our lives, we have not seen a radical change in transportation since the Wright brothers introduced air travel over 100 years ago. Tying together, the Middle East region would produce greater virtual density, without congestion and pollution, spur **innovation**, productivity, job growth and more powerful sharing of knowledge, labor and investment...(excerpt from Unit 8 Transportation: Text A Hyperloop Inches Closer to Reality) [4].

The paragraph says that the Wright brothers invented the airplane, which has brought a complete change to traffic, and science and technology has

completely reformed all aspects of life and stimulated innovation. But this is a foreign example. When explaining the two new words “revolutionize” and “innovation”, teachers can cite the examples of China, such as the revolution of 1911, which ushered in a modern national and democratic revolution completely, overthrew the autocratic monarchy that had ruled China for thousands of years and established a republic regime. It has spread the concept of democracy and republicanism, greatly promoted the ideological liberation of the Chinese nation and accelerated China’s social reform with great shock and influence. This example helps to make students not forget China’s history and revolutionary martyr. The explanation of innovation is associated with the idea of “Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation” encouraged by our country in recent years, which was put forward in the speech of Premier Li Keqiang at the Summer Davos Forum in September 2014, so that students can understand China’s new policies and respond to the national call.

### 3.2. Varying Teaching Methods

In order to improve students’ English application ability, teachers in College English class usually spare the first 10 minutes of the class for students to stand on the platform and give a speech to the whole class. In the past, there was no limit on the theme of students’ presentation. Students used to show their interests, hometown, idols and so on. After the implementation of the ideological and political education concept, teachers will confine the range of presentation, and the theme of speech is encouraged to include moral education elements such as socialist core values and excellent Chinese traditional culture. Teachers’ rating of students’ speech performance will be included in the overall semester evaluation as a formative evaluation.

At the same time, teachers should vary teaching methods, carefully design teaching activities, and enhance the effect of moral education in a novel and lively way. It is advisable to apply heuristic, inquiry and participatory teaching methods in the form of case analysis, group discussion, report presentation, role play, debate and knowledge competition. Teachers organize classroom activities in combination with political news and hot issues, so that students can know more about our country and society while learning English. For example, the year 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China.

Students are divided into several groups and assigned tasks. They are required to learn the histories of China from 1949 to 2019 after class, collect Chinese and English materials of some significant events, make group reports in class, and finally carry out knowledge competitions. Such a flipped classroom teaching method can effectively mobilize students’ enthusiasm and improve their autonomous learning ability and cooperative ability [5].

In addition, teachers should also embody ideological and political elements in assigning homework, such as asking students to read the News on *China Daily* and *China Today* after class. By reading English newspapers and magazines about China, students can not only enlarge their political vocabulary and improve their reading comprehension efficiency, but also follow the development of various fields of the country at any time. What’s more, they can learn the strategies of national leaders in governing the country, and cultivate cultural self-confidence, national pride and patriotism [6].

### 3.3. Compiling Teaching Materials

At present, the common problem in College English textbooks is that the content is mainly set to cultivate students’ knowledge and ability in listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation, but there are few ideological and political elements such as Chinese culture and values in them. Therefore, it is not easy for teachers to integrate the ideological and political elements into teaching. In view of the actual situation, the English Department in which the author works organized teachers to compile a book *A Guide to Chinese Culture in English*, which combines knowledge, readability and practicability, covers cultural fields such as traditional festivals, diet, art, clothing, traditional Chinese medicine, ethnic minorities, religion and literature, in order to enhance students’ sense of identity and self-confidence in Chinese culture, arouse students’ consciousness and sense of urgency in cultural inheritance. Compared with other similar textbooks, this book has the following characteristics: Each unit contains four passages to show one aspect of Chinese culture in detail, and is collocated with situational dialogues related to the unit theme, aiming to guide students to introduce Chinese culture in English and fully exercise students’ comprehensive ability of using English. Table 2 is the contents of the book.

**Table 2.** A Guide to Chinese Culture in English

Contents	Ideological and Political Objectives
Unit 1 Colorful Festivals	To experience the rich and colorful festival culture of China
Unit 2 Delicious Food & Drinks	To know the diverse diet culture and palatable cuisines of China
Unit 3 Chinese Folk Arts	To learn about the Chinese folk arts with a long history
Unit 4 Traditional Chinese Costumes	To enjoy the beauty of traditional Chinese costumes
Unit 5 Traditional Chinese Medicine	To marvel the magic of Traditional Chinese Medicine
Unit 6 Ethnic Minorities	To understand the tradition and customs of 56 Ethnic groups in China
Unit 7 Spiritual World	To know the traditional Chinese religions and philosophies like Confucius and Mencius
Unit 8 The Four Great Classic Novels	To appreciate the extensive and profound Chinese literature

This book is a supplementary textbook for College English teaching and can be used by teachers in combination with other textbooks, so that teachers can better integrate ideological and political ideas into English teaching. In addition, it is also a suitable textbook for the elective course "Chinese Culture" for students who are interested in further learning Chinese culture in English.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In traditional College English teaching, more attention is paid to the transmission of knowledge and the improvement of skills. It is easy to show a tendency of simplification in teaching content and methods, ignoring the overall educational function of the course itself. The ideological and political education requires foreign language teachers not only to have rich reserves of professional knowledge, but also to bear in mind the fundamental task of cultivating people with high morality, so that teaching can finally return to the original intention of educating people, which is also a beneficial exploration to steadily promote the reform of ideological and political education in all courses under the background of the new era.

As the main body of English teaching, English teachers should have a high sense of mission and responsibility, deeply understand the significance and urgency of the reform and strive to explore a new way of College English teaching with distinctive characteristics. In the process of College English teaching, teachers should lay emphasis on cultivating college students' humanistic quality and national feelings; infiltrate moral education factors into English teaching so as to imperceptibly complete the best combination of subject teaching and moral education. More importantly, educators and students should keep pace with the times; do a good job in inheriting the excellent Chinese culture as well as carrying forward the socialist core values. Hopefully in this way, we can embrace a bright and rosy future, and finally realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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