



The Infusion of Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture into English Pedagogy: An Empirical Study on Advancing Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education

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Abstract. Centering on the fundamental mission of "fostering virtue through education," this study integrates language teaching with the educational philosophy of "moral cultivation" and the value of "great doctors with utmost sincerity." Utilizing project-based learning and a blended online-offline teaching model, it embeds ideological and political education throughout the English teaching process. Through experimental methods, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews, the findings indicate that a deeper exploration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) culture, supplemented with new ideological and political materials, can effectively assist students in acquiring English language knowledge, enhancing their cultural literacy, and realizing the educative function of the English discipline.

Keywords: English Language Teaching; Curriculum Ideology and Politics; Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Culture

1 Introduction

College English, as a language and culture course that integrates general education, cultural awareness, and instrumental utility, carries the dual mission of fostering language proficiency and cultural cultivation within the context of the "Three-Wide Education" initiative and ideological-political curriculum development. Current research on curriculum-based ideological and political education predominantly focuses on macro-level conceptual discussions or disciplinary practices within humanities fields, while systematic and operable implementation models for integrating fine traditional Chinese cultural elements into public foundational courses like College English remain insufficient[1]. This study, taking traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) culture as an entry point, aims to construct a systematic, tiered, and evaluable pathway for cultural integration, thereby addressing the practical gap in deeply integrating tradi-

tional culture within College English ideological-political education and innovating a tripartite teaching model that synthesizes "language, culture, and values."

TCM culture embodies the Chinese nation's perspectives on life, health, and philosophical wisdom. Its core concepts, such as "benevolence and medical ethics," "harmony between humanity and nature," and "preventive treatment," align closely with socialist core values and professional ethics education. Integrating TCM culture into College English teaching is not only essential for enhancing students' ability to tell China's stories in English and strengthening their cultural confidence and national sentiment, but also a practical necessity for promoting the global dissemination of TCM and cultivating interdisciplinary talents[2]. This requires a fundamental shift in teaching from mere language skill training to value-oriented guidance and cultural transmission.

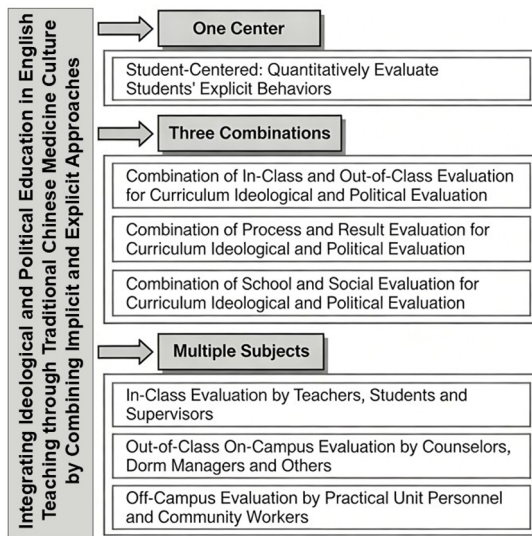


Fig. 1. Evaluation Model

To achieve the ideological and political education goals of College English and fully leverage the educational potential of TCM, this study explores the use of multidimensional narratives of TCM culture as a vehicle, systematically incorporating them into teaching content (as shown in Figure 1). These narratives are organically integrated into instructional activities such as oral communication, speech, translation, and intercultural communication, guiding students to deeply understand and disseminate TCM culture through English learning and practice. This approach aims to establish distinctive course modules, fostering a mutually reinforcing relationship between traditional cultural inheritance and language application skills. Regarding effectiveness evaluation, the course adopts a comprehensive assessment model that combines "implicit values and explicit competencies." Drawing on psychological and pedagogical theories, this model observes students' internal cultural identity, value formation, and ideo-

logical development by examining their explicit behaviors, such as explaining TCM concepts in English, engaging in cross-cultural dialogues, completing project-based tasks, and participating in classroom activities. This multifaceted evaluation system is designed to comprehensively reflect students' holistic development in knowledge, competencies, and values, thereby ensuring the effective implementation of curriculum-based ideological and political education objectives.

2 Application of TCM in Ideological and Political Education on English Courses

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) culture encompasses not only the fundamental theories, principles, methods, and skills of TCM but also carries a long history, forming a complex cultural system that integrates classical texts, renowned physicians, medical schools, traditions, philosophical thought, and medical ethics [3]. To achieve the integration of TCM culture into the ideological and political education of College English courses in TCM institutions, it is essential to define a scientifically sound application framework for their organic fusion.

2.1 Conducting Ideological and Political Education Centered on the Spirit of Historical TCM Figures

Historical TCM figures are both carriers of the development and transmission of TCM culture, known not only for their exceptional medical skills but also for their admirable character and moral radiance. Therefore, ideological and political education in College English can be centered around these historical TCM figures: Firstly, Patriotism Education: Historical TCM figures (e.g., Bian Que, Hua Tuo, Zhang Zhongjing) were deeply patriotic, dedicated to healing and contributing to the nation's health with their medical expertise. In College English, their stories can be used to explore the connotations of English terms such as loyalty, dedication, and responsibility. Secondly, Spirit of Inheritance and Innovation Education: These figures exhibited a spirit of exploration and practical courage, constantly innovating upon inherited knowledge to invigorate TCM's development. Thus, College English can leverage their examples to teach the spirit of innovation and perseverance. Thirdly, Medical Ethics and Humanistic Care Education: Historical TCM figures upheld lofty medical ethics and compassion, cherishing life, respecting nature, and dedicating themselves to healing. This represents a core quality for ideological education. Instructors can guide students to translate famous quotes from TCM masters, extracting their ideological educational value. Fourthly, Cultural Confidence Education: These figures played a key role in inheriting, promoting, and disseminating TCM globally, contributing to the spread of Chinese culture. Their stories can be used to foster cultural confidence. For instance, cloze exercises can be designed around narratives such as Jian Zhen's journey to Japan to spread TCM culture, requiring students to fill in relevant vocabulary.

2.2 Conducting Ideological and Political Education Centered on TCM Philosophical Concepts

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) philosophy, profound and long-standing, contains rich elements for ideological education. Integrating these concepts into teaching can both enrich the content of English classes and promote TCM culture, fostering well-rounded medical professionals. Firstly, integrate the philosophical concept of "Yin-Yang and the Five Elements." TCM philosophy holds that all things are composed of the two opposing yet complementary forces of Yin and Yang, which depend on and constrain each other to achieve balance. In English classes, instructors can guide students to explore the application of Yin-Yang balance in daily life—such as in cooperation, communication, and time management—helping them understand its importance for navigating interpersonal relationships and challenges. Secondly, incorporate the innovative thinking of "Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine." Throughout its development, TCM has continuously absorbed advanced external technologies to achieve integration with Western medicine [4]. In English classes, teachers can guide students to understand the advantages of this integrated approach and how to apply it in practice, encouraging discussions on its role in medical progress and technological innovation to cultivate an innovative mindset. Thirdly, embed the health concept of "Prevention First." TCM emphasizes disease prevention and promotes health preservation. In English classes, instructors can teach relevant health knowledge, helping students recognize the importance of prevention. Through discussions on how to apply this principle in daily life—such as maintaining healthy habits and regular exercise—students can develop correct health awareness and enhance self-care. Fourthly, integrate the concept of "Harmonious Coexistence Between Humans and Nature." Humans and nature form a unified whole and should coexist in harmony. In English classes, teachers can guide students to explore...

2.3 Conducting Ideological and Political Education Centered on the Historical Development of TCM

In practical teaching, the developmental history of TCM can be divided into four stages, with each stage's characteristics used to illustrate different ideological and political concepts. Firstly, the Enlightenment Stage. This refers to the period in ancient times when TCM was not yet systematized, and early practices were based on empirical observations. It highlights the importance of gradual accumulation, offering educational value for cultivating students' awareness of consistent learning. In College English courses, teachers can use picture-based writing or oral presentations to introduce students to this era, fostering good habits and a mindful approach to learning. Secondly, the Exploration Stage. This primarily covers ancient Chinese medical history, a crucial phase for TCM's development, during which renowned physicians such as Bian Que, Zhang Zhongjing, and Hua Tuo emerged. Through persistent practice, these figures gradually established a comprehensive theoretical system of TCM. Historical stories and challenges from this stage can serve as vehicles for promoting virtues such as diligence, perseverance, and resilience. Reading comprehension exercises

can be designed to guide students in reflecting on these ideological values. Thirdly, the Development Stage. This stage refers to the period from modern times onward, during which TCM not only progressed but also became increasingly standardized and systematic. By translating reports or articles on TCM's modern development, College English teaching can align with ideological education. This allows students to acquire language skills while engaging with themes such as patriotism, national commitment, and social responsibility embedded in TCM's growth [5]. Fourthly, the Innovation Stage. Beginning with China's reform and opening-up, this stage marks TCM's globalization and the emergence of integrated Chinese-Western medicine, reflecting new directions in its evolution. It embodies the ideological emphasis on fostering innovation and a global perspective. In College English, teachers can incorporate international TCM publications, innovative terminology, and related materials as learning resources. This helps students expand their professional English vocabulary while deepening their understanding of TCM's innovative spirit.

3 Curriculum Development and Application

3.1 Curriculum Design

The course is designed based on measurable objectives in knowledge, skills, and competencies. It was implemented over two semesters in a non-English major class (N=57), adopting a modular content structure and blended teaching mode combined with project-based learning. Instruction was delivered through an online platform and in-person sessions, totaling 36 credit hours across 18 classes. Ideological and political education was integrated throughout the pre-class, in-class, and post-class phases:

- Pre-class: Students reviewed bilingual (Chinese-English) materials on TCM culture and modern medical ethics via the platform.
- In-class: Instructors facilitated themed and group discussions on the wisdom and contemporary values of TCM, enhancing cultural confidence and professional ethics.
- Post-class: Students completed extended tasks such as TCM cultural dissemination or cross-cultural comparisons, and participated in online Q&A sessions.

Feedback was collected through surveys and interviews. Assessment combined formative and summative evaluation, emphasizing process-oriented performance and comprehensive evaluation of TCM-related humanistic literacy.

3.2 Course Content

The course content was systematically integrated and restructured (As shown in Table 1). A total of 208 teaching resources (including videos, documents, images, and reading materials) were uploaded to the platform, with 105 task points set. Core content included: course introduction, evaluation criteria, bilingual courseware, pre-class audio, text explanations, instructional videos, extended readings, an oral practice col-

umn for assessments, and chapter quizzes. Content design was organized around four modules.

Table 1. Integration of TCM into Curriculum Modules

Module Theme	Core Content	Language Skills Focus	Ideological and Political Mapping Points
Wisdom Source	Yin-Yang, Five Elements, Holistic View	Conceptual Explanation, Comparative Description	Dialectical Materialism, Systems Thinking
Art of Living	Dietary Therapy, Solar Terms, Daoyin (Guided Exercise)	Process Description, Suggestion Expression	Healthy China, Life Aesthetics
Art of Benevolence	Acupuncture, Herbal Medicine, Medical Case Studies	Terminology Translation, Process Narration	Craftsmanship Spirit, Life Ethics
Voice of the Times	Artemisinin, COVID-19 Contributions, Internationalization	Argumentation, Commentary, Public Speaking	Scientific Spirit, Community with a Shared Future for Mankind

3.3 Teaching Implementation

The teaching implementation is student-centered, emphasizing innovation and methodological integration. A whole-chain ideological and political education model is applied across pre-class, in-class, and post-class phases, systematically deepening the values of TCM culture through bilingual reading, thematic discussions, and extended tasks.

- Featured Teaching Activities: Activities such as themed photo check-ins and extended assignments like “The Way of Herbs” essays are conducted to integrate language training with value cultivation. For example, drawing on the unit “Craftsmanship” in English 2 (Basic Module), a series of activities like “TCM Tea Blending Workshop Check-ins” were designed based on TCM cultural characteristics.
- Personalized Tutoring: To address practical needs such as postgraduate entrance interview preparation, personalized revisions of English self-introductions are provided. A four-week “Enhancing Postgraduate Interview English Oral Skills” column is offered, specifically guiding students to incorporate TCM cultural elements—for instance, discussing career aspirations inspired by the Yellow Emperor’s Classic concept of “treating before illness arises”—to consciously integrate the contemporary value of TCM into ideological education.
- Diversified Teaching Methods: Various methods, including heuristic questioning, surveys, theory-practice integration, and case-based group discussions, are employed to foster the deep integration of professional knowledge and humanistic education.

- Interaction and Resource Expansion: Interactive activities such as polls, quick-response quizzes, and thematic discussions are incorporated into each session. An extracurricular resource library is established, covering pandemic-related expressions, original English videos, English pharmacopoeias, and other materials to broaden students' perspectives.

3.4 Teaching Evaluation

The course adopts a comprehensive evaluation system combining formative and summative assessment, each contributing 50% to the final grade. The formative assessment holistically monitors the learning process, covering attendance, assignments, chapter quizzes, class discussions, completion of course video viewing, and engagement with ideological and political materials and related evaluations. The summative assessment is based on the score achieved in the final examination.

4 Teaching Effectiveness of the Course

4.1 Course Access and Evaluation Data

The online platform recorded a total of 423,888 visits, with student visits accounting for 51,291. The course received a perfect rating of 5/5. The average student check-in rate was 99% (185/187), and the average completion rate for chapter tasks reached 97% (181/187). Assignment completion averaged 95% (178/187) with an average score of 89.67, while chapter quiz completion was 95% (178/187) with an average score of 90.42. The highest classroom participation score reached 471 points, and the overall average formative assessment score was 89. The course discussion forum generated 43 posts and 5,523 student replies.

4.2 Final Examination and Overall Course Performance

The average score for the final examination was 88.04 (out of 100), with 86% (161/187) of students scoring between 80–99 and 14% (26/187) scoring between 60–79. The average comprehensive final course score was 88.72, achieving a 100% pass rate (187/187) and an outstanding performance rate of 87% (162/187). In terms of language proficiency, pre- and post-course assessments showed significant improvement in students' mastery of thematic vocabulary and academic writing complexity. The accuracy of English expressions for core TCM terms (e.g., "Yin-Yang balance," "treatment based on syndrome differentiation") increased from 42% in the initial test to 89% in the final test. The use of complex sentences, academic phrases, and specialized terminology in academic writing tasks increased by an average of 67%, demonstrating the course's effectiveness in enhancing students' professional English application skills.

4.3 Evaluation of Cultural Literacy

In terms of cultural awareness, surveys indicated that over 90% of students reported "a deeper understanding of the philosophical wisdom behind TCM," and 88% expressed "greater willingness to introduce TCM culture in English." Modules comparing Chinese and Western medical systems and analyzing TCM classics effectively enhanced students' understanding of cultural differences and strengthened their confidence and willingness in cross-cultural communication. Regarding ideological internalization, high-frequency keywords in student interviews included "sense of pride," "responsibility," and "dialectical thinking." Project-based learning outcomes showed that students could consciously articulate the value of TCM from perspectives such as cultural heritage and the global health community. This reflects the successful internalization of ideological elements—cultural confidence, scientific spirit, and medical ethics—into students' value perceptions and behavioral awareness, achieving the organic integration of knowledge transmission and value guidance.

4.4 Student Feedback and Evaluation

Students expressed strong appreciation for the course, describing it as highly practical and beneficial. They actively engaged in classroom interactions, participating in a variety of teaching activities such as polls, quick-response quizzes, student selection, thematic discussions, group discussions, surveys, and in-class quizzes. Students also praised the design of online teaching content, the organization and implementation of teaching activities, and the engaging, informative, and humanistic nature of the supplementary reading materials.

5 Conclusions

Integrating TCM culture into the ideological and political framework of College English is deeply rooted in contemporary contexts such as cross-cultural communication and the international dissemination of TCM. By focusing on the historical figures and philosophical foundations of TCM, the course systematically incorporates ideological elements through diverse teaching methods, including curated readings, case analyses, and multimedia presentations. It encourages students to broaden their perspectives and enhance their understanding through independent research and material collection. This approach achieves the dual objectives of preserving cultural heritage and fostering cultural innovation, effectively aligning language proficiency development with value-oriented education.

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