

Original Paper

A Study on the Teaching Mode of Integrating Value Cultivation with Critical Thinking in the Listening and Speaking Course for English Majors

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Abstract

In order to solve the long-standing problems in English listening and speaking class, such as “Centralization of language knowledge and skills”; “Absence of critical thinking,” and “Separation of knowledge and affection”, this research put forward the model of Integrating Value Cultivation with Critical Thinking (IVCCT) (Note 1), which breaks through the traditional “Language-centrism” model. With values education as the core, this mode systematically cultivate the multi-competences in students, such as innovation, research, communication, cooperation and so on, through cross-cultural critical thinking activities, which will help the participants achieve the educational goals of integrating value shaping, knowledge transmission and competence cultivation.

Keywords

English Listening and Speaking, Integrating Values Cultivation with Critical Thinking, Values Cultivation

1. Introduction

Guidelines for the Construction of Moral Values Cultivation System in Higher Education Curriculum (hereinafter referred to as the *Guidelines*) was released by the Ministry of Education in 2020, May, 28th and it pointed out that “the cultivation of talents in colleges and universities is an unified process of educating people and cultivating talents. To build a high-level talent training system, we must integrate the Moral Values Cultivation system into it and do a good job in the construction of Moral Values Cultivation Courses” (Ministry of Education, 2020). Value Cultivation system cultivates humanity while Curriculum cultivates talents. Curriculum provides the carrier for Moral Values Cultivation, while Value Cultivation expands the depth and breadth of the Curriculum, so the two aspects

complement and promote each other.

National Standard for Undergraduate Teaching Quality in Colleges and Universities (hereinafter referred to as the New National Standard) lists critical thinking ability as one of the core skills of higher education training (National Administration Committee in Higher Education, 2018, p. 92). The cultivation of critical thinking ability is the basis for the cultivation of the innovative and practical abilities, and the cultivation of critical thinking ability can promote the development of “Nurturing Morality and Fostering Talent”, which is determined by the essential attributes of critical thinking. Critical thinking refers to a method to analyze, synthesize, evaluate and propose solutions to a certain problem, based on facts, data, evidence, observation, experience and reason, theory, principle, model and hypothesis (Paul & Elder, 2016).

The *English Listening and Speaking* course is a basic skill course to cultivate students’ comprehensive application abilities of English listening and speaking, critical thinking ability and humanistic literacy. However, there are some common problems in the teaching process of this course, such as “Centralization of language knowledge and skills”, “Separation of knowledge and affection”, “Priority of language abilities to cultural literacy” and “Absence of critical thinking”. (Lu, 2014) Huang (1998) pointed out that “Absence of critical thinking directly affects people’s creativity, research ability and problem solving ability, and also affects the quality of foreign language people” (p. 1). The serious consequences of it are mainly manifested as “Lack of the ability of analysis and synthesis in the work, Lack of individual ideas, innovation awareness and innovative accomplishments, so With the presence of the symptom of Absence of critical thinking, it will be difficult for English majors to cultivate creative talents, and English majors to emerge” (Huang, 2010, p. 12). With the continuous exploration and efforts of scholars, the critical thinking ability was finally written into the *New National Standard* in 2018, which was defined as “Study diligently and ask questions, believe in reason, respect facts, judge carefully, evaluate fairly, explore, and persistently pursue truth; be able to explain, analyze, evaluate, reason and explain the evidence, concept, method, standard and background; can consciously reflect and adjust their thinking process” (National Administration Committee in Higher Education, 2018, p. 95).

Critical Thinking and Values Cultivation are unified. The cultivation of critical thinking ability not only relies on the transmission of English professional knowledge, but also on the integration of the spiritual guidance of Values Cultivation. Values Cultivation in Curriculum is inseparable from the cultivation of critical thinking ability, which promotes the smooth realization of Values Cultivation in Curriculum. Only when the students have the ability to think critically can they distinguish the false from the true and assimilate the knowledge and positive energy in the courses. Only when the students have the critical thinking ability can they distinguish the right from the wrong in their daily life and uphold the right values. The integration of Values Cultivation in Curriculum with the cultivation of Critical Thinking ability is conducive to the development of independent spirit and free thoughts in students. The *New National Standard* (2018) also emphasizes the integration of language skills and professional abilities, which unified knowledge transmission, affection nurturing and values cultivation and

allocated equal emphasis to language and culture. Therefore, the mode of Integrating Value Cultivation with Critical Thinking in English Listening and Speaking course conform to the requirements in the *Guidelines* (2020) and the *New National Standard* (2018).

The integration of Value Cultivation with Critical Thinking Ability aroused some teacher's attention, however fewer researches has been done on the application of this integrated mode in English listening and speaking course, for example, Chen (2020) analyzed the relationship between Value Cultivation and Critical Thinking and explored the best approached to integrate Value Cultivation and Critical Thinking in the course of *British and American Culture*, which was designed to create the optimal Coordinated effect in teaching. Jiang (2020) stated that the Value Cultivation in the speech course can effectively help students to improve their comprehensive quality, stimulate their affections to family and country, broaden their international vision, therefor can enrich their knowledge, expand one's horizon and shape their character. Qin and Liu (2021) indicated that integrating Value Cultivation in English teaching can effectively realize collaborative education effect, cultivate students' critical thinking and innovation ability, and help to improve the quality of education. Huang and Wei (2023) held that while teaching language and imparting knowledge, foreign language teachers should put Value Cultivation first, and on this basis, improve students' critical thinking ability, which will promote Value Cultivation to a higher level, so the two complement each other, and finally lead to the mutual promotion and development.

The teaching Mode of Integrating Value Cultivation with Critical Thinking in the English Listening and Speaking Course is proposed in this research. With the Curriculum as the carrier, Value Cultivation as the guidance, Critical Thinking as the approach, this mode adopts the methods of question-driven leading and cross-cultural critical thinking expansion activities to achieve the coordination effect of "Nurturing Morality and Fostering Talent". In the cross-cultural critical thinking expansion activities, Value Cultivation and Critical Thinking are integrated with the basic skill practices of English listening and speaking, which can improve their language abilities and critical thinking and at the same time foster the cultural confidence, patriotism, and global vision, and strengthen their awareness of a community with a shared future for mankind. This teaching mode can improve students' competences of cross-cultural communication and global governance, which can guide them to adopt the global experiences to tackle the current issues in China and offer Chinese solutions to the global problems.

2. The Necessity and Feasibility of IVCCT Mode in English Listening and Speaking Course

2.1 The Necessity of IVCCT Mode in English Listening and Speaking Course

It is necessary to carry out IVCCT Mode in English Listening and Speaking Course. This course integrates the language skill training of listening and speaking, emphasizing both language input and output. The ability of listening and speaking is not only the ability to use certain communicative strategies to communicate, but also the critical thinking ability to express and discuss on specific topics, and the ability to carry out effective cross-cultural communication. In the time of globalization, it's

important to have a rational comparison of Chinese culture and foreign cultures and keep a clear understanding of different values, because the prerequisite for successful cross-cultural communication is the adherence to the right value stance.

In the teaching process, this course encountered several problems, such as the shortage of teaching time (2 periods per week) and multi-objective requirements (Language skills training, Critical thinking ability cultivation, Knowledge structure construction, Morality nurturing and Talent fostering and other objectives). In the listening and speaking training process, students tend to do basic training in listening skills but ignore such output practices as critical thinking, logical reasoning, and evaluative comprehension. As to the multi-modal audio-visual training materials, students establish few relationships with their own daily life and manifest weak cross-cultural awareness and low sensitivity to the Value cultivating elements in the materials, which may impair the efficiency of knowledge transmission, competency development and value cultivation.

Therefore, it is particularly necessary to integrate Value Cultivation with Critical Thinking in the English Listening and Speaking Course, which will cultivate high-quality English talents with lofty ideals and beliefs, firm cultural confidence, and solid cross-cultural ability. These talents can have a comprehensive and objective view of contemporary China and the outside world, which can facilitate the promotion of Chinese culture in international exchanges and let the voice of China heard by the international community.

2.2 The Feasibility of IVCCT Mode in English Listening and Speaking Course

It is feasible to integrate Value Cultivation with Critical Thinking in the English Listening and Speaking Course. “The cultivation of moral values, critical thinking ability and language ability in the course has high and consistent common characteristics, that is, they are a gradual process and the cumulative process of integrating into each micro-learning activity” (Liu et al., 2023, p. 62).

Value Cultivation in Curriculum is a gradual process that can influence the students intellectually and spiritually and the critical point is that they are imperceptibly influenced by the audio-visual materials they constantly sees and hears in class. Listening and Speaking is an important form of language communication, which is an important medium of ideological and cultural communication. With multi-modal materials as the media, such as audio-visual clips, text, pictures, topic discussion, body language, online resources, this course cultivate students’ English application ability and critical thinking ability, inspiring students to participate in critical thinking activities, in which they comprehend and analyze the language input to form their own judgment and evaluation, and verbally demonstrate the result of their inner critical thinking activities.

In the age of internet, the multi-modal teaching materials in English Listening and Speaking course have higher punctuality, social relevance and cultural contrast, which can audio-visually facilitate the cross-cultural contrasting and comparing activities and establish cultural confidence in the students. It is of great significance to cultivate students’ cross-cultural discriminating ability and critical thinking ability, which can facilitate the cultivation of patriotism, the sense of identity to the excellent traditional

culture and enhance the humane and ideological feature in teaching.

In the teaching activities, this course adopts the continuous audio-visual drilling method which may imperceptibly facilitate the Value Cultivation through the continuous appropriate audio-visual drilling of language input and output activities. Even though the weekly teaching time is only two periods, this course will last for two years, therefore it is beneficial to the interactions and exchanges between the teacher and the students, which can facilitate the Value Cultivation through continuous Critical Thinking activities and reflections. Therefore, this course is suitable for the continuous Value Cultivation in students, and it is feasible to implement the IVCCT Mode in English Listening and Speaking Course, which meets the requirements of the *National Standard* (2018) and the *Guidelines* (2020).

The IVCCT Mode explores and exploits the Value Cultivating elements in the multi-modal audio-visual teaching materials, which guides the students to judge, select and take in the positive knowledge and values in the active and subconscious way of cross-cultural Critical Thinking activities, fulfilling the unified objectives of “Integrating Value Cultivation with Critical Thinking” and “Nurturing Morality and Fostering Talent”.

3. The Construction of IVCCT Mode in English Listening and Speaking Course

Liu et al. (2023) stated that in foreign language teaching, the cultivation of moral values, critical thinking abilities and language abilities has some common features, such as chronicity, gradualness, dynamics, practicality, holisticity and culturality. With language teaching as the explicit approach, and the cultivation of moral values and critical thinking abilities as the implicit approach, the selection of the teaching contents and the design of the teaching activities should be guided to teach students according to their aptitude (p. 58). In this research, the IVCCT Mode takes the core elements into consideration, such as Value Cultivation, Critical Thinking abilities, Language abilities and Cross-cultural Communication abilities. With Value Cultivation as the supreme guidance, and the cultivation of Critical Thinking abilities, Language abilities and Cross-cultural Communication abilities as the three-dimensional supports, this mode is designed for the unified objectives of “Nurturing Morality and Fostering Talent”.

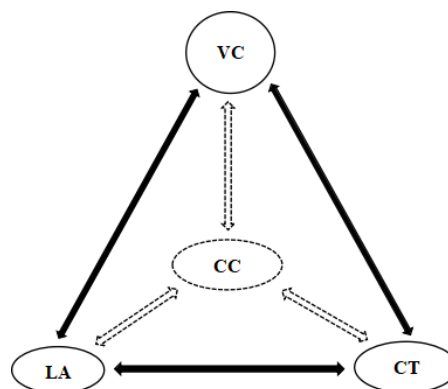


Figure 1. IVCCT Mode (Note 2)

As demonstrated in Figure 1, there exist the relationships of interconnection and mutual-promotion among the core elements of Value Cultivation, Critical Thinking abilities, Language abilities and Cross-cultural Communication abilities. In the integrated teaching process of Value Cultivation through Cross-Cultural-Critical Thinking Communicative activities, students can improve their multiple competences of cross-cultural communication, critical thinking, cooperation, innovation and so on, which will promote the development of Value Cultivation in the Curriculum.

With Value Cultivation as the supreme guidance, this mode promotes students' multiple competences through the integrated Value Cultivating activities of Cross-cultural communication, Critical thinking activities and so on.

In the Cross-Cultural-Critical-Thinking-Value-Cultivating-Communicative activities, students' competences of moral reasoning and value judgement will be improved, which may imperceptibly enhance their humane accomplishment, cultivate their values, expand their global horizon, solidify their cultural confidence, nurture their affection to China and finally achieve the unified objective of "Nurturing Morality and Fostering Talent".

4. The Approaches to Implementing the IVCCT Mode

4.1 The Formulation of Teaching Objectives for the IVCCT Mode

The teaching objectives for the IVCCT Mode are formulated on the basic teaching philosophy that "Value Cultivation should be integrated into the Curriculum, and Nurturing Morality and Fostering Talent should develop coordinately" (Tang et al., 2020, p. 53). The implementation of the IVCCT Mode in English Listening and Speaking course is a process which "with the foreign language teachers as the leader, is dedicated to the cultivation of positive values in students through the teaching processes which integrate Value Cultivation with the teaching contents, classroom management, students assessment, daily communication and teachers' behaviors and so on" (Wen, 2021, p. 48).

Based on the teaching philosophy above, the teaching objectives, which meet the basic requirements for the cultivation of talents in English majors, are formulated as the following:

- (1) To guide students to master the culture major English-speaking countries and Chinese culture, to have a deep understanding of the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, and gradually cultivate a global vision and cross-cultural communication ability.
- (2) With the transmission of the socialist core values and Chinese excellent traditional culture as the main guideline, to help students distinguish the right from the wrong, to cultivate the ability of critical thinking and reflection, and to establish the positive values;
- (3) To guide students to shift from the language-centered learning to the acquisition of diversified knowledge and critical thinking; to improve their comprehensive ability and quality of English so as to cultivate high-quality foreign language talents with national feelings, international vision and professional ability.

The purpose of implementing the IVCCT Mode in this course is to integrate Value Cultivation in

knowledge transmission and competence cultivation. With the transmission of the socialist core values and the Chinese excellent traditional culture as the main guideline, the teaching contents and materials are well-explored and exploited to get the Value Cultivating elements in the textbook which enable students to tell the Chinese stories well in English and spread the voice of China to the world. Furthermore, this mode helps students to cultivate positive values, strong patriotic spirit, cultural confidence, and professional dedication to education and so on.

4.2 The Selection of IVCCT Mode Teaching Materials

The selection process of the IVCCT Mode teaching contents and materials, with the objective of Cross-Cultural-Critical-Thinking-Value-Cultivation as the guideline, involves the processes of textbook analysis, students analysis and the observation of current affairs.

As to the textbooks, *Critical English Coursebook for College Students: Listing Critically* by Professor Sun Youzhong (2018) was selected. This series of critical listening coursebooks is composed of four books, which is edited according to different themes, such as Life (book1), Culture (book2), Society (book3) and Research (book4). Under each book theme, there are various relevant sub-thematic topics with rich teaching materials, which can facilitate the construction of knowledge structure and the enhancement of humanistic quality in the students. With the drills of listening skills and strategies as the breakthrough point, the exercises in this coursebook integrate the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and critical thinking, which can improve the students' abilities in English listening and critical thinking. The teaching materials in the coursebooks are all from authentic English audio-visual materials covering a broad discipline of knowledge, for example, Sociology, Anthropology, Architecture, Literature, Linguistics, History, Physics, Scientific and Technological Information, Intercultural Studies and so on, which can expand the knowledge scopes and optimize the knowledge structure for the students.

The various skills and qualities in Critical Thinking abilities are distributed into the teaching objectives in different units, which will be achieved through the diversified exercises targeting the cultivation of Critical Thinking abilities. The teaching materials in each unit cover some well-selected cross-cultural topics related to the unit theme, accompanied with the specially-designed drilling model of *Cross-cultural Reelection*, which can facilitate the cultivation of Critical Thinking abilities, cross-cultural communication awareness and abilities, cultural confidence, national affection and so on. As to the students analysis, a survey on the students' interests and suggestions is carried out during the orientation period, in which the students are required to preview each theme and topic in the textbook and fill in the questionnaire table on the Value-cultivating topics, elements and materials that arouse their interest, for example, the audio-visual materials related to the cultivation of cultural confidence, national affection, scientific spirit, professional quality, critical thinking ability and so on, and such materials as excellent English movies, documentaries and TED talks can be recommended. In the preparatory process of the courseware, the personalized suggestions from the students will be integrated into the design of the drilling activities, which makes the student an important participant in

the design of teaching activities and can therefore enhance the students' interests and involvement in the teaching activities.

In addition, the teachers actively keep sensitive to the Value-cultivating elements in the mainstream medias, such as China International Television, Xinhuanet, China Daily, CNN, BBC, VOA and so on, which can provide useful audio-visual materials on the current issues. Keeping up with the pulse of the times, the teachers introduce the current issues and hot topics into the classroom activates, which can guide the students' attention and interests to International and domestic current events. In the related activities, students can learn about different ideas on the issues and broaden their own horizon, and at the same time, they can improve their language abilities and study interests through the contact with such vivid English expressions in the reports and discussions on the current issues.

4.3 The IVCCT Mode Teaching Design and Samples

In the pre-teaching period, the students are provided with some audio-visual materials with Value-cultivating elements related to the unit themes, which will be the materials for students' autonomic learning and discussion.

In the while-teaching period, the achievements of the autonomic learning and discussion are integrated into the Value-cultivating activities through sharing and presentation.

In the post-teaching period, the Value-cultivating elements are integrated into their homework, which will lead to the cross-cultural critical thinking activities and finally achieve the integrated objectives of Language Abilities Cross-cultural Communication, Critical Thinking and Value Cultivation.

A sample will be elaborated to demonstrate the teaching design explained above.

The teaching sample is Unit 7 Education Session One: Education Around the Globe: Where Is It Going? From *Critical English Coursebook for College Students: Listing Critically*, book 4: *Approaching Research* (Sun, 2018, pp. 134-140)

The teaching content focuses on the theme of education, discussing the future trend, mode, characteristics of education and the change of modern information technology to education. Therefor it can guide students to pay attention to the impact of science and technology on the learning mode and get them better-adapted to the new educational concepts and learning methods.

The teaching objective of this unit is to train the abilities and skills in predication before listening, note-taking while listening, summary of main ideas and the outline and so on. These abilities and skills are important to students' comprehensive competences in English, including such listening abilities as interpretation, analysis, summary, reasoning and evaluation, critical thinking and cross-cultural communication and so on.

In the design of teaching activities, Value-Cultivating activities are distributed into the preview activities before class, classroom learning activities and homework activities, which implement the whole process of Value-Cultivating activities.

In the preview activities, an etymological exploration on the essence of education in English and Chinese is offered in which the students are required to carry out some dictionary works to find the

etymological and semantic development of the term of education in both English and Chinese. Through the etymological comparison of the essence of education in English and Chinese, the students can learn the traditional Chinese educational concept of “equal stress on the cultivation of Values and Talents” which can establish cultural confidence in them. When comparing the western educational concept of “guidance and stimulation of potential talent”, they can establish an open mind and the consciousness of mutual learning among civilizations.

After the etymological exploration task, a micro-course video on the aim of education in America is also provided for the critical comparison between America and China, which may cultivate the positive values on learning and education in the students and lead to the topic of this session: The aim of Education in the 21st Century.

In the while-learning activities, a video on the problems of education in the 21st Century is played in which students can learn about the problems of education in the 21st Century and the solutions from different countries. After the exercises of listening skills and strategies in this video, a critical discussion on the changes, problems and challenges in the education in China is designed, which can cultivate the critical thinking and analyzing abilities, awareness of problems, problem-solving abilities, social responsibility, and patriotism.

In the post-learning activities, a cross-cultural-critical-thinking-value-cultivating group discussion task is designed for the students, in which the advantageous and disadvantages of going to study in America is discussed critically and cross-culturally. The discussion is based on solid evidences from all sources. With the while-learning activities as the starting point, this post-learning activity deepens the discussion on the purposes and problems in the education of the 21st century, which explores the problems of patriotism and global vision in education. In this task-based autonomous learning activity, the students carry out some extended exploratory learning activities which can turn into the background learning activity for the next session of this unit, that is “Changes in Global Education”.

In all, in this teaching design sample, Value Cultivation is integrated with the cultivation of Language Abilities and Critical Thinking abilities, which can lead the students to live cross-cultural and critical learning activities. In the critical comparison of the cross-cultural topics, they can establish cultural confidence and awareness of mutual learning among civilizations. The activities designed can, to some extent, enhance the features of Critical Thinking, Value Cultivation, Humanity, and so on, which can facilitate the achieving of the multi-objectives of knowledge transmission, competence cultivation and Value Shaping.

4.4 The Construction of IVCCT Mode Teaching Assessment System

Based on the teaching objectives of IVCCT Mode, a formative assessment system of multiply dimensions is constructed at the dimensions of the Assessment Subject, the Assessment Content and the Assessment Approaches.

First of all, the diversified Subjects of assessment are introduced into the system, which breaks through the traditional mode of teacher-centered assessment, and introduces Peer Assessment, Self Assessment

and Teacher Assessment into the Teaching Assessment process. This system puts the students at a proper position in the assessment system, in which they are not only the objects but the subjects of the assessment process.

In the process of Peer Assessment, students will assess their classmates' performance, which can facilitate the cultivation of Critical Thinking abilities, Empathy and the awareness of emulating the excellent students and fostering their own advantages. Meanwhile, in the process of Peer Assessment, their competences of Communication and Coordination and Teamwork awareness can be cultivated.

In the process of Self Assessment, Self Reflection and Self Assessment are conducted by the students, which can guide them to review their own learning process, reflect on the learning effect, and conduct self-examination. In addition, Self Assessment, combined with Peer Assessment, can help the students form a comprehensive self-cognition and establish self-confidence too.

In the process of Teacher Assessment, on the basis of the teachers' observation of the students' classroom performance, teachers form a preliminary evaluation from the aspects of affection, attitudes, knowledge and abilities. Combined with Peer Assessment and Self Assessment, a relatively objective general evaluation is formed on the comprehensive consideration of the evaluations from the Assessment Subjects.

The Formative Assessment and the Summative Assessment are integrated into the Teaching Assessment System to achieve the teaching objective of integrating Value Cultivation with Critical Thinking. In the Formative Assessment, students' classroom participation, group discussion performance, speech ability, comprehension and analysis of audio and visual materials are thoroughly assessed before class, during and after class, integrating the assessment of the first class activities and the second class activities.

In the Summative Assessment, an integrated assessment approach of a close-book written examination and an oral English test is adopted.

In the close-book written examination, students will listen to some audio clips and finish some listening comprehension exercises, such as talks, conversations, lectures and speeches and so on. In this exam, the listening materials are loaded with Value-cultivating elements, which will not only test their critical listening and thinking skills, but their value tendency. The oral English test will take the form of cross-cultural discussions or speeches with critical thinking questions and exercises, which test the students' language expression, cross-cultural thinking ability, value judgment, affection and attitude.

The Teaching Assessment System in this mode abandons the score-centered assessment approach, integrating written assessments, oral assessments, and rewarding material assessments into the process of both explicit assessments and implicit assessments. Explicit assessments include on-site oral assessing feedback of students' performance in class, written assessing feedback of students' homework, and reward assessing feedback in group competitions. Implicit assessments include non-verbal assessments and spiritual encouragement for students in classroom activities, such as giving approving eyes for students' performance, smiling, clapping, and giving more opportunities for students to perform well. Incentive elements are integrated into the process of assessment and feedback. Explicit

assessments with incentive elements can help the confused students regain confidence and clear direction. In teaching activities, the implicit assessment and feedback with spiritual incentives can help the teacher establish a good interactive relationship with students, which will stimulate students' motivation and creativity.

5. Conclusions

Based on the analysis on the current situation of the teaching of English Listening and Speaking course, this paper started with the necessity and feasibility of the mode of IVCCT Mode, and then constructed a three-dimensional model of Integrating Value Cultivation with Critical Thinking, which expounded the construction and operation of this model from the aspects of objectives setting, content selection, teaching design and evaluation system construction.

The teaching practice in this research shows that, the IVCCT Mode integrates multi-modal audio-visual resources with Value-cultivating elements such as education, culture and socialist core values. The Integration of Value Cultivation with the cultivation of language application abilities and Critical Thinking ability can guide students to carry out intuitive cross-cultural critical learning experience, which may shape their character imperceptibly through the active judgement and intake of knowledge and positive values. The cross-cultural comparison activities can facilitate the cultivation of cultural confidence in the students and enhance the critical, ideological and humanistic nature of listening and speaking course, which is conducive to the realization of multiple talent training objectives in knowledge transmission, ability cultivation and value shaping.

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Notes

Note 1. Abbreviation of IVCCT is used in the paper

Note 2. In this figure, VC stands for Value Cultivation; CC stands for Cross-Culture; LC stands for Language Competence; CT stands for Critical Thinking.