

Original Paper

A Study on the Reform of College English Teaching in Higher Vocational Institutions from the Perspective of Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education

Yi Wang^{1*}

^{1*} Foreign Languages Teaching Department, Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou, China

Received: September 20, 2026 Accepted: October 09, 2026 Online Published: October 28, 2026
doi:10.22158/eltls.v8n5p125 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/eltls.v8n5p125>

Abstract

The college English courses in higher vocational colleges are an important carrier for implementing the basic task of “cultivating morality through education” and promoting the integration of ideological and political education with the curriculum. These courses possess dimensions of instrumentality, humanism and ideology, and have inherent advantages in promoting collaborative education. However, the current practice of integrating ideological and political education into the university English teaching in higher vocational colleges still faces many challenges in terms of educational concepts, textbook content, teaching methods, assessment mechanisms and teachers’ professional qualities. These problems hinder the full realization of the potential of language teaching education. Based on the theoretical connotation of curriculum-based ideological and political education and the educational mission of university English in higher vocational colleges, this paper systematically explores the practical challenges involved and proposes corresponding reform strategies from five dimensions: integrating educational goals, reconstructing teaching content, innovating teaching methods, diversifying assessment mechanisms and enhancing teachers’ professional qualities. This document aims to provide practical insights for higher vocational education institutions that wish to strengthen ideological and political education based on university English courses and promote the transition from formal coverage to effective integration.

Keywords

Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education, College English, Higher Vocational Institutions, Teaching Reform, Fostering Virtue through Education.

1. Current Situation of Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education

The promotion of ideological and political education based on courses is a strategic measure adopted by higher education institutions in the new era to fulfill the fundamental task of cultivating morality through education. The “Guiding Opinions on Building Ideological and Political Education Based on Courses in Higher Education Institutions” issued by the Ministry of Education of China clearly states that ideological and political education should be integrated throughout the entire talent cultivation system and value guidance should be incorporated into knowledge transmission and ability cultivation. The guidelines also require the implementation of ideological and political education based on courses in all higher education institutions, in all disciplines and in all professional fields. This requirement shows that ideological and political education in courses isn’t just for certain classes—it’s a responsibility every course has to take on. College English is one of the most widely taken basic public courses, right? In vocational colleges, it reaches tons of students and has plenty of class hours, so it plays a key role in boosting the overall quality of vocational talent training. That’s why how well we integrate ideological and political elements into College English teaching directly ties to the bigger mission of educating students in vocational colleges.

University English plays an important role in ideological and political education because of the nature of the subject itself. As a course that focuses on communication across cultures, it introduces students to different values, cultural traditions, and ways of life from around the world. These topics give students opportunities to compare cultures and think about their own values. However, without proper guidance, students may find it difficult to understand cultural differences and develop a clear sense of cultural identity. This is particularly important for vocational college students, who are still developing their views on the world, life, and personal values. What they learn in English classes, including language knowledge, cultural information, and the ideas behind different texts, can influence their thinking and personal growth over time. For this reason, bringing ideological and political education into College English teaching is not simply a response to national education policies. It is also part of the responsibility of English teachers to support students’ overall development.

However, in practice, integrating ideology and political education into the university English courses of higher vocational colleges still faces many significant challenges. Common problems include the separation of ideology and political education from language teaching, the mechanical or superficial integration of ideological elements, the disconnection of ideological and political content from students’ vocational needs, and the lack of effective assessment mechanisms. Therefore, the educational potential of ideological and political education based on the curriculum has not been fully realized (Pan & Yuan, 2021). In some institutions, such initiatives are still limited to policy documents, slogans, and a few exemplary teaching activities, and have not truly integrated into the entire process of daily teaching. Therefore, transforming the external requirement of ideological and political education based on the curriculum into an internal commitment of university English teaching in higher vocational colleges, while addressing long-standing issues such as superficial integration and ineffective

educational outcomes, has become an urgent practical problem. Based on the clarification of the theoretical connotation of ideological and political education based on the curriculum and the educational role of university English in higher vocational colleges, this paper systematically explores the existing challenges and proposes targeted teaching reform paths.

2. The Basic Connotation of Course-based Ideological and Political Education and the Educational Positioning of Higher Vocational College English

2.1 The Basic Connotation of Course-based Ideological and Political Education

To effectively implement curriculum-based ideological education in higher vocational college English teaching, it is necessary to first clarify what curriculum-based ideological education actually is. Curriculum-based ideological education does not mean adding an extra ideological education course beyond the existing curriculum, nor is it simply incorporating some ideological and political content into professional teaching. It emphasizes integrating value guidance naturally into the entire teaching process, enabling students to acquire not only knowledge and skills but also ideological and value guidance while learning. Various courses and ideological and political theory courses cooperate with each other to form a synergy, jointly fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue and cultivating talents.

In the field of foreign language education, Wen Qiufang pointed out from the perspective of classroom teaching that ideological education in foreign language courses requires the leading role of foreign language teachers, integrating the requirements of fostering virtue and cultivating talents into every aspect of teaching. These aspects include teaching content, classroom management, evaluation methods, and the words and deeds of teachers, with the ultimate goal of helping students form correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values (Wen, 2021). Thus, curriculum-based ideological education is not simply attaching an ideological and political label to a certain English knowledge point; rather, it requires the coordination of teaching content, classroom organization, teachers, students, and evaluation methods to form a complete teaching design (Huang, 2021).

2.2 The Educational Orientation of College English in Higher Vocational Colleges

Higher vocational colleges mainly aim to cultivate technical and skilled talents who can meet the needs of the front-line production, construction, service and management. Therefore, college English courses for higher vocational students should not only enhance their English communication skills in the workplace, but also help them broaden their cultural horizons, understand industry requirements, and gradually form good professional attitudes and values. Compared with ordinary undergraduate colleges, when conducting course ideological and political education in higher vocational college English, more consideration should be given to the characteristics of vocational education and students' future employment.

Firstly, there are certain differences in the English foundation and learning ability of higher vocational students, and their purposes and motivations for learning English are also not exactly the same. Some

students have not fully realized the connection between public English courses and future study and work. Secondly, higher vocational education emphasizes school-enterprise cooperation and industry-academia integration. Therefore, the content of English teaching should be as close as possible to industry development and real workplace scenarios. Thirdly, many higher vocational students will directly enter the workplace after graduation. Therefore, cultivating professional ethics, responsibility awareness and dedication in English teaching is also very important.

Therefore, the ideological and political education of college English courses in higher vocational colleges cannot simply copy the practices of undergraduate colleges. Instead, the teaching should be designed based on the characteristics of vocational education. Teachers need to combine English learning, industry knowledge and value guidance. Students should be able to improve their workplace English application skills while further understanding Chinese excellent traditional culture, future careers and national development. Only in this way can knowledge learning, ability cultivation and value guidance promote each other, and make college English truly serve the all-round development of students.

3. Main Issues Faced by the Ideological and Political Education in Higher Vocational College English Courses

3.1 Conceptual Challenges: Misunderstandings and the Separation of Ideological and Political Education from Language Instruction

The teaching philosophy will directly affect the classroom teaching. Currently, some English teachers in higher vocational colleges do not have a deep understanding of curriculum-based ideological and political education. Some teachers believe that curriculum-based ideological and political education merely involves adding some ideological and political content to the English classes or arranging policy lectures, thus considering it as an additional task; others believe that the main task of university English is to cultivate students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, and ideological and political education has little relation to the English class and even does not need to be integrated into the classroom. Influenced by these ideas, language teaching and ideological and political education tend to operate independently, resulting in a phenomenon of being separate and disjointed. Some teachers, although acknowledging the requirements of curriculum-based education, have not truly realized that every aspect of the curriculum can play a role in education. Therefore, ideological and political content is often scatteredly added to the classroom, lacking overall planning and systematic design, and the teaching effect is thus difficult to guarantee.

Furthermore, some schools' understanding of course-based ideological education remains at the level of policy requirements and general principles. At the departmental level, there is a lack of specific planning, and no implementation plans suitable for the actual situation of the school have been formed. Due to unclear teaching objectives and the absence of feasible implementation methods and teaching resources that are convenient for teachers to use, teachers often do not receive sufficient support when

conducting course-based ideological education. This also leads to significant differences in teachers' understanding and practices of course-based ideological education.

3.2 Content-Related Challenges: The Disconnect Between Teaching Materials and Professional Requirements

Textbooks and teaching materials are the crucial foundation for implementing course ideological education. However, the current university English textbooks used in some vocational colleges are not yet fully adequate in terms of the selection and design of ideological content, and there are relatively limited high-quality resources that can be directly applied in the classroom. The contents such as Chinese excellent traditional culture, Chinese national conditions, international affairs, and industry culture have not been fully and evenly integrated into the textbooks (Sun, 2020).

At the same time, some ideological teaching materials are not closely linked to students' majors and future jobs, and the content is far from their actual lives and career needs. This makes it difficult to arouse their interest and hard for them to truly understand the value. Some materials are too general and abstract, and the language difficulty and content depth may also exceed the actual level of students. This not only affects the learning effect of English but also reduces the attractiveness and practical effect of course ideological education. If these content issues are not resolved, it will be difficult for course ideological education to form a stable and effective teaching foundation.

3.3 Methodological Challenges: Limited Teaching Approaches and Artificial Integration of Ideological and Political Elements

The teaching methods can affect whether students can truly understand and accept the value guidance in the classroom. Currently, some vocational college English classes still focus mainly on vocabulary, grammar explanations and exam training, with a relatively monotonous teaching approach. The ideological and political content is sometimes simply added to the class in a rigid manner, manifested as simple labeling or one-way preaching. Teachers do not pay enough attention to creating real situations and students' independent thinking, and students' enthusiasm for participating in the class is not high. The course ideological and political education is prone to becoming a mere formality (Pan & Yuan, 2021).

In contrast, situational teaching, task-based teaching, project-based teaching and online-offline hybrid teaching are more conducive to integrating value guidance into English learning. Teachers can use specific tasks and real situations to enable students to encounter and think about related value issues during the process of completing language learning activities, rather than simply listening to the teacher's explanations. In this way, the guidance of values is also more likely to be understood and accepted by students (Hu, 2021).

Therefore, the outdated teaching methods and the lack of changes in classroom activities are also important reasons why the teaching goals of course ideological and political education cannot be transformed into actual effects.

3.4 Assessment-Related Challenges: The Difficulty of Measuring Value-Oriented Educational Objectives

Scientific teaching evaluation is an important part of curriculum-based ideological education. However, the current evaluation of college English courses still mainly focuses on how much vocabulary and grammar knowledge students have mastered, as well as how much their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills have improved. Regarding students' cultural identity, values and professional attitudes, the evaluation content is relatively limited; even when it is involved, it is sometimes rather general and difficult to accurately reflect the real changes of students.

Moreover, the existing evaluation does not pay enough attention to the learning process and the growth of students. Students' classroom performance, learning engagement, and performance during participation in thematic activities are rarely included in the evaluation. Therefore, teachers find it difficult to comprehensively understand the actual effect of curriculum-based ideological education and also have difficulty improving teaching based on the evaluation results. The evaluation mechanism is not perfect, which also makes some teachers believe that curriculum-based ideological education is just an optional task that can be done or not done, rather than an important part of college English teaching.

3.5 Teacher-Related Challenges: Insufficient Ideological Literacy and Competence in Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education

Teachers are the key to implementing course-based ideological education. The knowledge reserves and teaching abilities of teachers will directly affect the implementation effect of course-based ideological education. Currently, some English teachers in higher vocational colleges have insufficient understanding of the theory of course-based ideological education and do not have a deep enough understanding of Chinese excellent traditional culture. Sometimes, they have difficulty identifying the content in the textbooks that can be used for value guidance, and they are not familiar with how to naturally integrate these contents into the English classroom. Moreover, schools still have deficiencies in teacher training, teaching support, and incentive mechanisms. The enthusiasm of teachers to actively carry out course-based ideological education also needs to be improved (Zhang, 2024). Problems in teachers' capabilities will also affect the update of teaching concepts, the adjustment of teaching contents, and the innovation of teaching methods. If teachers lack the necessary knowledge and support, even if the school puts forward reform requirements, it will be difficult to implement these requirements as long-term and effective classroom practices.

4. Pathways for Reforming College English Teaching through Curriculum- Based Ideological and Political Education in Higher Vocational Institutions

4.1 Integration of Educational Objectives: Establishing an Integrated Educational Framework of Knowledge-Competence-Values

To promote the ideological and political education in higher vocational college English courses, the first step is to clearly define the teaching objectives of the courses. College English should not only

focus on language knowledge and language skills, but also integrate language application ability with the cultivation of values, forming a teaching objective that promotes the development of knowledge, ability and value simultaneously.

At the school level, higher vocational colleges should, based on the talent cultivation plans of different majors, clarify the tasks that college English undertakes in terms of fostering virtue, and incorporate these requirements into the curriculum standards. In specific teaching, teachers should also convert more macroscopic goals such as cultural identity, professional ethics and responsibility awareness into specific and actionable learning requirements in each teaching unit, and combine them with language training such as listening, speaking, reading, writing and translation, to avoid the value goals remaining at an abstract level (Hu, 2021).

The teaching objectives should also take into account students' English foundation and professional characteristics, so that language learning and value guidance can truly be integrated. Value goals should not just be abstract slogans; they should be linked to specific texts, teaching themes and classroom tasks. In this way, teachers will have a clear direction when preparing lessons and teaching, and students can gain benefits through actual participation and experience.

4.2 Content Reconstruction: Developing a Resource Bank Integrating Language, Culture, and Professionalism

To address the issue of the disconnect between teaching content and students' needs, it is necessary to reorganize and redesign the course content, and establish a course ideological and political resource library that takes into account language, culture, and professional characteristics (Sun, 2020). On one hand, teachers can select contents such as Chinese excellent traditional culture, revolutionary culture, and socialist advanced culture from both within and outside the textbooks, and adapt them into English reading materials, topic discussions, bilingual presentations, or other classroom activities. Through English learning, students can not only improve their language skills but also better understand Chinese culture and its contemporary value. On the other hand, teachers should combine the characteristics of different majors and industries, select contents such as professional ethics, craftsmanship spirit, industry role models, and technological development, and establish a connection between course ideological and political education and students' future work and life (Wang, 2024).

When choosing teaching resources, both the educational significance of the content and the language difficulty suitable for students should be considered. The materials should be as authentic as possible and have a certain degree of challenge, while also enabling students to understand. The focus of course ideological and political education is not to simply combine value content and English knowledge, but to naturally integrate the value guidance into language learning and make language learning a means of understanding and expressing related values (Xu, 2021).

4.3 Methodological Innovation: Implementing Situational, Blended, and Project- Based Teaching

Whether the teaching methods are appropriate directly affects whether the ideological education in the course can achieve practical results. Teachers can adopt situational teaching, task-based teaching, and

outcome-oriented teaching, integrating value questions that require students to think into the English learning tasks. Through real or simulated language communication scenarios, teachers can guide students to think actively and express their opinions instead of passively accepting conclusions (Hu, 2021). Moreover, the blended teaching combining online and offline can also make ideological education in the course no longer be confined to the classroom. Teachers can combine classroom teaching, online learning resources, after-class exercises, and extracurricular activities to extend the teaching time and learning space (Xie, 2025).

Teachers can also organize rich extracurricular activities and projects, such as holding “Telling Chinese Stories Well in English” themed speeches, making bilingual short videos, or participating in cultural volunteer services. During the preparation and participation in these activities, students can not only exercise their English expression and communication skills but also deepen their understanding of Chinese culture and enhance their cultural confidence.

The key to teaching method innovation is to naturally integrate value guidance into language learning and practical activities, so that students can achieve all-round development in the process of learning knowledge, forming emotional identification, actively thinking, and taking action.

4.4 Diversification of Assessment: Establishing a Formative and Developmental Evaluation System

The implementation effect of course ideological education should also be included in the teaching evaluation of higher vocational college English. Schools can establish an evaluation system that pays more attention to the learning process and students’ growth, and involve teachers, students, and enterprise mentors (Wen, 2021). The evaluation content should not only include English knowledge and language skills, but also appropriately focus on students’ performance in cultural identity, cooperation awareness, professional attitude, and professional ethics. Teachers can collect information through classroom observation, learning portfolios, topic presentations, peer evaluations, and teacher-student communication, and understand students’ learning and growth from multiple perspectives.

The evaluation results should not only be used to grade students, but also be promptly fed back to teachers to help them identify teaching problems and adjust subsequent arrangements. Schools can also adopt value-added evaluation, focusing on the progress made by students compared to their starting point, rather than judging learning effectiveness based solely on a single exam. At the same time, students’ self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and enterprise mentor evaluation can also be included in the evaluation system to make the evaluation more comprehensive. Such diversified evaluation helps change the tendency of only emphasizing knowledge and exam scores, while neglecting students’ comprehensive development, and also provides support for the continuous implementation of course ideological education.

4.5 Strengthening the Teaching Workforce: Enhancing Teachers' Competence in Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education

Building a team of teachers with the ability to conduct course-based ideological and political education is an important guarantee for improving the quality of course-based ideological and political education. Higher vocational colleges should formulate targeted training plans for university English teachers, with the training content including course-based ideological and political theory, Chinese excellent traditional culture, industry knowledge, and Chinese national conditions, etc., to help teachers supplement relevant knowledge and enhance their ability in value guidance and teaching design.

The school can also help teachers learn how to discover ideological and political resources in textbooks and integrate them reasonably into English teaching through collective lesson planning, teaching team building, observing excellent courses, and teaching competitions. At the same time, teachers should be encouraged to continuously engage in teaching research and exchanges, gradually forming a stable teaching research mechanism.

Furthermore, the school can incorporate the actual teaching effects of course-based ideological and political education into teachers' evaluations and professional title assessments, and establish corresponding incentive mechanisms. This will not only encourage teachers to actively explore but also enhance their enthusiasm and responsibility for integrating value guidance into English teaching (Zhang, 2024).

Only by continuously improving teachers' professional qualities and teaching abilities can course-based ideological and political education gradually move from simply appearing in the classroom to becoming a natural and effective teaching component.

5. Conclusion

Integrating course-based ideological and political education into higher vocational college English teaching involves implementing the requirement of cultivating people's morality throughout the entire process of language teaching, rather than merely adhering to slogans or superficial forms. Whether course-based ideological and political education can truly take effect depends not only on the continuous improvement of teachers' daily teaching but also on the support from school systems and resources. Higher vocational colleges should formulate implementation plans based on their own professional characteristics and students' actual situations, and through collective lesson preparation, teaching research, and teaching reflection, constantly explore suitable approaches for their own institutions, promoting the integration of ideological and political education in university English courses from a superficial level to a truly effective one. Only in this way can English learning and value guidance mutually promote each other, achieving the common goals of knowledge acquisition, ability improvement, and students' all-round development.

References

- Hu, J. H. (2021). Instructional design for foreign language teaching from the perspective of curriculum-based ideological and political education. *Foreign Languages in China*, 18(2), 53-59.
- Huang, G. W., & Xiao, Q. (2021). Six key elements in the development of curriculum-based ideological and political education in foreign language teaching. *Foreign Languages in China*, 18(2), 10-16.
- Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2020). *Guidelines for the Construction of Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions*. Beijing: Ministry of Education.
- Pan, H. Y., & Yuan, Y. (2021). An analysis of problems and improvement strategies in the practical implementation of curriculum-based ideological and political education in college foreign language teaching. *Shandong Foreign Language Teaching*, 42(3), 53-62.
- Sun, Y. Z. (2020). The design of college foreign language textbooks from the perspective of curriculum-based ideological and political education. *Computer-Assisted Foreign Language Education*, (6), 46-51.
- Wang, J. J. (2024). A practical exploration of integrating curriculum-based ideological and political education into college English teaching. *Journal of Adult Education of Hebei University*, 2024(4), 86-90.
- Wen, Q. F. (2021). The connotation and implementation framework of curriculum-based ideological and political education in college foreign language teaching. *Foreign Languages in China*, 18(2), 47-52.
- Xie, H. L. (2025). Exploration and practice of blended English teaching in higher vocational institutions incorporating curriculum-based ideological and political education. *Journal of Hubei Open Vocational College*, 38(10).
- Xu, J. F. (2021). Developing ideological and political content in teaching materials for college English courses. *Foreign Language World*, (2), 18-24.
- Zhang, H. (2024). An exploration of practical approaches to integrating curriculum-based ideological and political education into college English teaching in higher vocational institutions. *Overseas English*, (1), 209-211.