

## Original Paper

# Exploring the Implementation Path of Curriculum Ideology and Politics in Senior High School English Teaching

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### Abstract

*Under the guidance of the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, curriculum ideology and politics is integrated into various disciplines. Based on elaborating the concept of curriculum ideology and politics and the necessity of integrating it into senior high school English teaching, this article focuses on discussing the implementation path of integrating curriculum ideology and politics into senior high school English teaching, addressing the problems faced by integrating curriculum ideology and politics into senior high school English teaching. This includes strengthening teachers' ideological construction, innovating English teaching methods, and exploring ideological and political elements in textbooks, in order to enhance senior high school students' ideological and political education and cultivate a new generation of capable young people.*

### Keywords

*senior high school English, curriculum ideology and politics, paths*

## 1. Introduction

In December 2016, the General Secretary emphasized at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Higher Education: "Fostering virtue through education should be taken as central task of higher education. We should integrate moral and political education into every aspect of the entire education process, striving to elevate China's higher education to a new level (Zhang, 2016, December 9)." Subsequently, curriculum ideology and politics has been integrated into various disciplines across universities, continuously permeating and evolving.

Education stands as the foundation of a nation and the key to its prosperity. Hence, alongside higher education, basic education holds equal importance. During the basic education stage, students acquire essential skills, gain subject knowledge, and also need to cultivate correct emotions, attitudes, and values throughout the learning process. Therefore, ideological and political education should also be

integrated within basic education. As a language tool for international communication and a core subject in basic education, English must evolve with the changing times. Hence, the English subject should consider incorporating curriculum ideology and politics into the teaching process. However, given the current state of senior high school English teaching, integrating curriculum ideology and politics into English instruction remains challenging. Therefore, how to align the characteristics of senior high school English subject teaching with curriculum ideology and politics construction, thereby further enhancing the quality of high school English education, deserves deeper contemplation and exploration.

## 2. The Necessity of Integrating Curriculum Ideology and Politics into

Currently, we are at the historical juncture of the strategic whole process of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the great changes in the world that have not been seen in a century. We are in a critical period for the Chinese nation to achieve the great struggle goals of our country. There is a need for a large number of outstanding talents who are rooted in the Chinese land, have a global vision, and a world outlook. Foreign language education bears an important historical mission and responsibility in this regard (Jiang & Li, 2020). As an integral part of senior high school education, senior high school English teaching should take the strengthening moral education and cultivating people as its fundamental task, combine curriculum reform with educational value, and cultivate builders and successors of our country in the new era. Specifically, the necessity of integrating curriculum ideology and politics into senior high school English teaching is reflected in the following three aspects:

First, it is an inevitable requirement of the cultivation objectives of General High School English curriculum standards. As *General Senior High School English Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition, Revised in 2020)* states: We should fully implement our country's education policy, foster virtue through education, enhance our students' well-rounded development, promote fairness in education, and nurture a new generation of capable young people who have a good and all-round moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetical grounding, and are well-prepared to join the country cause (2020). Therefore, in English teaching, teachers must strictly follow the requirements of the Curriculum Standards to subtly integrate the core values of our nation into the curriculum in the first-line teaching, guide students to form innovative consciousness and a sense of responsibility for the times, and also integrate fine traditional Chinese culture into classroom teaching to give full play to the educational value of senior high school English courses.

Secondly, there is a practical need for the country to cultivate talents with a global perspective and cross-cultural communication skills. The unique value of the English subject lies in enabling students to view issues from an international perspective and develop cross-cultural communication and awareness. The world is currently in a period of great development, transformation, and adjustment, characterized by multi polarization, economic globalization, social informatization, and cultural diversity. The fate of

humanity is closely linked, and the interests of various countries are deeply integrated. However, at the same time, China is also facing various severe challenges in the process of increasingly open development. English courses with international characteristics are duty-bound to undertake the task of educating and guiding students to have a correct understanding of the global situation and international issues. Front-line English teachers should consciously establish the awareness of cultivating capable young people for the country, and continuously promote the process of curriculum ideology and politics in English courses. Also in classroom teaching, teachers not only cultivate students' language ability, but also enhance their cultural awareness. Then, students can accurately grasp the changes in the international situation and the prospects of China's development. Besides, teachers should guide students to understand and compare the similarities and differences between fine Chinese and foreign cultures, thereby enhancing national pride and fostering a sense of responsibility for spreading fine Chinese culture to the outside world.

Thirdly, there is also a fundamental need for adolescent development during critical periods. The senior high school stage is a crucial phase for the development of adolescent'' emotional attitudes and personality formation, as well as the shaping of their worldview, outlook on life, and values (Lv, 2020). If excessive emphasis is placed on students' academic development while neglecting the cultivation of their moral qualities, it will hinder the comprehensive and healthy development of high school students. Traditional Chinese culture has always attached great importance to the cultivation and development of morality, placing the word "virtue" in the forefront. Senior high school English teachers should actively explore and analyze texts such as fine traditional Chinese culture and advanced Chinese culture that appear in textbooks. While improving language knowledge and skills, they should continuously enhance students' cultural confidence. During this critical period of their development, they should gradually form a correct and positive worldview, outlook on life, and values.

### **3. The Problems Faced by the Implementation of Curriculum Ideology and Politics in Senior High School English Teaching**

However, the journey towards truly integrating curriculum ideology and politics into senior high school English teaching is exceedingly complex and challenging. Owing to the longstanding traditional teaching mode in English instruction, short-term shifts are unlikely to be profound or fundamentally transformative. Specifically, the implementation of curriculum ideology and politics in senior high school English courses faces the following issues: an exam-oriented approach, coupled with teachers' one-sided thinking; a monotonous approach, leading to a standardized curriculum ideology and politics; and a neglect of the teaching materials, resulting in limitations in the use of textbooks.

#### *3.1 An Exam-oriented Approach, Coupled with Teachers' One-sided Thinking*

In the educational landscape of our country, there has been a consistent emphasis on nurturing students into all-round quality talents in terms of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor skills. However, against the backdrop of exam-oriented education, an increasing number of parents,

schools, and teachers attach greater significance to academic grades, thereby intensifying the education of disciplinary knowledge while disregarding ideological and political education for students. It becomes rather challenging for students to enhance their ideological and moral character through English. Despite the fact that the topic of curriculum ideology and politics has been raised long ago and our country places considerable emphasis on students' ideological education, numerous schools and teachers haven't implemented this effectively. Simultaneously, teachers still adhere to traditional teaching viewpoints, maintaining that English is merely a language discipline and that students' primary task is to enhance their language application abilities, namely the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Furthermore, some English teachers have only a cursory understanding of curriculum ideology and politics. They misinterpret "curriculum ideology and politics" as "ideological and political courses", arguing that moral education is the main responsibility of school administrative departments and that ideological and political education does not fall within the purview of English teaching; some even contend that curriculum ideology and politics pertains to higher education institutions and has no bearing on basic education. Such notions are partial and fail to truly grasp the essence of curriculum ideology and politics.

Objectively, in contrast to the English discipline, the integration of curriculum ideology and politics into other disciplines is relatively effortless. For example, disciplines such as history, Chinese, and politics possess abundant philosophical connotations and diverse cultural heritages. When teaching such courses, teachers can readily incorporate certain moral education concepts, from which students can gain benefits. Regarding the English discipline, however, teachers encounter difficulties in operational control. In fact, the compilation of English textbooks is based on the objective of core disciplinary literacy. As English teachers, they ought to actively implement disciplinary education and education throughout the entire process. If they can fully utilize the moral education elements in the textbooks, students will reap significant benefits. Nevertheless, the majority of English teachers have failed to comprehend and implement the connotation and orientation of core competencies, thereby unable to carry out curriculum ideology and politics.

### *3.2 A Monotonous Approach, Leading to a Standardized Curriculum Ideology and Politics*

At present, the teaching methods of curriculum ideology and politics in senior high school English courses are rather simplistic. Traditional teaching classrooms mostly employ the discussion methods and direct instructions. Teachers should inspire and guide students, and provide individualized teaching based on their characteristics. English is a discipline that combines instrumental and humanistic qualities (Yin & Wu, 2023). However, the majority of English teachers only recognize its instrumental aspect and thus overlook its humanistic nature. From the instrumental perspective, English is a language that bears the history of a nation. Therefore, the methods for learning the language should be rich and diverse. From a psychological perspective, students entering the senior high school stage already have a certain ideological and knowledge foundation. Thus, the textbooks cover topics such as

international affairs, environmental protection, and life, which could enable students to innovate their thoughts by relating them to real life.

Nevertheless, due to the requirements of the times, some English teachers have endeavored to incorporate ideological and political elements into their English courses, but they merely remain at a shallow level. Teachers merely raise some elevated questions symbolically at the end of the class, such as “What did you learn from the passage?” “What do you think of the character in the story?” Without any transition, they rush students to summarize a profound principle from a short passage. In fact, it is extremely difficult for students to think deeply within 3 to 5 minutes. Such a teaching approach is somewhat formulaic. The integration of curriculum ideology and politics into English classes must not be stiff or fixed. Instead, teachers should stimulate students’ enthusiasm and enable them to study actively and proactively.

### *3.3 A Neglect of the Teaching Materials, Resulting in Limited Use of Textbooks*

Textbooks, as the main carrier of teaching content and the foundation of education, are closely related to the realization of teaching goals. How to use them is a direction that teachers should carefully explore. Teachers should creatively explore the ideological and political elements in textbooks and expand related teaching resources. However, teachers often overemphasize the input of the second language culture in textbooks while neglecting their inherent ideological and political functions. One reason for this is the lack of attention paid to textbooks. Nowadays, teaching resources are abundant, and teachers consider textbook content relatively simple, thus relying mainly on other resources to assist teaching. In fact, although textbooks may seem simple, they are also profound. Textbook editors and writers cannot include all principles and knowledge in them. Only when teachers carefully study and fully understand the content can they supplement the combined content based on the textbooks to students, enabling them to absorb the ideological and political elements. Secondly, teachers lack the ability to develop textbooks that integrate the concept of ideological and political education in courses (Wang & Xiao, 2021). They fail to sort out the ideological and political elements in English textbooks in light of the learning characteristics of high school students and help them establish correct core values. Moreover, if teachers do not pay close attention to daily life and integrate it into the application of foreign language textbooks, they cannot enhance students’ moral education awareness and foster cultural confidence.

## **4. The Implementation of Curriculum Ideology and Politics into Senior High School English Teaching**

In view of the above problems faced by the integration of curriculum ideology and politics into senior high school English teaching, the following will explore the implementation paths of curriculum ideology and politics in senior high school English teaching from three aspects: teacher ideology, teaching methods and curriculum resources.

#### 4.1 Strengthening Teachers' Ideological Construction

Senior high school English teachers are the main body of imparting knowledge, and their ideological and political quality level has an indirect impact on students. Therefore, teachers should transform their educational ideas and truly enhance their political literacy. First of all, schools should actively carry out ideological and political education and training activities for English teachers, enabling them to deeply understand the essence of ideological and political education, thereby improving their theoretical level and further applying it in actual teaching activities. Secondly, senior high school English teachers themselves should have a correct attitude and consciously shoulder the responsibility of the times. They should not only have solid cultural knowledge but also attach importance to the study of political theory. Teachers should pay attention to social hot topics and current political affairs, learn about the outstanding deeds of advanced figures, keep the mainstream values in mind, and then externalize them in daily teaching. For example, teachers can select articles and materials with moral value. These contents have certain ideological depth and reference value, which can arouse students' discussions and thinking and involve some ideological and political topics. For instance, teachers can choose some biographies of famous people as supplementary materials. The biographies of famous people often have a certain influence, and their personality qualities and ideological viewpoints can make students reflect and give them inspiration. Taking the text *The Power of Good* in Unit 2 of the Compulsory Book 3 of the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press as an example, the genre of this text is an autobiography, mainly introducing the life of Nicholas Winton. The title "The British Schindler" of this text is worth exploring by teachers: Who is Schindler? What are his deeds? These questions may trouble students' reading. Therefore, teachers should search for relevant clips of Schindler's speeches and deeds before class and play them in the introduction part to let students understand Winton's personality qualities. The theme of this article is "The Power of Good Deeds", and teachers can share and display the deeds that moved China in the post-reading part, allowing students to think about good deeds and their importance unconsciously. Finally, teachers should invite students to share their understanding of good deeds and put them into practice.

#### 4.2 Innovating English Teaching Methods

In classroom teaching, in addition to traditional teaching methods, teachers can use innovative teaching methods such as tasks-driven teaching, scenario simulation teaching, etc. to complete the design of each teaching link. In addition to the convenience of the Internet today, teachers can use the network platform to assist classroom teaching, integrate images, audio, video and other resources, and give full play to the advantages of new media technology in teaching. The use of information technology is vivid and rich, which helps students absorb and internalize relevant ideological and political content. Unit 2 *Let's celebrate*, a compulsory course for senior high school English in the Foreign Language Research Edition, mainly discusses the topic of "festivals". Teachers can introduce artificial intelligence software into the classroom to allow students to communicate face-to-face. The main intention is to enable students to quickly perceive cultural differences and appreciate excellent cultures. Secondly, teachers

should actively mobilize students' initiative in the classroom and engage in debates and reflections related to ideological and political elements. Taking *The Real Father Christmas* as an example, the holiday mentioned in the article is Western Christmas. Teachers can guide students to think of traditional Chinese festival-Spring Festival, and explore the similarities and differences between the two festivals to help students better understand local culture. Subsequently, the teacher can ask a question "What's your favorite Chinese festival?" and divide everyone into several groups to answer in a competitive manner, expressing the value and significance of traditional Chinese festivals. This teaching mode can enable students to perceive and deeply love their own ethnic culture from an international perspective, and stimulate their sense of national pride.

After class, schools can hold various forms of ideological and political education themed activities, such as English handouts, patriotic speech competitions, debate competitions, etc., which can not only cultivate students' moral education quality, but also return to the original intention of English teaching, which is to improve language ability.

#### *4.3 Exploring Ideological and Political Elements in Textbooks*

Teachers should be adept at uncovering the ideological and political elements hidden within textbooks. This involves not only analyzing unit themes but also encompassing the three dimensions of core competencies. Using the 2019 Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (FLTRP) Compulsory One as an example, this article delves into the ideological and political elements present in the textbook.

Unit 3 *Family Matters* centers around the thematic context of human and self. The discourses present scenes like a grandfather resolving conflicts with his son, two athlete brothers uniting and moving forward, and family members preparing a birthday party for grandmother. These scenes help students deepen their understanding of family and enhance their emotional cognition. Through the teaching of these discourses, teachers can extend their lessons to the cultural heritage of traditional Chinese families, thereby enabling students to truly understand family roles and reevaluate familial relationships. Unit 5 *Into the Wild* focuses on the thematic context of human and society. Through depictions of animal migration and the life of Chinese pandas in the Netherlands, students can comprehend the relationship between humans and nature, fostering respect and protection for the natural world.

## **5. Conclusion**

The integration of curriculum ideology and politics into senior high school English teaching is irresistible. Through analyzing the problems faced by the integration of curriculum ideology and politics into senior high school English teaching, three approaches are put forward: strengthening the ideological construction of teachers; innovating English teaching methods; exploring ideological and political elements in textbooks. In short, English teachers should have a far-reaching intention to carry out moral cultivation in the reform of senior high school English teaching, and nurture a new

generation of capable young people who have a good and all-round moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetical grounding and are well-prepared to join the country cause.

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