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Original Paper

A Study on the Problems and Countermeasures in Cultivating College Students' Cross-Cultural Awareness in College English from the Perspective of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education

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Abstract

From the perspective of curriculum-based ideological and political education, cultivating college students' cross-cultural awareness is not only an inherent requirement of language teaching, but also an important way to implement the fundamental task of fostering moral character and cultivate a sense of patriotism and international perspective. This study adopted a questionnaire survey method to systematically investigate the actual situation of cross-cultural awareness cultivation in current college English teaching. The results showed that there were several prominent problems in the existing teaching practice: the training goals were mainly focused on language skills training, and insufficient attention was paid to cultural understanding and value guidance; the cross-cultural knowledge and ideological and political elements in the teaching content were disconnected, presenting a phenomenon of being two separate entities; the teaching methods were mainly based on one-way cultural knowledge teaching, lacking in comparative, reflective and empathetic deep learning activities; the evaluation system focused too much on language ability assessment, and insufficient attention was paid to cross-cultural attitudes, patriotism and critical thinking, etc. in comprehensive qualities; meanwhile, some teachers had weak theoretical foundation of cross-cultural theory and lacked ideological and political literacy, making it difficult for them to effectively undertake the responsibility of value guidance. In response to these problems, this study proposed systematic countermeasures from six dimensions: reshaping the "knowledge, ability, value" three-in-one educational goal, deeply exploring the ideological and political elements in the textbooks to reconstruct the teaching content system, innovating teaching methods to build a deep cross-cultural experience and dialogue classroom,

improving the multi-dimensional evaluation mechanism to highlight the effect of ideological and political education, enhancing teachers' "dual literacy" to strengthen the educational subject, and optimizing the educational ecosystem to expand the linkage platforms inside and outside the classroom. These measures provide a reference path for promoting the organic integration of curriculum-based ideological and political education and English cross-cultural teaching.

Keywords

Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education, College English, Cross-cultural Awareness, Problems and Countermeasures

1. Introduction

Promoting moral cultivation and fostering individuals is the fundamental task of higher education in the new era. It profoundly addresses the core questions of what kind of people to cultivate, how to cultivate them, and for whom to cultivate them, and sets the basic direction for curriculum reform. College English, as a public basic course that covers all undergraduate students, has a long duration of study and naturally carries cultural values, and possesses dual disciplinary attributes of instrumentality and humanism. It has the unique condition of integrating ideological and political education. However, due to the long-term influence of the exam-oriented mentality and practical tendencies, teaching practice has long focused on skill training and exam-oriented guidance, and the humanistic function has been significantly weakened. Although students have extensive exposure to diverse cultural materials, they lack sufficient value analysis and reflection. Some learners encounter difficulties in cultural cognition and value judgment, creating a realistic tension with the fundamental requirements of promoting moral cultivation and fostering individuals. Therefore, while strengthening language skills, it is necessary to guide students to rationally understand the differences between Chinese and Western cultures and strengthen cultural confidence, and this has become an urgent issue to be addressed.

In recent years, the national level has continuously deepened its deployment for the integration of ideological and political education with cross-cultural communication skills training. The "Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions" requires that ideological and political education be integrated throughout the entire process of talent cultivation. The "University English Teaching Guidelines" (2020 Edition) has established cross-cultural communication skills as the core objective, emphasizing that students should strengthen cultural confidence and tell China's stories based on the analysis and reflection of cultural phenomena. These two policies are not parallel issues but have a deep-level connection: in the dimension of goals, ideological and political education nurtures a sense of family and country and cultural confidence, while cross-cultural communication skills training requires understanding the world from a Chinese perspective and an open outlook. The value orientations of the two are highly consistent; in the implementation dimension, ideological and political education emphasizes integrating ideological and political elements into the entire teaching process rather than setting up separate modules, and

cross-cultural awareness training is not merely adding knowledge points to the classroom but rather a cognitive reshaping and attitude assimilation throughout the language learning process. The two methods are naturally compatible. However, how the top-level design can be transformed into classroom actions, how these two types of training goals can avoid mechanical addition and achieve mutual infiltration, how front-line teachers can find the focus of value guidance between language practice and cultural understanding, and how to clarify these issues in depth still need to be further clarified. Based on this, this research focuses on the actual difficulties and improvement strategies for cultivating college students' cross-cultural awareness in the context of ideological and political education, aiming to provide theoretical references and practical paths for enhancing the educational effectiveness of college English courses.

2. The Logical Compatibility between Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education and the Cultivation of Cross-cultural Awareness in English

From the perspective of the target dimension, the two present a clear alignment, jointly pointing to the educational goal of cultivating new era individuals with a sense of patriotism and an international perspective. The core concept of course-based ideological education lies in integrating value shaping throughout the entire process of education and teaching, guiding students to form a correct worldview and value recognition in the process of knowledge learning and ability improvement; English cross-cultural awareness cultivation requires students to respect cultural diversity when encountering heterogeneous cultures, and to recognize the unique value of Chinese culture through comparison and reflection, firmly establish cultural confidence, and enhance the ability to communicate China's voice in English. The two are not respectively aimed at internal identification and external understanding, but support each other: without a firm cultural foundation, cross-cultural dialogue is prone to become cultural dependence; lacking international vision and dialogue ability, the expression of patriotism will lose its contemporary context. Course-based ideological education provides a value coordinate for cross-cultural awareness cultivation, and cross-cultural awareness cultivation provides a practical field for course-based ideological education. The two are highly unified in educational goals.

From the dimensions of content and approach, language and culture teaching inherently contain value-guiding functions. Knowledge imparting, ability cultivation, and value shaping are integrated and coexist, forming a solid foundation for integration. Language is not only a formal system, but also a carrier of culture and a manifestation of values. Every English text and every cross-cultural case carry specific cultural concepts, which means that English teaching inherently has the conditions for conducting value guidance at the content level, rather than requiring external forced embedding. The value guidance advocated by course-based ideological education is not an additional moral education link outside English teaching, but integrates ideological elements organically into the entire process of language knowledge teaching and cultural difference analysis, enabling students to naturally form value judgments and emotional identification in the process of studying texts and comparing cultural

phenomena. This approach eliminates the mechanical dichotomy of knowledge education and value education, pursuing the organic unity of the three: teachers guide language learning while using cultural themes to stimulate critical thinking, and cultivate an inclusive spirit while training cross-cultural strategies, making the English classroom a comprehensive educational space that combines language acquisition, cultural understanding, and spiritual growth.

3. Research Design

This study adopted a mixed research design, integrating three methods: questionnaire survey, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observation. It systematically examined the current characteristics and deep-seated problems of college students' cross-cultural awareness cultivation within the context of curriculum-based ideological and political education. In the questionnaire development stage, the research team independently compiled two sets of tools—a student questionnaire and a teacher questionnaire—based on the theoretical framework of the cross-cultural communication ability model and the educational requirements of the "Guiding Outline for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions". The student questionnaire covered four dimensions: cross-cultural knowledge reserves, cultural difference sensitivity, cultural confidence level, and perception of ideological and political education courses, with a total of 24 items. The teacher questionnaire focused on self-assessment of cross-cultural literacy and self-assessment of ideological and political education teaching ability, with the former including 5 items such as familiarity with cross-cultural theories, overseas experience or cross-cultural training background, and cultural comparison analysis ability, and the latter involving 6 items such as the ability to mine ideological and political elements, the naturalness of classroom integration, and the mastery of value guidance strategies, totaling 11 items. After pre-testing (with a sample size of n=187) for item analysis and reliability and validity testing, items with a discrimination level lower than 0.3 were deleted. Afterward, both the student questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire adopted the Likert five-point scoring method. In the formal testing, the overall Cronbach's α coefficient of the student questionnaire was 0.869, and the KMO value was 0.852; the Cronbach's α coefficient of the teacher questionnaire was 0.834, and the KMO value was 0.817. The Bartlett's spherical test reached a significant level, indicating that both questionnaires had good reliability and validity. The survey employed a stratified cluster sampling strategy, selecting 6 different-level universities in three regions—East China, Central China, and South China—to distribute questionnaires to non-English major undergraduate students taking college English courses and full-time teachers undertaking related teaching tasks. A total of 1,278 student questionnaires were distributed, with 1,136 valid questionnaires obtained after excluding invalid responses, and the effective response rate was 88.9%. 186 teacher questionnaires were distributed, and 164 valid questionnaires were retrieved, with an effective response rate of 88.2%. At the same time, the research team conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 college English teachers, focusing on the selection of cross-cultural teaching content, the exploration of

ideological and political entry points, and classroom implementation difficulties. The interview recordings were transcribed and formed approximately 86,000-word textual materials. These materials were coded using NVivo 14 for themes, aiming to qualitatively explore and explain the underlying mechanisms behind the quantitative results.

4. The Current Situation and Problems of Cultivating College Students' Cross-Cultural Awareness in English

4.1 The Status Analysis

4.1.1 The Overall Characteristics of Students' Cross-cultural Awareness Level

In order to comprehensively understand the actual situation of cultivating college students' cross-cultural awareness in the context of curriculum-based ideological and political education, the research team conducted descriptive statistical analysis on 1,136 valid student questionnaires and 164 teacher questionnaires. The results are shown in Table 1. The overall characteristics of students' cross-cultural awareness levels present a structural pattern of "medium knowledge dimension, differentiated attitude dimension, and insufficient confidence in expression". The average value of the cross-cultural knowledge reserve dimension is 3.42, which is at a moderately high level. Among them, the score of the item "Common knowledge of Western festivals and customs" is the highest, while the score of the item "Cognition of the differences in core values of Chinese and Western cultures" is only 3.08; the average value of the cultural difference sensitivity dimension is 3.67, indicating that students have a certain degree of cross-cultural perception ability; however, the average value of the cultural confidence level is only 3.15, and the score of the item "Self-efficacy in explaining the connotations of Chinese culture through English" is as low as 2.83, reflecting that students have an obvious lack of confidence when facing the task of expressing Chinese culture externally. In addition, the average value of the perception dimension of curriculum-based ideological and political education is 3.29. Students' evaluations of the integration of ideological and political elements in English classes are generally close to the "average" scale. The standard deviation of each indicator ranges from 0.82 to 1.14, suggesting that there are significant differences in teaching implementation among different classes and teachers. These data indicate that the development of students' cross-cultural awareness is not balanced, there is a significant gap between knowledge reserve and cultural confidence, and the ability to express one's native culture externally has become a neglected weak link.

Table 1. The Descriptive Statistics of the Various Dimensions of Students' Cross-cultural Awareness Levels (N = 1136)

Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Cross-cultural Knowledge Reserve	3.42	0.91	1.83	5.00

Cultural Difference Sensitivity	3.67	0.86	1.60	5.00
Cultural Confidence Level	3.15	0.94	1.00	4.80
Perception of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education	3.29	1.02	1.14	5.00

4.1.2 The Proportion and Presentation Method of Cross-cultural Content in College English Teaching

In terms of the breadth and depth of cross-cultural content coverage in university English teaching, the research team obtained relatively systematic empirical evidence through textbook analysis and classroom observation. Key data summaries are presented in Table 2. From the perspective of teaching weight, the average proportion of cross-cultural theme units in the total teaching duration of the semester is 18.7%, and the proportion of passages in the textbook that involve the comparison of Chinese and Western cultures is approximately 21.3%. Although these two indicators indicate that cross-cultural content has entered the regular scope of classroom teaching, the proportion is still much lower than the modules for language knowledge explanation and skill training. From the perspective of presentation methods, classroom observation records show that the teaching methods used by teachers are mainly background knowledge introduction, with an average frequency of 4.12. Secondly, it is the interpretation of cultural annotations in the textbook, with an average frequency of 3.58. The frequency of using cultural comparison discussions is 2.36, and the usage frequencies of situational simulation and role-playing are 1.47 and 1.23, respectively. This distribution pattern reflects that cross-cultural teaching still mainly relies on the teacher's one-way output of knowledge information, and students' opportunities for in-depth learning, such as comparison, analysis, and reflection around cultural phenomena are relatively scarce. In interviews, some teachers admitted that due to time constraints and exam-oriented orientation, the cultural sections are often compressed into "background supplements" at the end of the class or assigned as self-study content after class, making it difficult to form a systematic and in-depth teaching loop.

Table 2. The Proportion of Cross-cultural Content Teaching and the Frequency of Teaching Method Adoption (N = 164)

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation
Proportion of Cross-Cultural Thematic Units in Total Class Hours (%)	18.7	5.64
Percentage of Comparative Chapters on Chinese and Western Cultures in the Textbook (%)	21.3	7.12
Frequency of Introducing Background Knowledge	4.12	0.87
Frequency of Interpreting Cultural Annotations in the Textbook	3.58	1.04
Frequency of Conducting Cultural Comparison Discussions	2.36	1.21

Frequency of Using Scenario Simulations	1.47	0.96

4.1.3 The Degree to which Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education Elements Are Reflected in Cross-cultural Teaching

The extent to which the elements of curriculum-based ideological and political education are reflected in cross-cultural teaching was investigated by the research team through cross-data collection from both students' perceptions and teachers' self-evaluations. The summarized results are shown in Table 3. From the students' perspective, the average evaluation of the frequency of integrating ideological education elements was 3.31, while the average score for the naturalness of integration was only 3.14. Moreover, the agreement rate for the question "Classroom teaching can help me understand the differences between Chinese and Western cultures more rationally" was 59.3%, indicating that over 40% of students failed to receive sufficient support for cultural analysis from the current teaching. From the teachers' perspective, the average self-assessment score for the frequency of integrating ideological education elements was 3.52, slightly higher than the students' score, showing a tendency of self-assessment overestimation. In terms of the cognition of ideological education elements in textbooks, only 35.4% of the teachers believed that the current textbooks had "relatively rich" ideological education entry points, 42.1% chose "There is some manifestation but it needs to be independently explored", and 22.5% believed that the ideological education elements in the textbooks were "significantly insufficient", reflecting a significant gap between the supply of textbook resources and the actual teaching needs of teachers. The comparison of the two sets of data reveals a phenomenon worthy of attention: Teachers tend to overestimate the naturalness and effectiveness of integrating ideological education in their self-assessment, while students, as the recipients of teaching, have more cautious perception evaluations. This gap suggests that the implementation effectiveness of curriculum-based ideological and political education needs to be further verified based on the real feedback from the students' side.

Table 3. The Degree to which Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education Elements Are Reflected in Cross-cultural Teaching

Indicators	Student Evaluation Average (N = 1136)	Teacher Self-Evaluation Average (N = 164)
Frequency of Integrating Ideological and Political Elements	3.31	3.52
Degree of Natural Integration of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education Elements	3.14	3.28
Degree of Assistance in Rational Understanding of Differences between Chinese and Western Cultures	3.23	3.56

4.1.4 Teachers' Cross-cultural Competence and Self-assessment of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education Teaching Ability

In terms of the self-assessment of teachers' cross-cultural literacy and their teaching ability in curriculum ideological education, the data analysis of the teachers' self-assessment questionnaires has outlined a relatively clear picture of the shortcomings in their literacy. The data is presented in Table 4. The total average score of self-assessment of cross-cultural literacy was 2.93, which was lower than the theoretical median of 3.00. Among the five items, the score for "familiarity with cross-cultural theoretical knowledge" was only 2.78, and the score for "richness of overseas study or cross-cultural training experience" was as low as 2.35. Both of these indicators were at a relatively low level. The total average score of self-assessment of curriculum ideological education teaching ability was 3.05, which was slightly higher than the score of cross-cultural literacy but still at the medium level. Among them, the average self-assessment score for "ability to integrate ideological elements with language teaching content" was 3.12, while the average self-assessment score for "ability to respond to students' doubts in classroom value guidance" was only 2.87. This reflects the teachers' insufficient confidence and strategies when dealing with complex value issues. Further correlation analysis shows that the total score of self-assessment of cross-cultural literacy by teachers is significantly positively correlated with the total score of self-assessment of curriculum ideological education teaching ability, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.528. This indicates that teachers with a more solid theoretical reserve for cross-cultural studies also show stronger self-efficacy in implementing curriculum ideological education. The interview data supports this quantitative finding. Several teachers mentioned that due to the lack of systematic cross-cultural discipline training, when they encountered students' value confusion in classroom discussions, they often found it difficult to provide a response with academic depth and clear stance, thereby reducing the actual effect of cultural education.

Table 4. Self-assessment Scores of Teachers' Cross-cultural Literacy and Their Teaching Ability in Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education (N = 164)

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self-assessment Average Score of Cross-Cultural Literacy	2.93	0.79
Degree of Familiarity with Cross-Cultural Theoretical Knowledge	2.78	0.91
Ability to Conduct Cultural Comparison Analysis	3.12	0.84
Degree of Richness of Overseas Study or Cross-Cultural Training Experience	2.35	1.06
Self-assessment Average Score of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education Teaching Ability	3.05	0.82
Ability to Explore Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Elements	3.18	0.87
Ability to Integrate Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education	3.12	0.90

Elements with Language Teaching Content		
Ability to Respond to Students' Questions in Classroom Value Guidance	2.87	0.95

4.2 The Main Problems

4.2.1 The Misalignment of Training Objectives

Based on the in-depth analysis of the aforementioned current data, this study has found that there are prominent structural problems in the cultivation of cross-cultural awareness in university English education in five dimensions: target positioning, content integration, teaching methods, evaluation system, and teacher capabilities. The data shows that the comparison data of teachers' and students' understanding of the course goals reveals a significant deviation in the target positioning. When asked about "the primary teaching goal of the university English course", 73.2% of the students chose "passing the CET-4 and CET-6 exams and improving English application skills", while only 18.4% listed "enhancing cultural understanding and international perspective" as the primary goal. The cognition of the teacher group also confirmed this bias, with as high as 64.6% of the teachers admitting that in the actual teaching process, "teaching language knowledge and skill training" was given priority, and only 28.7% of the teachers regarded "cultural understanding and value guidance" as the primary teaching goal. This inverted sequence of goals directly leads to the imbalance in the allocation of classroom teaching resources: language skill training accounts for 67.4% of the total class time, while cross-cultural understanding and value analysis activities only account for 14.3%. In the interviews, many teachers pointed out that under the dual pressure of class time reduction and the assessment of the pass rate of CET-4, cultural teaching is often transformed into "a supplement during the break period" or an optional part in public lectures, and is difficult to truly be integrated into the core process of daily teaching.

4.2.2 The Teaching Content Is Integrated with Superficial Elements

The integration of superficial elements into the teaching content constitutes the second dilemma. The cross-cultural knowledge and ideological and political elements present a fragmented and juxtaposed "a dualism" state. The research team conducted a text analysis of the current university English textbooks used in 6 universities and a questionnaire survey of 164 teachers. The findings showed that the logical arrangement of cross-cultural materials mainly adopted a parallel layout pattern of "one Western culture-themed chapter paired with one Chinese culture-themed chapter". There was a lack of comparison, dialogue, and value analysis bridges between the two cultural materials. Specific data indicated that 55.5% of the teachers believed that the cross-cultural content and ideological and political elements in the textbooks were "independent of each other and lacked an internal connection", 32.9% believed that they "had some connection but were not deep enough", and only 11.6% of the teachers recognized that "the integration was relatively natural". More crucially, when asked about "the way to handle the issues of cultural conflicts between the West and China in the classroom", 62.8% of the teachers preferred "only stating the factual differences without making value judgments", 25.0%

chose “directly giving the attitude conclusion”, and only 12.2% of the teachers would guide students to conduct critical reflection and autonomous construction. The feedback from the students also confirmed this problem. Only 34.7% of the students agreed that “English classes have taught me how to dialectically view the differences between Chinese and foreign cultures”, and 42.3% of the students believed that cultural learning remained at the cognitive level of “knowing there are differences”, not reaching the higher level of understanding, reflection, and internalization.

4.2.3 The Teaching Methods Are Relatively Fixed

The predicament of relatively fixed teaching methods is particularly evident in the survey data. The survey results show the frequency distribution of various teaching methods used in cross-cultural teaching. The data indicates that the teaching methods most frequently used by teachers are “explanations of cultural background knowledge from the textbook” and “introduction of Western cultural knowledge points”, with average frequencies reaching 4.38 and 4.15 respectively, falling within the “frequently used” range; while those at the middle level, such as “comparison of Chinese and Western cultures”, have an average of 2.64, and “classroom discussions on cultural phenomena” have an average of 2.51, falling within the “sometimes used” range; the usage frequencies of “scenario simulation and role-playing” and “analysis of cross-cultural conflict cases” are as low as 1.47 and 1.68 respectively, sliding into the “rarely used” range. This distribution pattern clearly depicts a teaching scene where “the teacher lectures while the students listen passively”, with a serious lack of in-depth learning activities characterized by comparison, reflection, and empathy in the classroom. In contrast, the data from the student demand side shows: 76.1% of students expressed the desire to increase “cultural comparison discussions”, 65.8% expected to introduce “cross-cultural scenario simulation tasks”, and 61.4% longed for “practical opportunities to express Chinese culture in English”. The significant gap between the supply of teaching methods and students’ learning needs suggests that there is a significant structural shortage of supply in the activity design of current cross-cultural teaching. The explanations given by the teachers in the interviews mainly focused on three aspects: the tight teaching schedule prevented the implementation of time-consuming interactive activities, the large class size increased the difficulty of organizing in-depth discussions, and the insufficient theoretical understanding of cross-cultural issues made it difficult to handle open discussions.

4.2.4 The Evaluation System Has a Single Dimension

The issue of a single dimension in the evaluation system was directly evidenced from the textual analysis of the course assessment plans, based on the survey results of the distribution of assessment dimensions in university English courses of 6 sample universities. At the final assessment level, the proportion of language knowledge in the total score was as high as 64.3%, while listening and reading skills accounted for 21.2%, and oral expression skills accounted for 8.7%. However, the combined assessment proportion of the three comprehensive qualities of cross-cultural attitude, patriotism and critical thinking was only 5.8%, among which the mean proportion of the cross-cultural attitude dimension was only 2.1%, the mean proportion of the patriotism dimension was 1.8%, and the mean

proportion of the critical thinking dimension was 1.9%. The standard deviations of these three indicators did not exceed 0.80, indicating that the weakness in comprehensive quality evaluation among all universities was highly consistent. The situation of formative assessment was equally worrying. 89.5% of the course assessment plans limited the content of formative assessment to attendance, homework and unit tests, and only 10.5% of the plans included process-based comprehensive evaluation tasks such as cross-cultural reflection diaries, cultural research reports or comparisons of Chinese and foreign cultures. This evaluation orientation that emphasizes language assessment and neglects cultural literacy was transmitted downward through the "commander's stick" effect, causing students to view cultural learning as a "soft task" that is not included in the grades and lacking the internal driving force for in-depth participation. In teacher interviews, some respondents also reflected: "If there is no assessment or no score for cross-cultural learning, students naturally have no motivation to take it seriously, and it is also difficult for us to truly promote cultural thinking activities in the classroom."

4.2.5 The Insufficient Teacher Capacity

The insufficient capacity reserves of teachers constitute a deep bottleneck that restricts the cultivation of cross-cultural awareness. At the cross-cultural literacy level, the average familiarity with cross-cultural theoretical knowledge is 2.78, while the average richness of overseas study or cross-cultural training experience is as low as 2.35. Only 21.3% of the teachers indicated that they had systematically taken courses related to cross-cultural communication. At the level of teaching ability in curriculum-based ideological and political education, the average ability to integrate ideological elements with language teaching content is 3.12, while the average "ability to respond to students' doubts in classroom value guidance" has dropped to 2.87, indicating that more than half of the teachers find it difficult to provide a sufficient and firm response from an academic perspective when facing sensitive cultural issues or value confusions raised by students. After the research team conducted a two-dimensional cross-classification based on cross-cultural literacy and teaching ability in curriculum-based ideological and political education, it was found that the proportion of teachers with "both low" cross-cultural literacy and teaching ability was 38.4%, while the proportion of those with "one high and one low" was 42.7%, and only 18.9% of the teachers were "both high". This distribution pattern indicates that the current teaching staff is facing a severe capability gap in the process of transforming from "language instructors" to "culture educators". The interview data further revealed the causes of this capability gap: The long-term training system for university English teachers is dominated by linguistics and literature as the main disciplinary background, and the systematic training in cross-cultural disciplines is insufficient; the post-employment teacher training mostly focuses on the update of teaching methods and techniques, while there are scarce high-quality training opportunities involving the cutting-edge theories of cross-cultural studies, curriculum ideological and political design strategies, and value guidance methodologies. Many teachers admitted that when facing deep issues such as cultural stance and ideological comparison in the textbooks, they often adopt avoidance or

simple indoctrination approaches due to insufficient theoretical reserves, which undoubtedly weakens the depth and persuasiveness of cross-cultural teaching.

5. Countermeasures for Cultivating College Students' Cross-Cultural Awareness in English within the Context of Course-based Ideological Education

5.1 Revitalizing the Tripartite Education Goal

Based on the structural problems revealed in the previous text, such as deviation in the positioning of training goals, superficial teaching content, rigid teaching methods, single evaluation, and insufficient teacher capabilities, this study believes that the improvement path for cultivating college students' cross-cultural awareness in the context of course ideological and political education should be carried out through systematic and coordinated reforms in five dimensions: reshaping the educational goals, reconstructing the teaching content, innovating teaching methods, improving the evaluation mechanism, and enhancing the teacher's competence. The top priority is to reshape the three-dimensional educational goal system of "language ability - cross-cultural literacy - value identification", reversing the one-sided tendency of emphasizing skills training while neglecting cultural understanding and value guidance. This goal structure does not merely divide the three dimensions mechanically; instead, it requires the organic integration of the three elements in the design of each teaching unit. For example, in the "Science and Technology Development" theme unit, the language ability goal is reflected in the mastery of scientific and technological vocabulary and academic discourse, the cross-cultural literacy goal points to the comparison and reflection of Chinese and foreign scientific and technological ethical concepts, and the value identification goal guides students to understand the strategic significance of China's independent scientific and technological innovation and the responsibility of the community of human destiny. Only through the systematic reconfiguration of the goal level can the passive situation where cultural teaching has become "a sideline" be reversed at the source, providing a clear direction anchor for the subsequent reforms of teaching content, methods, and evaluation.

5.2 Reconstructing the Teaching Content System

The systematic reorganization of teaching content is a crucial link for realizing the transformation and implementation of educational goals. Its core task lies in breaking the disconnected state of cross-cultural knowledge and ideological and political elements, and establishing a content organization logic based on themes, using comparison as a method, and focusing on value analysis. This study suggests implementing a three-level content structure of "cultural theme - comparative perspective - value focus" in the use of teaching materials and the development of teaching resources. The first level, "cultural theme", selects topics that have both language teaching functions and cultural nurturing potential, such as family concepts, educational ideas, ecological ethics, and technological innovation; the second level, "comparative perspective", sets up modules for comparing and analyzing Chinese and foreign cultural concepts and practical methods under the same theme, guiding students to identify the surface phenomena and deep causes of cultural differences; the third level of value focus

transitions naturally from comparison to value discernment, refining ideopolitical focal points around specific themes. Taking "ecological ethics" as an entry point, it compares Chinese and Western environmental philosophy traditions and ultimately centers on Xi Jinping's Thought on Ecological Civilization and the contemporary practice of the beautiful China initiative.

5.3 Establishing Innovative Teaching Methods

The innovation of teaching methods should aim at breaking the stereotype of one-way knowledge transmission and constructing deep cross-cultural experiences and dialogue classrooms. In response to the problem in the survey where the usage frequency of methods such as "scenario simulation and role-playing" and "analysis of cross-cultural conflicts" was seriously low, this study proposes a three-stage progressive teaching method model of "cognitive activation - experience deepening - reflection internalization". In the cognitive activation stage, teachers use cultural phenomena introduction, knowledge map construction, and pre-designed question chains to awaken students' cultural awareness and curiosity for exploration. In the experience deepening stage, learning activities such as cross-cultural scenario simulation, case discussions, role-playing, and online collaborative projects with Chinese and foreign students are introduced, enabling students to experience cultural collisions and stimulate emotional resonance in a realistic cross-cultural communication scenario. In the reflection internalization stage, output tasks such as cross-cultural reflection journal writing, group debates, and telling Chinese stories in English are relied upon to promote students to elevate their fragmented cultural perception to systematic cultural understanding and value identification.

5.4 Establishing a Comprehensive and Diversified Evaluation Mechanism

The reform of the diversified evaluation system is a rigid guarantee to ensure that the goal of cultivating cross-cultural awareness can truly be implemented. Its core lies in breaking the single-dimensional evaluation paradigm dominated by language assessment and establishing a comprehensive evaluation framework that covers language proficiency, cross-cultural literacy, and value identification. This study suggests that the reform should be carried out simultaneously at the summative evaluation and formative evaluation levels. In the summative evaluation, moderately reduce the proportion of language knowledge in the total score and incorporate dimensions such as cross-cultural attitude, critical thinking, and patriotism into the assessment scope in an operationalized manner. For example, indirect measurement of these dimensions can be achieved by setting questions involving cultural comparison and value discrimination in reading comprehension and writing tests. In the formative evaluation, vigorously expand the evaluation methods based on multiple evidence and incorporate cross-cultural reflection diaries, cultural research reports, comparisons of Chinese and foreign cultures, and the quality of participation in classroom discussions into the process evaluation system.

5.5 Enhancing Teachers' "Dual Qualities"

The "dual literacy" of teachers—the simultaneous improvement of cross-cultural theoretical literacy and the teaching ability of course ideological and political education—is the prerequisite and key

variable for realizing all the aforementioned reform concepts. In response to the severe reality that the proportion of teachers with low cross-cultural literacy and ideological and political ability in the current teacher group is as high as 38.4%, this study proposes a three-stage progressive path for the construction of teachers' capabilities. The first stage is the "basic deficiency remediation period", which targets teachers with weak training backgrounds in cross-cultural disciplines. Through the establishment of systematic training courses on cross-cultural communication theory, workshops on course ideological and political education design, and special topic seminars on comparing Chinese and Western cultures, the basic theories and methods will be supplemented within 1-2 years; the second stage is the "ability development period", where teachers are organized to conduct collective lesson planning, teaching with different approaches for the same lesson, and case studies around specific cross-cultural themes, converting abstract theoretical knowledge into practical teaching behaviors; the third stage is the "reflection and improvement period", where teachers are encouraged to apply for teaching reform projects, write teaching research papers, and participate in high-level teaching competitions. In this way, they can continuously iterate their dual literacy capabilities through research and practice. At the same time, universities should provide institutional support for teachers' professional development, including incorporating cross-cultural literacy and ideological and political teaching ability into the teacher assessment index system, establishing a collaborative teaching research mechanism between English teachers and ideological and political teachers across departments, and expanding the two-way channels for teachers to go abroad for exchange and training and participate in cross-cultural training in China. Only when the teacher group truly possesses the theoretical foundation and practical strength to "cultivate people through culture" can the cultivation of cross-cultural awareness in the context of course ideological and political education be transformed from a slogan into practical teaching results.

5.6 Expanding the Platform for Integrating Inside and Outside the Classroom

Expanding the interconnection between inside and outside the classroom is a crucial support for cultivating college students' cross-cultural awareness in English from knowledge imparting to value internalization within the framework of curriculum-based ideological and political education. Currently, there is a significant "island predicament" in English teaching in the dimension of educational cultivation space—cross-cultural critical thinking activities within the classroom, once separated from the teaching scenario, are difficult to sustain. Students lack opportunities to continuously practice and reflect in real or semi-real situations, resulting in classroom learning being difficult to be transformed into internal cultural consciousness. The basic solution to this predicament lies in breaking the boundaries of the classroom and disciplines, and constructing a three-dimensional educational platform matrix of in-depth study in class, immersion outside the classroom, expansion online, and practice outside the school. Specifically, at the school level, second-class classroom activities such as English corners, international culture festivals, and exchanges between Chinese and foreign students should be upgraded and reoriented towards ideological education, setting up dialogic topics with strong critical

tension around specific cultural themes, enabling students to naturally touch upon value judgments and cultural mutual learning in language communication; at the extracurricular level, practical education bases should be established with foreign-related enterprises, international communities, and cultural and tourism publicity departments, developing practical projects that integrate language services, cultural dissemination, and national conditions observation, enabling students to achieve the embodied internalization of national and family sentiments and responsibility through undertaking foreign-related volunteer services and participating in local cultural international communication of Chinese culture and translation tasks. Digital technology provides important support for expanding the breadth and depth of the interconnection platform, and should rely on virtual exchange platforms to establish a regular online collaborative learning community for Chinese and foreign students, designing structured cross-cultural cooperation tasks and virtual simulation scenarios experiments, allowing students in non-target language countries to also obtain a similar real cross-cultural interaction experience, and at the same time, online interaction data can provide an objective basis for process evaluation. The continuous operation of this educational ecosystem also requires the support of multi-party collaboration and institutional guarantees: at the school level, a joint working mechanism led by the Foreign Language College, in conjunction with the School of Marxism, the student affairs department, and the international exchange department should be established; at the extracurricular level, enterprises with foreign-related backgrounds should be selected to jointly build practical bases and hire industry experts as practice mentors; at the same time, the university should introduce the second-class classroom credit recognition measures and set up special funds, transforming the interconnection between inside and outside the classroom from an elastic advocacy to a rigid constraint, so that cross-cultural awareness cultivation can spread from the spark in the classroom to a conscious pursuit throughout the students' growth process.

6. Conclusion

The cultivation of intercultural awareness in college English currently faces multiple challenges, including misaligned goal orientation, superficial integration of content, relatively rigid methods, a single-dimensional evaluation framework, and teachers' insufficient dual competence in both intercultural and ideological and political education. Among these, the narrowing of goals toward "emphasizing skills over values" constitutes the logical starting point of the other problems. Curriculum-based ideological and political education and the cultivation of intercultural awareness share a deep structural congruence in their goal orientation, content carriers, and implementation pathways. Their integration is not an external grafting but an endogenous fit, providing a theoretical basis for resolving these challenges. Advancing reform requires systematic measures: at the goal level, reconstruct a tripartite framework integrating value guidance, competence development, and knowledge construction; at the content level, deeply explore ideological and political elements in textbooks to achieve organic integration rather than mechanical addition; at the method level, build

classrooms that foster comparative reflection and in-depth dialogue; at the evaluation level, establish a comprehensive system covering intercultural attitudes and critical thinking; at the teacher level, address the dual shortcomings in intercultural theory and ideological and political education competence; and at the ecosystem level, expand platforms for coordinated in- and out-of-classroom education. In sum, only by rooting value guidance in the intrinsic logic of language and culture teaching can the cultivation of intercultural awareness move from skills training to character cultivation and truly serve the fundamental goal of cultivating new people of the era who possess both a love for their country and family and an international perspective.

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