

# The Construction of the Ideological and Political “Curriculum Chain” for Foreign Language Majors

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**Abstract:** Amid the intensifying global competition for discursive power, China has prioritized the enhancement of its international communication capacity and the global influence of Chinese culture as strategic measures to navigate a complex international public opinion environment. This evolving context has expanded the mission of foreign language education beyond its traditional role as a bridge for cultural exchange, positioning it as a critical means for cultivating talent that serves national strategies and contributes to shaping China’s global image. However, traditional models of foreign language education—limited by their predominantly instrumental orientation—are increasingly insufficient for this broader mission. In response, the ideological and political “Curriculum Chain” for foreign language majors has been introduced as a top-level structural reform. It establishes an integrated curricular framework that holistically links linguistic competence, disciplinary application, and value orientation. By embedding language learning within authentic professional contexts and nationally strategic frameworks, this model enables the implicit cultivation of students’ ideological awareness and value systems, thereby fundamentally redefining the competence structure of foreign language professionals.

**Keywords:** Foreign languages; Ideological and political education; Curriculum chain; Talent cultivation

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## 1. Introduction

According to the *Notice on Issuing the “Guidance Outline for Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Courses”* released by the Ministry of Education in May 2020, foreign language education in Chinese universities is no longer confined to the transmission of linguistic knowledge alone. It is now tasked with cultivating students’ cross-cultural communication abilities, interdisciplinary literacy, ideological awareness, and moral values<sup>[1]</sup>. The core objective of constructing an ideological and political “Curriculum Chain” for foreign language majors is to establish comprehensive and in-depth linkages among all courses within the discipline. This framework seeks to integrate every aspect of foreign language teaching into a unified educational system that combines knowledge acquisition, value orientation, and competence development, thereby fostering a

holistic and systematic educational ecology.

## **2. Current research on the collaboration between foreign language majors and the ideological and political “curriculum chain”**

Ideological and political education plays a pivotal role in fulfilling the fundamental mission of “cultivating virtue through education.” Existing research on ideological and political education in foreign language programs primarily centers on three areas: the integration of ideological and political elements into disciplinary instruction, innovations in teaching models, and case-based exploration. However, empirical studies on a coordinated “Curriculum Chain” that connects the entire system of foreign language courses remain at a preliminary stage.

A keyword search for “Curriculum Chain” on the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) platform (up to July 2025) yielded only 54 results, of which merely four were directly related to foreign language education. Zhao and Wang proposed a “point-line-plane” logic for curriculum chain construction <sup>[2]</sup>; Shen and colleagues examined implementation pathways under the “Three Incorporations” framework from the perspectives of the knowledge chain, value chain, and capability chain <sup>[3]</sup>; Zhang developed a three-dimensional integration model based on Tyler’s curriculum theory <sup>[4]</sup>. These studies provide valuable theoretical and methodological insights for foreign language curriculum design.

Nevertheless, compared with other disciplines, research specifically focusing on the “Curriculum Chain” for foreign language majors remains limited. The construction pathways and practical mechanisms still require further theoretical refinement and empirical validation. This study, therefore, begins with the special mission borne by foreign language education, exploring in depth the core significance and implementation strategies of Curriculum Chain construction, with the aim of offering guidance and inspiration for the reform of core foreign language courses and the optimization of talent cultivation systems.

## **3. The contemporary value of constructing an ideological and political “curriculum chain” for foreign language majors**

In the context of the new era, the mission of “cultivating virtue through education” has been elevated to an unprecedented strategic level. Constructing an ideological and political “Curriculum Chain” for foreign language majors thus represents a vital initiative in response to national policy directives. By deeply integrating ideological and political education—as well as interdisciplinary knowledge—into foreign language courses, this approach not only imparts language knowledge and skills but also emphasizes the cultivation of students’ professional competence, moral integrity, and socialist core values. It thereby fulfills the mission of fostering high-quality, innovative, and ethically grounded professionals <sup>[5]</sup>.

First, in serving national strategies, the construction of the Curriculum Chain enables the cultivation of a new generation of foreign language professionals capable of “communicating China’s voice.” While strengthening students’ foreign language communication skills, the Curriculum Chain also highlights the inheritance and promotion of China’s excellent traditional culture. By integrating professional language instruction with the profound cultural and philosophical ideas embedded in Chinese civilization, it realizes comprehensive and multidimensional teaching. This innovative integration not only enhances students’ intercultural communication competence but also strengthens their cultural confidence, fosters a global vision with local sensibility, and prepares them to become ambassadors for Chinese culture on the international stage <sup>[6]</sup>.

Second, in promoting a collaborative educational ecosystem within universities, the Curriculum Chain facilitates reform and innovation in foreign language education. It shifts the focus from single-dimensional language skill training to a multidimensional cultivation model characterized by culture as the soul, discipline as the foundation, and language as the tool <sup>[7]</sup>. The goal is to nurture high-level, interdisciplinary talents equipped with foreign language competence + professional knowledge + cultural literacy, meeting both students' needs for personalized growth and the nation's demand for professionals who can effectively tell China's stories and engage in global communication and governance.

Finally, in reshaping the orientation of talent cultivation and internalizing curriculum values, the Curriculum Chain helps university students establish a sound outlook on life and values at the formative stage of their development <sup>[8]</sup>. By transcending the limitations of traditional classroom teaching and constructing an all-encompassing educational model that is scenario-based, process-oriented, and element-integrated, it extends ideological and political education from the classroom to diverse practical contexts. This forms a comprehensive learning ecosystem that integrates classroom instruction, experiential practice, social engagement, and international exposure, thus achieving deep integration of knowledge acquisition, skill development, and value formation.

## **4. Implementation pathways for constructing the ideological and political “curriculum chain” in foreign language majors**

The ideological and political “Curriculum Chain” for foreign language majors can be organized into a “1–2–3–4–5” model: one core educational thread, two-dimensional curriculum chains, three-classroom synergy, four major course modules, and five supporting systems. This model is anchored by the central aim of serving national strategies and communicating China's voice, integrates horizontal and vertical curricular logics, leverages online–offline synergy across classrooms, connects multiple course types, and mobilizes diversified resources.

### **4.1. One core educational thread**

The core thread—serving national strategies and communicating China's voice—permeates the entire curriculum. A four-year developmental logic is proposed: in the freshman year, consolidate cultural identity and clarify the social roles and responsibilities of foreign language professionals; in the sophomore year, cultivate critical thinking and intercultural competence while strengthening cultural confidence; in the junior year, emphasize practical ability and patriotic commitment, enhancing students' capacity to tell China's stories effectively in foreign languages; in the senior year, broaden international perspectives and reinforce social responsibility and professional ethics. This staged progression ensures that value education and professional competence evolve together across the program.

### **4.2. Two-dimensional curriculum chains**

The curriculum chain comprises two interacting dimensions. Horizontal integration chain adopts a “Foreign Language +” approach to form interdisciplinary course clusters that break disciplinary silos. This model foregrounds language as a foundation, interdisciplinary integration, digital empowerment, and continuous iteration, thereby mitigating the instrumentalization and fragmentation typical of traditional foreign language programs. Complementing this, the Vertical competency chain is designed as a progressive competence trajectory aligned with language learning stages. It guides students from building fundamental listening,

speaking, reading, and writing skills, through developing greater fluency and accuracy at the intermediate level, to achieving advanced capacities for creative language use, critical thinking, and professional application. The vertical chain culminates in the capacity to apply language skills creatively to solve complex problems and to convey values in international contexts.

Implementing these chains requires leveraging institutional strengths and aligning module design with national strategies and industry needs. Language faculty and disciplinary instructors should collaborate—via shared terminological resources, case repositories, and faculty exchanges—to integrate cross-faculty resources. Elements such as international understanding education, Chinese solutions, and cultural confidence should be systematically embedded. Practically, the vertical progression can be framed as Foundational Competence → Professional Application → Value Creation, supported by AI-enabled simulation, industry internship bases, and problem-based projects.

### **4.3. Three-classroom synergy**

The First Classroom delivers formal instruction to consolidate disciplinary knowledge and ideological-political theory through systematic coursework; while the Second Classroom extends learning beyond traditional settings, enabling value internalization through immersive experiences in social practice, industry–university cooperation, and international exchanges; furthermore, the Third Classroom leverages digital technologies—such as VR simulations, multilingual resource libraries, and online global collaborations—to broaden learners’ perspectives and enhance their capacity to perform in complex, intercultural contexts.

This integrated model establishes a dynamic cycle connecting theory, practice, and innovation. In the First Classroom, ideological-political themes are woven into formal instruction through foreign-language texts. This approach bridges abstract knowledge with lived contexts, enhancing both relevance and student engagement. The Second Classroom extends learning through real-world projects and partnerships, enabling students to internalize and test theoretical knowledge. The Third Classroom employs digital tools—VR negotiation scenarios, simulated Sino-foreign media dialogues, and a Multilingual Communication Resource Library to train students for multilingual public opinion engagement and independent content creation. These classrooms should interoperate through shared resources and data feedback to achieve deep integration.

### **4.4. Four major course modules**

The Curriculum Chain is implemented across four interrelated course modules. Foundational Courses establish core linguistic proficiency while embedding socialist core values, Chinese cultural identity, and an outward-looking perspective. Professional Courses align with national strategic priorities through industry-integrated “Foreign Language +” programs, implemented via dual-supervisor systems combining academic and professional mentorship. Practical Courses employ a tiered experiential learning approach, progressing from simulated training to real-world engagement through AI-enhanced scenarios and collaborative projects with international partners. Extension Course provides flexible, credit-bearing pathways for interdisciplinary studies and cross-institutional learning opportunities. Collectively, these modules create a vertically sequential and horizontally integrated curriculum that maintains language acquisition as its foundation while achieving interdisciplinary synthesis, strategic responsiveness, and value-based education.

This modular design balances language proficiency development, interdisciplinary integration, responsiveness to national priorities, and the permeation of value guidance, producing a curriculum that is vertically coherent and horizontally interconnected. Foundational Courses, Professional Courses, Practical



Courses, and Extension Courses constitute the four core modules of the “Curriculum Chain.” Their design balances language ability cultivation, interdisciplinary integration, response to national strategies, and value guidance infiltration, forming a curriculum system that is vertically coherent and horizontally interconnected.

#### **4.5. Five supporting systems**

The collaboration of five parties—Teaching, Management, Research, Support, and Society—collectively builds a closed-loop system of “Objectives-Resources-Practice-Evaluation”<sup>[9]</sup>, overcoming the dilemmas of “instrumentality” and “silo effects” in ideological and political education for foreign language majors. The teaching system develops faculty competencies through training programs that enhance ideological awareness, curriculum design, and value-guidance capabilities. Management provides strategic direction and resource allocation. Research activities integrate with teaching through collaborative mechanisms that translate theoretical insights into practical applications. Support services deliver academic programming and assessment tools, while social partnerships connect with external stakeholders to align talent cultivation with societal needs. These systems address the challenges of instrumentalism and disciplinary silos and sustain ongoing improvement through continuous feedback and evaluation<sup>[10]</sup>.

### **5. Conclusion**

Against the strategic imperative to build a more effective international communication system, foreign language professionals are entrusted with the dual mission of enhancing cultural soft power and expanding international discourse influence. The ideological and political “Curriculum Chain” for foreign language majors—embodied in a Foreign Language + talent cultivation model—aims to produce graduates equipped with foreign language competence, professional knowledge, and cultural literacy. By integrating disciplinary instruction, practical engagement, digital innovation, and values education within a coherent curricular architecture, the model offers a replicable paradigm for cultivating applied foreign language talents who can effectively communicate China’s narratives and participate in global dialogues.

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