

Research on the Path of Integrating the OBE Concept into Ideological and Political Education in College English

Qi Wang

School of Foreign Languages, Huangshan University, Huangshan, Anhui, China

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: Under the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and the strategic requirements of ideological-political course construction, College English, as a compulsory public basic course with wide coverage and long teaching duration, serves as an important field for ideological and political education in colleges and universities. The outcome-based education (OBE) concept is highly consistent with the guiding ideology of ideological-political courses—*student-centered, outcome-based, and continuously improving*—and provides strong support for the reform of ideological and political education in College English. This paper first expounds on the compatibility between ideological-political courses and the OBE concept, as well as the significance of ideological and political education in College English. Then it systematically analyzes the practical dilemmas of College English ideological-political courses in four dimensions: objectives, content, teaching mode, and evaluation. Finally, it proposes practical paths for the teaching reform of College English ideological-political courses based on the OBE concept from four aspects: constructing a dual-dimensional objective system, reconstructing teaching content, innovating teaching modes, and reforming the evaluation system. The study aims to solve the problem of “separation between language teaching and ideological guidance” and realize the coordinated cultivation of linguistic competence and ideological-political literacy to fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education.

Keywords: OBE concept; College English; Ideological and political education; Teaching reform

Online publication: June 5, 2026

1. Introduction

The General Secretary emphasized at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities that ideological and political work in colleges and universities should adhere to fostering virtue through education as the central link. All courses should maintain their responsibilities so that various courses can work in the same direction as ideological and political theory courses to form a synergistic effect^[1]. In 2019, the *Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Deepening the Reform of Undergraduate Education and Teaching and Comprehensively Improving the Quality of Talent Training* pointed out that

ideological-political course construction should be regarded as a key link in implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, insisting on the unity of knowledge imparting and value guidance, explicit education and implicit education, and fully exploring ideological and political education resources contained in various courses and teaching methods ^[2]. In 2020, the *Guidelines for Ideological and Political Construction in Colleges and Universities* were issued, stressing that comprehensively promoting ideological-political course construction is a strategic measure to fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education ^[3]. In October 2022, the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was held in Beijing. The General Secretary emphasized providing education that satisfies the people and that the essence of education is to foster virtue. We must fully implement the Party's education policy, fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, and train socialist builders and successors who develop in an all-round way morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and spiritually ^[4]. From “synergistic effect” to “key link” and then to “strategic measure,” the state's positioning of ideological-political courses has become increasingly clear with higher requirements. The latest *College English Teaching Guide* puts forward new requirements for the orientation and nature of College English: College English teaching should be integrated into the school's ideological-political teaching system so that it can play an important role in implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education ^[5]. As one of the compulsory public basic courses for non-English majors, College English usually lasts 1.5 to 2 years, covering a large number of students over a long span and generally without changing teachers. If teachers effectively integrate ideological and political education into nearly two years of College English teaching, it will imperceptibly promote students to form a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values, and help improve their comprehensive quality and all-round development. Therefore, College English classrooms can and should become a new front for ideological and political education in colleges and universities ^[6].

Outcome-based education (OBE) is an educational theory oriented to students' learning outcomes. It organizes, implements, and evaluates teaching around expected learning outcomes, takes students as the center, and takes learning activity outcomes as the starting point and orientation. The OBE theory emphasizes taking students as the main body, attaching importance to students' effective acquisition of learning outcomes and abilities in the learning process, conducting quantitative analysis and evaluation of students' learning outcomes at different teaching stages, and forming a complete closed loop through continuous improvement to ensure teaching quality and achieve talent training goals. This theory is highly consistent with the construction goal of “focusing on comprehensively improving the ability of talent cultivation” and the guiding ideology of constructing an ideological-political teaching system adhering to “student-centered, outcome-oriented, and continuous improvement” proposed in the *Guidelines for Ideological and Political Construction in Colleges and Universities*. Therefore, it is of great significance to implement the teaching reform of ideological and political education in College English based on the OBE theory.

2. Practical dilemmas of integrating ideological and political education into College English

2.1. Misaligned objectives: Separation of dual-dimensional goals and lack of outcome-oriented top-level design

Teaching objectives are the logical starting point of teaching activities. At present, the objective design of ideological and political education in College English in most colleges and universities is generally

inconsistent with the core logic of the OBE concept—*outcome-oriented, reverse design, student-centered*—leading to a “rootless” dilemma in ideological and political integration from the source.

First, dual-dimensional goals are seriously separated. Most College English training programs and syllabuses still focus on imparting linguistic knowledge and cultivating application abilities. Ideological-political objectives are mostly added as general expressions such as “cultivating patriotism and enhancing cultural confidence,” neither integrated into the graduation requirement index system of professional talent training nor bound with language ability objectives such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating. This forms the inherent cognition that “language teaching is a hard task while ideological guidance is a soft requirement,” exacerbating the “separation between teaching and ideology.”

Second, ideological-political objectives are vague and generalized. Most teachers’ objective design remains at the conceptual level without following the OBE principle of *measurable, achievable, and evaluable*. Macro ideological-political education objectives are not decomposed into specific outcome indicators at the unit and class hours levels, making ideological-political objectives untraceable and unverifiable, eventually becoming formal “decoration in teaching plans.”

2.2. Inappropriate content: Mechanical integration of ideological-political elements and lack of systematic content reconstruction

Teaching content is the core carrier for implementing ideological and political education in College English. At present, the ideological-political content construction of this course in most colleges and universities is generally out of line with the core logic of OBE “outcome orientation,” failing to build a systematic content system around preset education outcomes, resulting in the prominent dilemma of “superficial and labeling” ideological-political integration.

Most teachers only dig ideological-political elements at the level of “surface connection,” generally adopting the labeling method of “text explanation + ideological-political slogans.” Some even separate ideological-political content from language teaching and conduct one-way indoctrination in independent sessions, without deeply integrating ideological-political elements into the whole process of language teaching such as vocabulary explanation, listening training, and speaking practice. This not only violates the disciplinary attribute of “unity of instrumentality and humanism” in language teaching but also easily causes students’ resistance.

Meanwhile, mainstream College English textbooks are still dominated by Western cultural contexts and materials, with a low proportion of content related to excellent traditional Chinese culture, China’s development achievements, and China’s governance experience. Most teachers do not supplement corresponding content around the outcome objectives of ideological-political courses, resulting in a long-term unbalanced state of “mainly Western cultural input and insufficient Chinese cultural output” in College English teaching, directly causing students’ “Chinese cultural aphasia” and making it difficult to achieve the education goal of “telling Chinese stories well in English.”

In addition, content design is generally homogeneous, without hierarchical design based on students’ English foundation and ability levels in accordance with the OBE principle of “student-centered.” There is a lack of differentiated content suitable for students with different English levels, leading to the problem that “students with poor foundation cannot keep up, and students with good foundation are not challenged,” making it impossible to achieve ideological-political education outcomes for all students at all levels.

2.3. Solidified mode: Teacher-centered lecturing and lack of student-oriented outcome achievement paths

Teaching mode is the core path to achieve ideological-political education outcomes in College English. At present, the teaching implementation of this course generally adopts the traditional “teacher-centered” one-way indoctrination mode, which is contrary to the core logic of the OBE concept “student-centered and active construction,” directly leading to ineffective ideological and political guidance.

Most College English classrooms still follow the traditional fixed teaching process. Ideological-political integration relies entirely on teachers’ one-way lectures and indoctrination, leaving students in a passive acceptance state. This violates the practical and applied nature of language learning and the core law of ideological and political education—*emotional identity and active construction*. Students lack sufficient language practice and space for ideological-political thematic discussion and value thinking, unable to achieve the leap from “knowledge reception” to “value identity” and then to “ability transformation,” and ideological guidance eventually becomes a “formality.”

Most teachers design classroom tasks only around language knowledge points without integrating ideological-political education objectives into the whole process, failing to create dual-dimensional teaching tasks. This leads to the complete separation of language practice and ideological-political cultivation. Meanwhile, the course generally “attaches importance to in-class teaching and neglects after-class practice.” The first classroom and the second classroom are completely disconnected; after-class activities such as English speech contests and English corners are not linked with in-class ideological-political objectives. Coupled with the lack of practical scenarios connecting social needs, students find it difficult to transform what they have learned into practical actions to tell Chinese stories well, and ideological-political literacy cannot be transformed into core competence.

2.4. Unbalanced evaluation: Single evaluation system and lack of dual-dimensional evaluation mechanism focusing on outcome achievement

Evaluation is the core link of closed-loop management in the OBE concept and the key starting point for testing the effectiveness of ideological-political education in College English. At present, the evaluation system of this course generally has an imbalance of “valuing language over ideology, valuing summative evaluation over formative evaluation,” failing to achieve accurate tracking and effective feedback of education outcomes.

Most college and university course evaluations still focus on language knowledge and application ability. Language items such as listening and reading in final assessments generally account for more than 90%, with almost no content related to ideological-political literacy assessment. Even in formative evaluation, ideological-political content is generally summarized as “class performance” without clear indicators and scoring standards, relying entirely on teachers’ subjective judgment, resulting in immeasurable and unverifiable ideological-political education effectiveness and a lack of effective evaluation constraints for ideological-political course construction.

Meanwhile, the evaluation system is dominated by summative evaluation, with final assessments accounting for 60–70%. Formative evaluation accounts for a low proportion and mainly focuses on attendance and homework, failing to track the whole process of students’ learning and ideological-political literacy improvement, which is contrary to the core logic of OBE. In addition, the evaluation subject is mainly classroom teachers, lacking students’ self-evaluation and peer evaluation, and no external multiple

subjects are introduced. Students' performance in cross-cultural practice and competitions cannot be included in the evaluation, leading to a serious disconnect between evaluation results and students' actual ability and literacy.

3. Practical exploration of teaching reform of ideological and political education in College English

3.1. Anchoring outcome orientation: Constructing a dual-dimensional training objective system of “linguistic competence + ideological-political literacy”

Aiming at the core dilemmas of misaligned, vague, and generalized objectives in ideological and political education in College English, we should strictly follow the core logic of the OBE concept “reverse design and forward implementation,” take graduation requirements as the starting point and students' final education outcomes as the core, and build a clear, hierarchically decomposed, and adaptable dual-dimensional objective system to fundamentally solve the problem of “separation between teaching and ideology.”

We should strictly connect with the top-level requirements of the *Guidelines for Ideological and Political Construction in Colleges and Universities* and the *College English Teaching Guide (2020 Edition)*, deeply bind the core objectives of ideological and political education in College English with the graduation requirements of professional talent training programs, and clarify the top-level education outcomes: at the linguistic competence level, cultivate students' solid comprehensive English abilities in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating; at the ideological-political literacy level, cultivate students' firm patriotism and cultural confidence, cross-cultural thinking ability, international communication ability to tell Chinese stories, and awareness of a community with a shared future for mankind.

The dual-dimensional top-level outcomes should be integrated into the graduation requirement index system to clarify the supporting relationship of College English to graduation requirements and completely change the “separated and additional” status of ideological-political objectives. Following the OBE principle of *measurable, achievable, and evaluable*, the top-level dual-dimensional outcome objectives should be gradually decomposed into course objectives, unit objectives, and class hour objectives, realizing the one-to-one correspondence and deep binding of linguistic and ideological-political objectives at each level to ensure that each ideological-political objective has corresponding measurable outcome indicators and can be implemented and evaluated.

3.2. Content reconstruction: Deeply exploring ideological-political elements and building a teaching content system matching outcome objectives

Aiming at the dilemmas of inappropriate content, mechanical integration, and an unbalanced system in ideological-political courses, we should strictly follow the core principle of the OBE concept “content serving outcome objectives,” reconstruct the teaching content system guided by dual-dimensional education outcomes, and realize the deep integration of ideological-political elements and language teaching content.

Taking *New Era College English Essential Viewing, Listening & Speaking* (2nd Edition, Volume 1) as an example, the teaching design breaks the original unit order, finds the implicit logical relationship between unit themes, extracts the ideological-political education main line of “self—society—country,” and implements modular teaching. Starting with Unit 1 *Youth and Education* and Unit 4 *Career and Pursuit* as the first module, it leads to the second module including Unit 2 *Social Media and Sharing* and Unit 3 *Food*

and Culture, and finally to the third module Unit 5 *China and the World*. Through this modular learning, students connect themselves with others, society, and the country, guiding them to improve personal ability while realizing value guidance and spiritual shaping.

In specific teaching, taking *China and the World* as an example, teachers can closely focus on the theme and set multiple output tasks. Linguistic knowledge tasks include listening and gap-filling activities such as *70 Years of Diplomacy: How PR China Claimed Its Lawful Seat in the UN*. Tasks for cultivating cultural confidence and core values include guiding students to translate traditional Chinese expressions about world integration, exchanges, and development, broadening the connotation of the unit theme, and reflecting the educational value of foreign language ideological-political courses.

3.3. Mode innovation: Student-centered all-scenario teaching implementation mode focusing on outcome achievement

Aiming at the dilemmas of solidified teaching mode, lack of student subjectivity, and disconnection between in-class and after-class in ideological and political education in College English, we should strictly follow the core principle of the OBE concept “student-centered and active construction,” take dual-dimensional education outcome achievement as the core, and create an all-scenario teaching implementation mode of “in-class innovation + after-class extension + digital empowerment” to make ideological guidance truly effective.

Abandoning the traditional one-way indoctrination mode and relying on the unit structure of “warm-up—listening & speaking practice—viewing & learning—extension activities” in textbooks, we adopt flipped classroom, PBL (project-based learning), and other methods. All teaching tasks are bound with dual-dimensional linguistic and ideological-political objectives simultaneously, enabling students to achieve synchronous improvement of dual-dimensional abilities in active construction.

Taking Unit 3 *Disaster and Relief* in *New Era College English Essential Viewing, Listening & Speaking* (2nd Edition, Volume 4) as an example, the “flipped classroom + PBL” mode is adopted: before class, students complete textbook listening preview and ideological-political expansion material learning through online platforms to synchronously consolidate linguistic foundation and conduct ideological-political enlightenment; in class, hierarchical listening training, thematic project discussion, and English debate are carried out to improve linguistic ability while deepening students’ identity with China’s development concepts and cross-cultural thinking ability; after class, English vlog shooting tasks realize the extension from classroom learning to practical transformation.

Meanwhile, we break the barriers between the first and second classrooms and build an after-class practice system linked with in-class themes. On the one hand, we connect with textbook core themes to carry out school selections for national English competitions; on the other hand, we build practice platforms such as cross-cultural volunteer services and foreign trade translation, enabling students to practice “telling Chinese stories well in English” in real cross-cultural scenarios and transform ideological-political literacy into core competence^[7].

3.4. Evaluation reform: Constructing a diversified, three-dimensional, and whole-process dual-dimensional evaluation system focusing on outcome achievement

Aiming at the core dilemmas of an unbalanced evaluation system, vague ideological-political evaluation, and overemphasis on summative evaluation in ideological and political education in College English, we should strictly follow the core principle of the OBE concept “focusing on outcomes, whole-process tracking,

and accurate feedback” and build a dual-dimensional, whole-process, and diversified evaluation system of “linguistic competence + ideological-political literacy” to promote the effective implementation of ideological-political courses through evaluation reform.

First, construct a dual-dimensional quantitative evaluation standard to break the “vague and subjective” status of ideological-political evaluation, establish an evaluation index system matching dual-dimensional education objectives, and refine ideological-political literacy into four first-level dimensions: cultural identity and patriotism, cross-cultural thinking ability, international communication ability to tell Chinese stories, social responsibility, and awareness of a community with a shared future for mankind. Each dimension is equipped with quantifiable second-level indicators and scoring standards to realize the standardization of ideological-political evaluation.

Second, optimize the whole-process formative evaluation. Following the OBE logic of “process determines outcomes,” adjust the assessment weight: reduce summative evaluation to 50% and increase formative evaluation to 50% (25% for language and 25% for ideology). Formative evaluation covers the whole teaching process with dual-dimensional scoring standards to track outcomes and guide students to make up for shortcomings.

Third, introduce multiple evaluation subjects to break the single-teacher evaluation mode and build a system of “teacher evaluation 60% + student self-evaluation 20% + student peer evaluation 20%,” mobilizing students’ initiative and comprehensively evaluating their comprehensive ability and ideological-political literacy.

Funding

This work was supported by the Educational and Teaching Reform Research Project of Huangshan University (Project No. 2023JXYJ14, Exploration of Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education Path in College English Curriculum under the OBE Concept), the Horizontal Project of Huangshan University: Research on the Path of Ideological and Political Education in College English under the OBE Concept (No. hxkt2025031), and the Key Project of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Anhui Provincial Department of Education (Project No. 2023AH051346, Construction and Practice of Ecological Discourse Analysis for International Communication of Huizhou Culture from the Perspective of Ecolinguistics).

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Xi J, 2016, Make Ideological and Political Work Run Through the Whole Process of Education and Teaching: Speech at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities, Xinhua News Agency, viewed April 25, 2026, http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-12/08/c_1120082577.htm
- [2] State Council of China, 2019, Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Undergraduate Education and Teaching and Comprehensively Improving the Quality of Talent Training, viewed April 25, 2026, http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-10/12/content_5438706.htm

- [3] Ministry of Education of China, 2020, Notice on Issuing the “Guiding Outline for Curriculum Ideological and Political Construction in Higher Education Institutions,” viewed April 25, 2026, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2020-06/06/content_5517606.htm
- [4] Xi J, 2022, Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Unite to Strive for Building a Modern Socialist Country in an All-Round Way: Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Communist Party Member Net, viewed April 25, 2026, <https://www.12371.cn/2022/10/25/ARTI1666705047474465.shtml>
- [5] Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, 2020, College English Curriculum Teaching Guide, Higher Education Press.
- [6] Yang Y, Pang WW, Ni ZG, 2020, Exploration and Practice of Ideological and Political Education in College English Curriculum under the OBE Concept. *Journal of North China Institute of Aerospace Engineering*, 30(3).
- [7] Jin Y, 2024, A Study on the Perception of the Effective Classroom Environment of Foreign Language Courses with Ideological and Political Education in Flipped Classroom, dissertation, Dalian University of Foreign Languages.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.