

# Values and Paths of Ideological and Political Education in College English Teaching in Applied Universities

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**Abstract:** As the state promotes teaching reform with the goal of ideological and political education, the teaching of various disciplines in colleges and universities is facing new challenges and novel research topics. In applied colleges and universities, as a compulsory course of general education, the ideological and political education elements have not been deeply explored, and the function of ideological and political education that should be undertaken by English teaching has not been fully realized. This paper analyzes the value of ideological and political education in college English in applied colleges and universities and discusses the effective path of ideological and political education in college English in applied colleges and universities from the four levels of teachers, teaching materials, teaching methods, and curriculum.

**Keywords:** Applied colleges and universities; College English; Ideological and political courses; Ideological and political education

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## 1. Introduction

In 2016, it was pointed out at the National Ideological and Political Work Conference of Colleges and Universities that “it is necessary to use classroom teaching as the main channel ..... All other classes should take responsibility so that all kinds of courses and ideological and political theory courses advance in the same direction and form a synergistic effect”<sup>[1]</sup>. In 2018, the National Education Conference<sup>[2]</sup> and the National Conference on Undergraduate Education in Colleges and Universities<sup>[3]</sup> both put forward the “four returns.” The Ministry of Education’s “40 Articles of Higher Education in the New Era”<sup>[4]</sup> emphasized “strengthening the ideological and political education of courses and professions,” i.e., strengthening every teacher’s awareness of moral education and organically integrating the elements of ideological and political education in every course.

## **2. Values of ideological and political education of college English in applied colleges and universities**

### **2.1. Integrating ideological and political education to generate educational synergy**

College English is an important public foundation course in applied colleges and universities, accounting for the most credit hours and credits, lasting two years, and covering all non-English majors, with a large teaching staff and a high degree of social concern. It can be seen that the educational impact of college English courses on students is characterized by long time, wide range, and great influence. Therefore, the integration of elements of ideological and political education in college English teaching, aligning with ideological and political theory courses, will inevitably produce a wide and lasting synergistic effect, generating a strong ideological and political education synergy.

### **2.2. Favorable to the realization of the goal of “emotional attitudes and values”**

In the context of the new curriculum, classroom teaching of various disciplines should be based on teaching tasks and student needs, and curriculum objectives should be designed from the three dimensions of knowledge and skills, process and method, and emotional attitudes and values. Among them, the objective of “emotional attitude and values” emphasizes the need to stimulate students’ emotional resonance, arouse their positive attitude experience, and guide them to form correct values in the teaching process. In applied colleges and universities, integrating ideological and political education organically into college English teaching and vigorously promoting socialist core values and advanced culture will be conducive to cultivating students’ positive emotional attitudes and helping them form correct worldviews, outlooks on life and values, so as to better achieve the curriculum objectives of the dimensions of “emotional attitudes and values.”

### **2.3. Enhancing humanistic teaching in English subjects**

The subject of college English is characterized by both instrumentality and humanity. Instrumentality means that university English teaching should focus on cultivating college students’ ability to listen, speak, read, write, and translate in English, as well as their ability to use special-purpose English in their professions or future work; humanity means that university English teaching should enable students to learn about Western society and culture and enhance their understanding of different cultures. The Ministry of Education’s *Guide to Teaching English at University* (the Guide) <sup>[5]</sup> clearly states that humanism means putting people at the center, cultivating students’ comprehensive qualities, and promoting their all-round development. The Guide requires university English teaching to fully explore the rich humanistic connotation of university English courses and organically integrate socialist core values into them. It can be seen from the Guide to the university English discipline “humanistic” interpretation and teaching requirements that “the humanistic nature of the university English program and ideological and political education has a high degree of compatibility” <sup>[6]</sup>. Strengthening the teaching of ideological and political education in college English is to enhance the humanistic teaching of the English subject.

### **2.4. Effective response to the phenomenon of Chinese cultural aphasia**

With the increasing frequency and depth of international exchanges, English has become the most widely used language for international exchanges, and the widespread use of English has also contributed to the prosperity of Anglo-American culture. Nowadays, some students are keen on Western festivals such as Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Halloween, etc., but have forgotten some traditional Chinese festivals; certain students blindly pursue Western lifestyles and ways of life, but have forgotten Chinese etiquette and morality. If students blindly worship Western cultural practices and values, it will weaken their mother tongue cultural identity <sup>[7]</sup>.

In addition, if we fail to communicate Chinese culture in English, it will result in “Chinese cultural aphasia”<sup>[8]</sup>. The teaching of ideological and political education in university English courses integrates advanced socialist culture and traditional Chinese culture into English teaching so that students can learn to express traditional Chinese culture and socialist culture in English, build up cultural self-confidence, which is conducive to the dissemination of Chinese culture in the world, and effectively deal with the phenomenon of “Chinese cultural aphasia.”

### **3. Effective paths of ideological and political education of college English in applied colleges and universities**

#### **3.1. Teachers**

##### **3.1.1. Improving teachers’ ideological and political quality**

Teachers are the most important part of the education program. In order to integrate ideological and political education in the university English course, it is first necessary to improve the ideological and political quality of university English teachers. In this regard, the “Opinions on Comprehensively Deepening the Reform of Teacher Team Construction in the New Era” requires teachers to strengthen the education of ideals and beliefs, set up a correct outlook on history, ethnicity, country, and culture, and deeply understand and take the lead in practicing socialist core values. As a college English teacher in applied colleges and universities, first of all, it is necessary to strengthen ideological and political learning. For examples, teachers can study the “Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era,” understand and grasp the profound connotation of socialist core values, study the excellent traditional Chinese culture and revolutionary culture, learn the advanced socialist culture, and fully understand the situations of the Party, country, community, and people. Secondly, they should actively disseminate and practice socialist core values. English teachers not only teach English knowledge and improve students’ English skills in the classroom but also disseminate socialist core values. Teaching by example is better than preaching by words. Teachers should take the lead in practicing socialist core values in their teaching work and life, and achieve the purpose of cultivating morality and educating people through explicit or implicit ideological and political education.

##### **3.1.2. Strengthening the awareness of ideological and political education in college English**

College English teachers should be deeply aware that language is also a carrier of ideology. “It is impossible to teach an empty language, the process of teaching language is essentially the process of teaching ideology”<sup>[9]</sup>. With economic globalization, social informatization, and cultural diversification, Western ideologies are increasingly being introduced into China along with English-language cultural products. The worldview, outlook on life, and values of college students are still in the formation stage and have not yet been fixed, and they are easily influenced by negative Western ideologies. Teachers should fully understand the importance of integrating ideological and political education into university English teaching, take good care of students in ideology and politics, and cultivate students to have both international vision and Chinese sentiment, to be down-to-earth as well as develop ideal beliefs, professional skills, and humanistic qualities.

#### **3.2. Teaching materials**

Modern foreign language teaching materials must reflect three “closeness” in guiding ideology, training objectives, teaching content, and practice methods, that is, close to the times, close to the needs of the talent market, and close to the needs of human existence and development<sup>[10]</sup>.

### **3.2.1. Selecting appropriate teaching materials**

College English textbooks are the primary carrier for learning English language and culture, as well as the main information medium for ideological and political education. The guiding ideology, content, and design of textbooks should be up-to-date, reflecting the characteristics of higher education in the new era and the requirements of moral education, and including the contents of ideological and political education and traditional Chinese culture education. There are various college English teaching materials, with constantly emerging new teaching materials and continuously updated original teaching materials. These college English textbooks are updated according to current situation, improving the content of the textbooks and incorporating elements of Chinese politics, society, and culture. Some examples of the textbooks include the third edition of *New Vision College English Reading and Writing Course* (Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press) and the third edition of *21st Century College English Applied Comprehensive Course* (Fudan University Press). The adapted textbooks have made up for the lack of political education content in college English courses, played the role of implicit political education in college English, and provided timely teaching resources to incorporate ideological and political education in college English courses. We should select high-quality teaching materials that can meet the needs of English teaching and at the same time have the effect of ideological and political education, so as to build a good platform for the teaching of ideological and political education in college English courses.

### **3.2.2. Self-compiled school-based teaching materials**

In applied colleges and universities, there is a large team of college English teachers, so they can cooperate with each other and compile their own school-based teaching materials for college English. The self-compiled teaching materials should take into account the national conditions of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, the conditions of applied colleges and universities, and the learning conditions of contemporary college students, and conform to the trend of ideological and political education, so as to maximize the role of implicit ideological and political education of college English teaching materials. Firstly, the teaching materials should incorporate socialist core values, so that students can master English knowledge and skills while guiding teachers and students to promote and practice socialist core values and strengthening confidence in the path, theory, and system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Secondly, the textbooks should include more Chinese culture and stories, so that students can inherit and carry forward traditional Chinese culture and advanced socialist culture, disseminating Chinese culture and showing our cultural confidence.

### **3.3. Teaching methods**

The key to improve the ideological and political education in university English is to organically integrate ideological and political education into the university English classroom teaching. Firstly, the teaching content should be refined. After all, the university English teaching materials are mainly for teaching English subjects. To achieve the effect of ideological and political education, it is necessary to extend, expand, or supplement the content of the teaching materials from the perspective of ideology and politics. Secondly, the teaching methods should be diversified. In the era of rapid development of information technology, ideological and political education in colleges and universities should have an enhanced sense of the times and attraction. Teachers should adopt flexible and varied teaching methods according to the teaching objectives of the university English ideological and political education and the physical and mental characteristics of students, and make good use of modern educational information technology to improve the effect of education and teaching. Various teaching methods can be flexibly used in classroom teaching, such as case studies, speeches, debates, presentations, and knowledge competitions, etc., to achieve a seamless connection between ideological and political education and

English learning<sup>[11]</sup>. Additionally, the “second classroom” can be incorporated. Achieving the goal of college English ideological and political education in the English classroom is impossible due to limited class time, hence we can use after-class teaching to continue ideological and political education, known as the “second classroom.” English teachers can set up QQ or WeChat groups and use network platforms to carry out the “second classroom,” tutoring students in English learning as well as in ideological and political, traditional culture, and mental health; teachers can also rely on the activities of college student associations, such as organizing English speech contests, translation contests, and so on, to promote the socialist core values and Chinese culture. Lastly, the effect of ideological and political education should be emphasized in teaching evaluation. Teaching evaluation is the process of measuring, analyzing, and evaluating college English teaching activities and their results, mainly including students’ academic evaluation and teachers’ teaching evaluation. In addition to considering students’ cognition and skills, teaching evaluation is also required to focus on the effect of ideology and politics as required by the ideological and political education of the university English program. Taking Unit 6 of the third edition of *21st Century College English Applied Comprehensive Course* (Fudan University Press) as an example, the theme of Unit 6 is “Aging Society,” which discusses the social problem of aging. The report of the 19th National Congress proposes to “actively cope with the aging of the population, build a policy system and social environment for elderly care, filial piety, and respect for the elderly, promote the combination of medical care and nursing, and accelerate the development of aging services and industries”<sup>[12]</sup>. Teachers should consult relevant information about the current aging society in China, understand the relevant national policies, and be familiar with the contents of the 19th National Congress report when preparing for the class. In classroom teaching<sup>[13]</sup>, teachers should organize lively classroom activities and organically integrate ideological and political education into English teaching.

### 3.4. Curriculum

“With the improvement of the overall English level of China’s university freshmen, the basic English teaching of university English should be transferred to special-purpose English in due course, and academic English should be the development direction of China’s university English teaching”<sup>[13]</sup>. In terms of curriculum, applied colleges and universities can offer ESP (English for Specific Purposes) elective course of “ideological and political English” in addition to the compulsory college English courses to further strengthen ideological and political education while enhancing students’ comprehensive use of English.

## 4. Conclusion

Applied colleges and universities should bear in mind the fundamental task of cultivating people with moral integrity, deeply understand the significance of ideological and political education, and strengthen the ideological and political education of college students in all aspects. College English teachers should constantly improve their own ideological and political quality, strengthen the awareness of college English ideological and political education, organically integrate ideological and political education into college English classroom teaching, and actively offer the ESP elective course “ideological and political English.” Improving the ideological and political education of university English courses in applied colleges and universities will be conducive to strengthening students’ rational understanding of socialist core values and traditional Chinese culture, their emotional identity and their ability to use English to disseminate Chinese thoughts and culture to the outside world, cultivating outward-looking, applied, and high-quality talents with both integrity and talent, and contributing to the development of socialist core values and traditional Chinese culture in the international arena.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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