

# Research on the Reform Path of Ideological and Political Education in Tourism English Courses in Higher Vocational Education

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**Abstract:** Tourism English in higher vocational education has profound humanistic, strong professional orientation, and instrumental characteristics. Through analyzing the current situation of ideological and political teaching in Tourism English courses in higher vocational education, it is found that there are too few ideological and political elements in the curriculum, the skills teaching and ideological education are not unified, and the ideological and political education in the curriculum tends to be empty preaching. The reasons for this are the weak ideological and political awareness of teachers, the emphasis on skills in textbooks over ideological and political education, and the conservatism of teaching methods. Based on the requirements of curriculum ideological and political education and teaching reform, a teaching reform practice path is constructed from four aspects: anchoring curriculum ideological and political goals, improving teachers' ideological and political awareness and educational ability, creating ideological and political-oriented textbook resources, and integrating ideological and political teaching methods through multiple channels throughout the entire process, in order to cultivate students with patriotism, international vision, and professional skills.

**Keywords:** Tourism English course; Ideological and political education; Reform in education

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## 1. Introduction

As a core course in tourism management, vocational Tourism English cultivates students' future employment positions in related technical fields such as scenic spots, international travel agencies, immigration services and management institutions, and international hotels. It is a window for cultural exchange between China and foreign countries, and shoulders the important mission of shaping China's image, spreading beautiful China, and promoting Chinese culture. As a specialized English course, in addition to empowering students majoring in tourism management with cross-cultural communication skills and cultivating their ability to use English in specific professional environments, it is also necessary to develop self-learning abilities, improve comprehensive cultural literacy, cultivate humanistic spirit and critical thinking ability, tell Chinese

stories well to the outside world, showcase China's image, enable the world to comprehensively understand China, spread Chinese culture to the world, and deeply integrate and exchange with world culture <sup>[1]</sup>.

There are three ideological and political characteristics of vocational Tourism English courses: firstly, humanistic. The content of Tourism English courses includes the historical and cultural background, customs, and traditions of a country or region, reflecting the social reality in the process of historical development. The course requires a deep exploration of the rich humanistic significance and value connotations contained therein, the integration of ideological and political education into teaching reform practice. Secondly, with a focus on career orientation, Tourism English is a core course in the field of tourism management. Its professional characteristics require students to understand and appreciate Chinese cultural characteristics, cultivating their cultural confidence and political identity. It is necessary to promote the reform of ideological and political education in the curriculum, strengthen students' "four self-confidences," and cultivate qualified socialist tourism practitioners. Thirdly, it is instrumental; Tourism English course aims to cultivate students' ability to use English to complete customer service, consult English literature, learn foreign professional knowledge and advanced foreign science and technology, and carry out international exchanges and cooperation to seek industry development. This characteristic requires the curriculum to implement the teaching reform of ideological and political education, to help students compare and identify cultural differences between China and the West <sup>[2,3]</sup>.

## **2. Current situation of ideological and political teaching of Tourism English course in higher vocational colleges**

The leading courses of Tourism English in higher vocational colleges include tour guide business, tour guide laws and regulations, basic knowledge of national tour guides, hotel management professional courses, etc. The objectives of the course include cultivating students' basic language skills, basic English vocabulary of tourism, service terms, and English expressions in specific situations; guiding students to use tourism English knowledge to provide inbound tourists with itinerary planning, English explanation and communication, accompanying tourists to visit, and implementing the skills of tourists' food, housing and transportation services. According to the content of the course, ideological and political objectives such as practicing etiquette, team spirit, a sense of cooperation, professionalism, and professional ethics are extracted. The teaching mode emphasizes demonstration, practicability, and expansibility, strives to closely connect with the industry, pays attention to language ability and skill training, and reflects ideological and political teaching in the curriculum, but it is not systematic and has a single form of integration. Taking the important content of the course "sightseeing service" as an example, students are required to carry out English explanations and guidance of tourist attractions or scenic spots according to the visiting process. The ideological and political course is embodied in helping students establish the socialist core values of "tourist-oriented, sincere service" in the tourism industry, advocating civilized visits, broadcasting, and exchanging different cultures. These ideological and political objectives are reflected in the professional core courses "Tour Guide Business" and "National Tour Guide Basic Knowledge," which are not innovative enough and have no obvious effect. Through the implantation and inculcation of ideological and political elements in the form of famous scenic spots, Chinese culture and history, and excellent cases in the industry, the form of presentation is rigid, the teaching content is increased, the teaching burden is heavier, but the ideological and political education is not effective. Students majoring in tourism management in higher vocational colleges

can easily accept new things, but their worldview, outlook on life, and values are not yet fully developed, and their critical thinking ability is insufficient. They are highly utilitarian in their professional English learning and place more emphasis on language proficiency and skill mastery. Some of them do not have a deep understanding of traditional Chinese culture and are susceptible to negative cultural erosion. They lack proactive thinking about mainstream values and ideal beliefs, and blindly “preaching” and repeating ideological and political content not only fails to achieve the expected educational effect but also makes students feel tired and bored.

Based on the above analysis, the current situation of ideological and political education in vocational Tourism English courses presents three major challenges: (1) the ideological and political elements are scattered and lack pertinence and continuity; (2) the teaching content and ideological and political content are separated; (3) teaching design fails to stimulate students’ interest in learning ideological and political content. Therefore, the ideological and political education of the curriculum is in the primary stage of exploration <sup>[4]</sup>.

### **3. Analysis of the current situation and reasons for ideological and political teaching of Tourism English course in higher vocational college**

In order to solve the phenomenon that tourism English skill education and ideological and political education are simply superimposed on each other and change “passive ideological and political education” into “active ideological and political education,” this paper analyzes the underlying reasons behind the current phenomenon from the perspectives of teaching materials, teaching methods, and teachers.

#### **3.1. Teachers’ low ideological and political awareness**

Tourism English teachers have a clear professional direction, generally possessing excellent professional skills and strong traditional cultural cultivation. However, they are not professional ideological and political teachers, in practice, their teaching habits tend to focus on the explanation and practice of professional English, emphasizing the training and cultivation of skills. The lack of subjective consciousness and teaching design ability to guide values while imparting knowledge and skills has eroded the practical enthusiasm for ideological and political education in the curriculum. Additionally, for a considerable period of time in the past, colleges focused on evaluating teachers based on the number of awards, papers, projects, patents, etc., which led to insufficient thinking and exploration of the reform of ideological and political education in the curriculum for Tourism English teachers. A total of 249,496 results were retrieved on China National Knowledge Infrastructure under the theme of “Ideological and Political Education,” but only 85 results were retrieved under the themes of “Tourism English” and “Ideological and Political Education.” Research on the “Vocational Tourism English” course is mainly focused on teaching modes, vocational abilities, teaching methods, and curriculum systems. As of November 2021, there are 28 independent tourism higher vocational colleges in China, and 918 vocational colleges with tourism-related majors. As a compulsory course for tourism majors, the comparison between the number of courses offered and theoretical research results reflects that Tourism English teachers have an insufficient understanding of the importance and necessity of ideological and political education, and lack practice <sup>[5,6]</sup>.

#### **3.2. Teaching materials’ emphasis on skills rather than ideological and political education**

There are three types of vocational Tourism English textbooks: national planning textbooks, general

textbooks, and school-based textbooks that integrate local tourism resources. All three types of textbooks basically include business processes such as tourist reception, travel itinerary arrangement, introduction of tourist attractions, hotel check-in and catering services, shopping escort, complaint handling, and other business processes. Teaching tasks are set according to the workflow, including introduction, situational dialogue, knowledge expansion, summary, and post-class operation exercises. Information technology audio and video materials are also provided. The content changes greatly, even for the same theme, the author's narrative focus, expression methods, language characteristics, etc. are all different. However, the common problems are that they focus on language skills training and professional knowledge accumulation and ignore the infiltration of humanistic knowledge; there is a lack of excavation of excellent traditional culture, integration of ideological and political content, and progressiveness to keep pace with the times.

Taking "Catering Services" as an example, which is an important part of hotel service in Tourism English, textbooks containing this content will interpret Chinese Eight Famous Cuisines and Chinese cooking techniques in the form of listening or reading exercises, train "helping tourists order" and "special dishes recommendation" in the form of dialogue, expand knowledge with "Chinese Medicinal Cuisine" and "local delicacies," and finally test and consolidate students' knowledge with corresponding practical tasks. The entire theme of teaching meets the job requirements, teaches professional skills, and completes knowledge accumulation, but the ideological and political content is lacking. Even if students have a good grasp, they cannot deeply interpret the craftsmanship spirit of "people-oriented" and "never tired of fine dishes" reflected in "Chinese food culture" in the process of external communication, nor can they guide students to independently explore the complementary relationship between modern Chinese food and terrain, products, culture, history, politics, etc.

### **3.3. Lack of innovation in teaching and learning methods**

With the improvement of teaching informatization level, Tourism English courses in higher vocational colleges are often taught in Intelligence Practical Training rooms, which have abundant resources, advanced methods, situational teaching, and a large amount of information. However, students have varying levels of English proficiency and limited semester hours. To ensure teaching progress, the rigid addition of ideological and political content and the lack of interactive design have greatly reduced teaching effectiveness.

For example, in the "Sightseeing" project, all textbooks will provide English tour guide training on well-known scenic spots. The most basic teaching method is to use excellent tour guide explanation words as an example and combine them with audio and video materials to teach students explanation skills. The learning method goes from simple memorization to mastery. The author attempts to adopt the following approach: in pre-class lesson plan arrangement, students independently prepare scenic spot introduction; in class, students are divided into different groups and cooperate to select explanation content, use 3D tour guide simulation technology to transform the teaching scene into a sightseeing scene, change the explaining students into tour guides and teacher and other members of the group into passengers, give real-time feedback through the teaching platform, and give the tour guide an objective evaluation. This situationally cultivates students' introduction ability, communication skills, and adaptability. However, compared to innovative teaching forms such as "Science and Education to Build Dreams" and "Walking Ideological and Political courses" that encourage students to actively explore, the current teaching methods in Tourism English are somewhat conservative and have not truly integrated multiple approaches such as practice, experience, and research<sup>[7]</sup>.

## **4. Reform paths of ideological and political education in Tourism English course in higher vocational colleges**

The ideological and political education of vocational Tourism English Courses is not only learning content but also future work content. The principle should be to promote cross-cultural awareness, guide ideological and political goals, and focus on the cultivation of core knowledge and abilities in tourism English. Through explicit guidance combined with implicit infiltration, the synergy between ideological and political education and knowledge skills can be achieved, so that students not only know “what to learn” and “why to learn” but also “what to do with learning,” reflecting the educational, knowledge-based, and industry-specific nature of the course.

### **4.1. Unified planning and precise anchoring of ideological and political objectives of the curriculum**

The professional talent training plan comprehensively considers the planning of ideological and political construction. Firstly, in the ideological and political courses, emphasis is placed on establishing the recognition of patriotic emotions and the rendering of national spirit, setting up ideological and political points such as “craftsman spirit” and “labor spirit,” and achieving ideological and political goals such as value recognition, ideal pursuit, and moral cultivation. Secondly, in other professional courses, we promote the integration of vocational awareness and skill improvement, decompose the ideological and technical points of vocational literacy, and form a curriculum literacy module. Thirdly, in the process of teaching Tourism English, emphasis should be placed on promoting the unity of practice and education, using national image cases that students are concerned about as ideological and political elements, setting up literacy projects such as “national business cards,” cultivating students’ critical thinking, “thinking” about cultural differences between the East and the West, cultivating patriotism, stimulating students’ self-awareness and long-term exploration. Fourthly, we arrange teaching tasks according to the workflow, synchronously embed ideological and political requirements memorization, ideological and political behavior training, ideological and political experience exchange and reflection, etc. We also expand the breadth of collaborative education and the depth of ideological and political education, achieve an orderly connection between ideological and political courses, clarify the hierarchical division of ideological and political education among professional courses, promote the logical progression of ideological and political elements within this course, and comprehensively cover the ideological and political education goals of cross-cultural communication throughout the entire process<sup>[8]</sup>.

Accurately positioning the ideological and political goals of Tourism English courses—patriotic education, cultural promotion, and an international perspective—allows students to showcase a responsible socialist country image with profound cultural heritage and diversity.

### **4.2. Cooperating to enhance teachers’ ideological and political awareness as well as their ability to educate students**

Teachers are the main force in promoting ideological and political education in the curriculum, playing a leading role in classroom teaching. The political literacy and teaching level of teachers directly affect the ultimate effectiveness of ideological and political education in the curriculum. Ideological and political education requires the use of team strength, based on common teaching objects, to carry out joint lesson preparation between ideological and political teachers and professional teachers, regularly discuss hot issues that attract students, sort out ideological and political elements, and discuss teaching forms. Professional

course teachers should continuously carry out ideological and political training, clarify their role in educating students, recognize the sense of responsibility and mission in cultivating morality, enhance the consciousness of curriculum education, and unleash the enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity of curriculum ideological and political education.

In the teaching process of Tourism English courses, teachers should infuse humanistic consciousness and benevolence, respect students' personality and value needs, help students establish a correct worldview and professional spirit from a professional perspective, and experience the sense of gain and happiness brought by ideological and political education in the curriculum. Teachers should conduct spiritual communication with students in a friendly and approachable manner, using genuine emotions and feelings to enable students to truly accept their teachers and believe in their teachings, and spontaneously explore and disseminate ideological and political content.

### **4.3. Adapting to the national image and creating ideological and political-oriented teaching materials resources**

Vocational Tourism English textbooks should reflect on the important task of promoting the image of China through humanization and fun, innovate and organize ideological and political content, explore the rich connotations and multiple dimensions of China's image through themed and in-depth exploration of new loose leaf and workbook style textbooks, and present the national character in a three-dimensional and diverse manner. Not only should we leverage the dissemination value of ideological and political content in shaping the national image, but we should also explore the economic value of ideological and political content in the tourism industry.

It is important to create a textbook that showcases the magnificent mountains and rivers, prosperous economy, technological innovation, political stability, cultural inheritance, ecological green, and social harmony of the motherland in a comprehensive manner through high-potential cultural topics such as Land Silk Road, Maritime Silk Road, Grand Canal Cultural Belt and Ancient Civilization that are of great concern to the world, in accordance with the attractive characteristics of the national image, and interprets the national image. Using typical work processes as carriers, integrating themed tourism resources along the route, designing distinctive tourism routes, guided by work processes, setting up six elements of tourism modules, covering training in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation skills in work scenarios, setting up extended tasks to guide students' after-class exercises, stimulating collaborative innovation <sup>[5,8]</sup>.

China has abundant tourism resources and the tourism industry is developing rapidly. In order to promote the sustained and comprehensive development of students, it is necessary to create a scientific, visual, operable, and referenceable online teaching resource library for tourism English, and introduce high-quality teaching resources from society. Some examples are official media resources of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, English cultural tourism accounts created on various platforms, and tourism promotion resources launched in various regions. We integrate touching stories, exemplary stories, etc. into the corresponding theme of ideological and political courses, highlight the education and inheritance of national spirit, and update ideological and political teaching resources with the times <sup>[9]</sup>.

### **4.4. Improving ideological and political teaching methods through multiple channels and the entire process based on people-oriented theory**

From the perspective of ideological and political education in the curriculum, human development is the most

fundamental. Teaching methods should consider the development trends of the industries and enterprises in which students work, focus on exploratory, experiential, collaborative, and reflective learning, enhance students' initiative in learning, and promote their creative and personalized development.

Firstly, it is imperative to innovate the form of courses, fully utilize the role of flipped classrooms, micro-courses, MOOCs, virtual simulation platforms, and other carriers, carry out situational teaching, task-based teaching, project-based teaching, etc., cultivate students' professional responsibilities, and achieve the "integration of learning and practice" in vocational education. For example, in the case of "hotel check-in services," a learning task will be released before class: What are the steps required to assist foreign tourists in handling hotel check-in services? Teachers provide relevant information on international and domestic chain hotels and smart hotels, collaborate with students to complete thematic knowledge reserves, establish topic contexts, form their own judgments on the development level of the domestic hotel industry based on free exploration, understand the latest technology in the international and domestic industries, and carefully consider the changes that China's smart hotels, smart tourism, and other industries will bring to the industry. In class, language and service skills are gained through experiencing tasks and practicing in hotel simulation systems. Through exchanging knowledge with peers, questioning, debating, and evaluating each other, one can improve their understanding, selection, criticism, and appreciation. After-class expansion thinking can involve the question: Will unmanned hotels lead to unemployment among hotel employees? Reflecting on the learning process and content not only helps internalize language knowledge and service skills, but also helps students improve their professional quality, practice values, and maintain a professional attitude that keeps up with the times.

Secondly, teachers need to closely integrate online ideological and political education with curriculum ideological and political education, and create online classrooms. Some content is transferred from physical classrooms to online teaching, breaking the limitations of space and time, and providing convenience and flexibility for the integration of professional education and ideological and political education. In recent years, there have been a large number of English documentaries, animations, etc. online, vividly and interestingly introducing China's political system, beautiful scenery, the charm of Chinese cuisine, martial arts, Chinese cultural relics, traditional Chinese medicine culture, etc. to overseas audiences. For instance, the Palace Museum, Dunhuang Museum, and other institutions have integrated traditional culture into the new trend of the Internet, creating countless online celebrity products; cities such as Xi'an, Chongqing, and Chengdu have been widely spread on foreign social media platforms, successfully spreading and shaping regional images. In accordance with the requirements of ideological and political education, we will introduce internet-friendly elements such as "micro movies," "music," and "TV series" as curriculum elements before, during, and after class to enhance the attractiveness and infectiousness of ideological and political education throughout the entire process. On the other hand, online practice platforms such as foreign language websites and apps can be used to guide students in using their knowledge to publish English tourism introduction works, test the effectiveness of ideological and political courses, and enhance the depth of learning and thinking<sup>[10,11]</sup>.

Thirdly, it is necessary to deepen the integration of industry and education, innovate practical teaching, establish student clubs such as tour guides, speeches, and debates based on relevant courses, integrate the ideas of research-based tourism, use club activities to go out of campus, listen to cultural relics and exhibits, naturally extend ideological and political concepts in the classroom to extracurricular activities, deepen understanding, and balance knowledge and action. Teachers need to give full play to professional and

language advantages, actively participate in social practice and volunteer services, gain insights through personal observation and experience, and elevate emotions and values in the service process. The ideological and political teaching scene that connects campus and society through industry classrooms, constructs a new space for the growth of cross-cultural communication and thinking abilities, and enhances practical operation and adaptability through work experience. A comprehensive, multi-level, and three-dimensional educational environment is built, creating a resonant educational atmosphere both inside and outside the classroom and guiding students to develop value perception in the process of knowledge learning and practical use. These make the interaction of various elements of education active and dynamic and ensure that the educational goals of the curriculum are achieved smoothly.

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