

A Study on the Implementation Effect of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education in College English Courses from the Perspective of Students

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Abstract: This study conducted a comparative quasi-experiment, mainly using qualitative research methods to conduct text analysis on students' feedback in college English ideological and political education, supplemented by a questionnaire and interviews, to evaluate its implementation effect from the perspective of students. Research shows that the integration of ideological and political education has a good educational effect on knowledge transmission, skill development, and value shaping. Blending ideological and political awareness into college English courses can resonate with students' emotions and play a certain role in shaping their values. This study can provide reference for the implementation effect of curriculum-based ideological and political education in tertiary curriculum.

Keywords: College English; Curriculum-based ideological and political education; Students' perspective; Evaluate

Online publication: October 30, 2024

1. Introduction

As the basic principle of Chinese education reform in the new era, curriculum-based ideological and political education has become a new focus of curriculum construction in universities. The "Guidelines for College English Teaching (2020 edition)" ^[1] points out that "college English teaching should actively integrate ideological and political education into the school curriculum so that it can play an important role in implementing the fundamental task of moral education and talent cultivation in higher education institutions." Currently, domestic and foreign language circles have conducted extensive and in-depth thinking and discussions on ideological and political education in the curriculum ^[2]. There is a macro discussion on the ideological and political construction of foreign language courses along with research on textbook development and use from this perspective ^[3]. A large number of teachers have also attempted to integrate curriculum-based ideological and political education into their respective teaching, and have achieved

significant results ^[4]. However, further in-depth research is needed on its implementation effect ^[5]. The author conducted a comparative experiment of blended learning based on the MOOC “Insights into Classic English Films”, collected students’ evaluations of the course through classroom feedback, a questionnaire, and interviews, and studied the teaching effect of integrating curriculum-based ideological and political education into college English classrooms so as to provide reference and inspiration for the research of evaluation.

2. Literature review

Evaluation, as an important part of teaching process, is a continuous check of all available information about students, teachers, teaching plans, and teaching processes to determine the degree of change in students and form judgments on the effectiveness of courses ^[6]. It occupies an important position in the entire teaching process and is a decisive factor to assess whether the goals of ideological and political education have been achieved ^[7]. Wen Q (2021) proposed to construct a “three-dimensional” evaluation system for ideological and political education, using students’ efforts, progress, and academic performance as evaluation criteria ^[8]. Lu D (2020) pointed out that evaluation of curriculum-based ideological and political education should be based on student development, with a focus on process, emphasizing qualitative and descriptive evaluation, and improving teaching through evaluation. In terms of evaluation principles, teachers should adhere to and revolve around the “value-added” ^[9] academic and ideological and political literacy. Wang Y (2020) divides the evaluation subjects into four categories based on their different positions and roles in courses: management subjects, implementation subjects, teaching subjects, and social subjects ^[10]. Students are the direct participants in curriculum-based ideological and political education, and their perceptions towards ideological and political education are the most direct. They can observe the implementation of ideological and political education in the classroom, reflect on their gains during the process, and provide feedback. The above studies all emphasize that ideological and political education should be rooted in students’ development and experience, which points out the direction and path for future evaluation research. Zhou L *et al.* (2023) proposed a theoretical model for evaluating ideological and political education in tertiary foreign language courses, which covers 9 dimensions. After testing, an ideological and political education evaluation scale consisting of 27 evaluation indicators was finally determined. However, there is no reported research on its application ^[11]. Qin L *et al.* (2023) evaluated the effectiveness of ideological and political education through students’ changes in five indicators (political identity, patriotism, cultural literacy, constitutional and legal awareness, and moral cultivation) and three dimensions (cognition, emotion, and behavior) ^[12].

In summary, there has been some progress in the theoretical exploration and scale development of curriculum-based ideological and political education evaluation research. Qualitative and mixed research results are still rare, and the use of diversified evaluation methods can expand the depth of research while ensuring research validity. Yan X (2020) proposed that “the best educational evaluation for the effectiveness of ideological and political education is an educational experiment, which is a scientific method to test whether an educational activity has achieved its goals.” ^[13]. Based on this, the research team developed three sessions of a college English course, and studied students’ evaluation of the implementation effect of ideological and political education through an experimental method.

3. Research design

3.1. Research questions

“Insights into Classic English Films” is a large-scale online open course. Based on it, the research team releases an optional course in a university in south China. Students are required to complete all the online tasks within 10 weeks (2 hours per week) and 3 offline tutoring sessions (2 hours per time). During the tutoring sessions, the experimental class used a large proportion of time to focus on films containing obvious socialist core values, striving to deepen students’ understanding of concepts such as “patriotism”, “equality” and “friendliness” besides language learning and film appreciation. The control class followed the traditional learning mode, mainly conducting classroom instruction through class reports and teacher or peer evaluation to deepen students’ understanding of English films.

This study mainly focuses on the following issues:

- (1) Taking the second offline session as an example, what are the differences in classroom feedback between the experimental class and the control class?
- (2) Can ideological and political education in college English courses resonate with students’ emotions and play a role in shaping their values?

3.2. Research subjects

The research subjects are 349 undergraduate students who have taken this course as an elective. Students were divided into two classes based on grade, major, and gender balance, with 175 students in the control class and 174 students in the experimental class. This study mainly focused on students’ acceptance of ideological and political education in the curriculum, using bilingual teaching in both Chinese and English. Students’ English proficiency was not a decisive factor, so no pre-test was conducted.

3.3. Research process and methods

The study used a comparative quasi-experimental method to collect data through students’ feedback logs, a questionnaire, and interviews to verify the validity of the data through triangulation with teacher’s classroom observation.

The experimental class and the control class have a similar three offline classes. The class procedure and content can refer to the second class “Equality” (*Jane Eyre*) case (**Table 1**). Each session is 120 minutes long, with the first half of the class having the same content and the second part with differences lasting approximately 60 minutes.

Table 1. Process and content of the second offline class

| Course process | Experimental class | Control class |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Pre-class (online) | Watch videos of the first four movies in the course; Complete the designated tasks; The relevant groups prepare for class reports. | |
| In class (offline) | Four groups will give class reports based on the four movies, expand on the foundation of MOOC videos, and the teacher supplements information and comments. | Eight groups will give class reports on the four movies, and expand their themes and artistic features on the basis of the online videos. The teacher will provide comments and supplements, and interact with students through questioning and peer evaluation. |
| | Watch the clip in “Jane Eyre” that highlights the theme of “equality” and complete the comprehension exercise. Learn the language expression and rhetorical devices in dialogue. Compare different versions of the definition of “equality” and extract keywords. Distinguish famous sayings and phrases related to equality. <i>I have a dream</i> : Has his dream come true? Why ? Debate: Does VIP access/wristbands harm social equity? | |
| After class (online) | Writing: Based on the content of this lecture, select a film and write an English film review. | Writing: Based on the content of this lecture, select a film and write an English film review. |

4. Research findings

4.1. Differences in various dimensions of classroom feedback between the experimental class and the control class

Language is a reflection of human mental process, and a person’s inclination is reflected in frequently used words, which are at the center of their cognition and reflect the most active part of their thinking. Therefore, the frequency of text usage can reflect people’s cognition and the degree of importance they attach to things, as well as their focus. Hence, by capturing, summarizing, and generalizing high-frequency words in students’ classroom feedback, we can understand their focus and knowledge retention status, and thus know what leaves a deep impression in students’ minds and subtly completes the role of value shaping.

After each offline session, the author required students to summarize their learning and fill out an online feedback form to obtain their evaluation of the class. Feedback could be an evaluation of various aspects of classroom instruction, a reflection on learning outcomes and self-learning situations, or a description of their experiences. Taking the second offline class as an example, the number of students’ feedback logs collected by the two classes was roughly the same. In terms of Chinese character count, the number of words from the control class was more than that from the experimental class (**Table 2**). The control class had more detailed descriptions of the film content and film appreciation perspectives, which precisely confirms the seminar content (eight groups conducted in-depth appreciation of four films). The control class clearly spent more time on film appreciation.

Table 2. Number of feedback logs and character count for the second offline class

| Class | Number of feedback logs (copies) | Number of Chinese characters (words) |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Experimental class | 158 | 3071 |
| Control class | 161 | 3837 |

Import student classroom feedback texts into NVivo 12, and use grounded theory to code students' gains, five main dimensions emerged, which were "overall experience of the course", "evaluation of class reports", "reflection on self-regulated learning", "gains in emotion and values", and "gains in knowledge and skills". Among them, "overall experience of the course", "evaluation of class reports", and "reflection on self-regulated learning" are relatively easy to define. Gains in emotions and values mainly include expressions with the keywords of "socialist core values", "spiritual sublimation", "emotional enhancement/enrichment" and related expressions. Gains in knowledge and skills include the following content (film plots or details, film appreciation techniques, and thematic exploration); practice and gains in listening, speaking, reading, and writing; skills or ways of thinking such as teamwork, critical thinking, and relating theory with practice. The coding was completed by two members of the team, and different opinions were discussed before classification. The number of codes in different dimensions for the two classes after induction (**Table 3** and **Table 4**) is as follows:

Table 3. Coding of classroom feedback from students in control class

| Dimensions | File | Number of codes |
|--|------|-----------------|
| Overall experience of the course | One | 9 |
| Evaluation of group presentations and classmates' speeches | One | 33 |
| Reflection on self-learning | One | 12 |
| The harvest of emotions and values | One | 12 |
| Harvest of disciplinary knowledge and skills | One | 119 |

Table 4. Coding of classroom feedback from students in experimental class

| Dimensions | File | Number of codes |
|--|------|-----------------|
| Overall experience of the course | One | 20 |
| Evaluation of group presentations and classmates' speeches | One | 8 |
| Reflection on self-learning | One | 7 |
| The harvest of emotions and values | One | 50 |
| Harvest of disciplinary knowledge and skills | One | 90 |

In order to compare the number of codes in each dimension of the two sets of data more intuitively, they were put in a line graph (**Figure 1**).

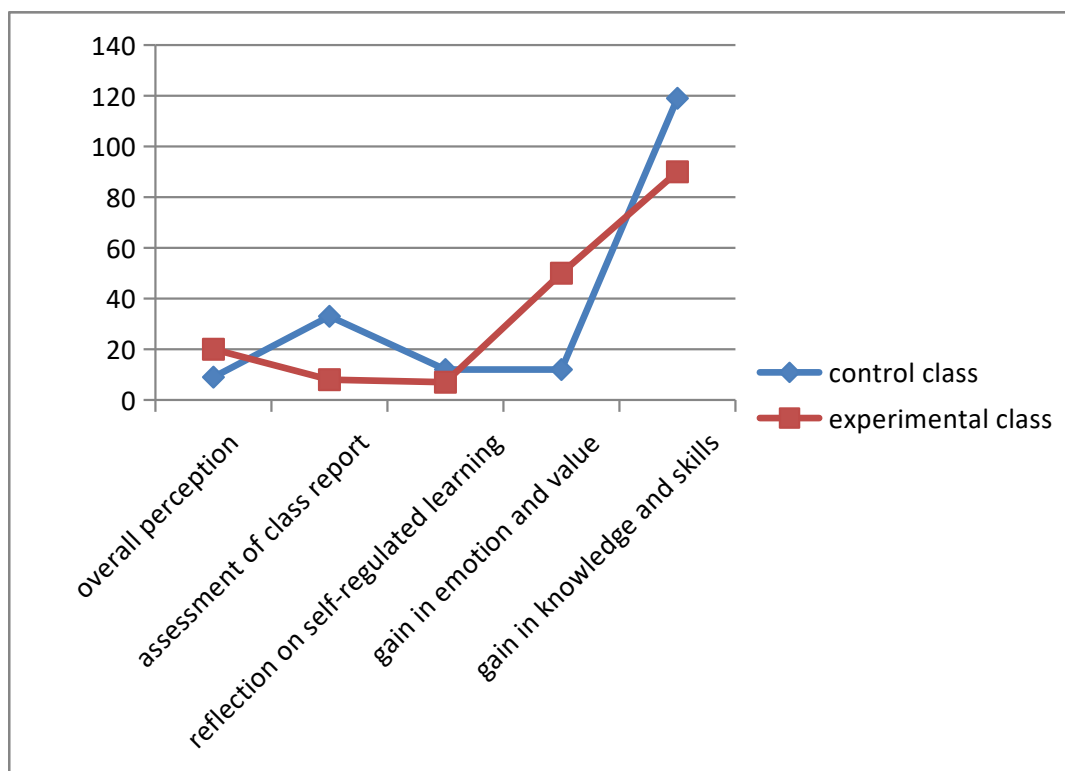


Figure 1. Comparison of the number of codes for the five dimensions between the control class and the experimental class.

From **Figure 1**, it can be seen that there is no big difference in the number of codes between the control class and the experimental class in terms of “overall experience of the course” and “reflection on self-regulated learning.” Most of the quotes are positive feedback such as “good,” “gain a lot,” and “feel that I need to exercise my English speaking skills.” In the dimension of “Evaluation of Class Reports”, the number of codes from the control group is higher than that of the experimental group. This is because the second seminar of the control group is mainly composed of group reports and student discussions, and hence students have deeper understanding about the films. Therefore, the difference faithfully reflects differences in class content and organizational forms can lead to differences in student gains. The number of codes for both classes in the “Gains in Knowledge and Skills” is at a high level (both reaching or exceeding 90 codes), which is most prominent in student feedback. This means that both classes have achieved the teaching objective of imparting knowledge, and students have gained professional knowledge in English language and film appreciation. The number of codes from the control group is higher than that of the experimental group because there were four additional groups of students reporting in the control group, and one group’s report (the light and shadow art in Mona Lisa’s Smile) was particularly exciting and received unanimous praise from the students. The difference in code numbers in the gains in emotions and values is significant, with the experimental group having 38 codes higher than the control group, indicating that the educational goal of value shaping is better achieved in the experimental group.

4.2. Curriculum-based ideological and political education can evoke emotional resonance and shape students’ values

Since this course is an elective course, students do not concentrate on it as on compulsory courses, and

classroom feedback is usually brief or even perfunctory. In order to obtain more detailed evaluations, the author conducted interviews with some students in the experimental class using stratified purposive sampling after the course ended. The interview time is after scores were input into the administration system and students would not take the course in the future to ensure the reliability of the data. Interviewees were four male and three female students from six different majors: English, Japanese, law, finance, journalism, and management. The interview was conducted in two forms: telephone interview and face-to-face interview. Each person was interviewed for 10–15 minutes, The seven interviewees were coded as S1–S7 according to the interview sequence. The permission record was signed before the interview, and the recording was transcribed into text using iFlytek voice software ^[14].

The interview questions evolved from easy to deep ones. After asking students the relatively easy question “why did you choose this course”, students are required to summarize the entire course, especially offline classes in a few words. Huang *et al.* (2017) believe that lexical meaning consists of two parts: conceptual meaning and color meaning. Color meaning is attached to the conceptual meaning of words, expressing specific feelings given by people or contexts. According to the “emotional color”, words with emotional connotations can be divided into three categories: positive words, negative words, and neutral words ^[15], so the choice of vocabulary in communication can reflect the speaker’s emotional tendencies. The interviewed students all used positive words in their evaluation of the course and provided reasons (**Table 5**), which also confirms to the reliability of the evaluation from the experimental class (**Figure 1**).

Table 5. Overall perception from the interviewed students from the experimental class

| Interviewed students | Perception | Quotes |
|----------------------|--|--|
| S1 | practical | It is helpful for your English learning and appreciation. |
| S2 | expansion of English learning | Because if we learn on our own, we will not watch the movie again. Usually, we follow the textbook, and the textbook will not cover these topics. The English movies we usually watch include science fiction, fantasy, and ultrasonic genres, mainly focusing on special effects and not values. Therefore, films like <i>Jane Eyre</i> and <i>Wonder</i> make us reflect on positive values. |
| S3 | vivid & lively | I think there should be a group where everyone can learn and discuss together. I still prefer this learning mode. |
| S4 | interesting; broaden one’s horizons | Watching English movies is a pleasure in itself, as it broadens my horizons and enriches my knowledge. |
| S5 | great & rich | In my impression, many elective courses are low-quality “water class”, but your elective course makes me feel that I am learning something more practical. I am learning every minute and every second, rather than wasting time. That’s how it is. |
| S6 | interesting, innovative & easy to accept | In previous classes, no teacher taught in this way, so I think it’s very innovative. |
| S7 | impressive | In addition to the movies themselves and some related things in English, it also involves values. There are also many ways, such as showing some movie clips and asking classmates to express their opinions, which are very open-ended, and then asking classmates to express their thoughts, making me feel like my eyes lit up. |

Although the interviewed students gave positive evaluations of the course, it does not mean all students held this view. In the final feedback, some students wrote that “the content of the course expansion is a bit simple, and some of it has already been understood in other courses before.” Some students gave sharper responses, “I feel that some of the content is like team building.” This means that in the process of integrating ideological and political education into specific courses, teachers need to strike a balance, try to convey

ideological and political elements in a hidden way, and avoid arousing students' resistance.

In the interview, the answers given by students regarding whether the three offline classes have strengthened their understanding of equality, patriotism, and friendliness, although varied, students expressed that their understanding of the three core values was further deepened.

A3 said, "I have a deep impression of the patriotic theme. Yes, when I sang the song 'Edelweiss', I was a bit moved when I saw the colonel and his family singing it. If I hadn't focused on this theme before, I might not have had such a profound understanding... I may not have thought of it when I just watched the movie, but with the guidance of the teacher, I have further improved my ideas."

A6 remarked, "Equality actually has many forms because I always thought it was limited to equality between men and women. In fact, there is still equality between love, and there are equality concepts involved in various aspects of society. If there is any change in my value, it may be in *Wonder*. I remember I was quite touched after watching it, because I still feel that the whole film is relatively optimistic, because I think it is difficult for such a protagonist to achieve such success in real life. However, in the end, I discover that the power of kindness is great, it is a strong force that can change many things. Actually, I did not think about it before. Kindness can actually play such a big role."

In addition, the offline class feedback logs and interviews from the experimental class showed expressions such as "emotional enhancement," "enriched understanding," and exposure to "positive values." This indicates that integrating ideological and political education in college English courses can stimulate students' thinking, expand their understanding of socialist core values, and thus play a certain role in shaping their values.

5. Summary

This study is based on a quasi-experiment to investigate students' evaluation of ideological and political education in college English courses through classroom feedback, a questionnaire, and interviews. It examines the implementation effect of ideological and political education from a first-person perspective. The results indicate that integrating ideological and political education into college English teaching has a good educational effect in terms of knowledge transmission, skill development, and value shaping; ideological and political education in college English courses can resonate with students' emotions and play a certain role in shaping their values. However, curriculum-based ideological and political education does not exist independently. High-quality classroom teaching is the foundation of its existence. Teachers should design the course according to the "golden course" standard, and improve class interaction and critical thinking based on the cognitive level of college students in the new era.

This study was only conducted in two classes. With such a small sample, the research conclusions need further verification. In addition, students' learning outcomes and acceptance of the course are not only closely related to teachers' teaching behavior but also inseparable from students' learning behavior. Students' performance can more intuitively reflect on their perception and thinking tendencies towards the course, and action research based on classroom observation can more accurately capture changes in students' knowledge, skills, and emotional attitudes. Next, our research team will focus on conducting action research, observing students' classroom performance for a semester, supplemented with statistics from homework and project completion, recording students' performance in learning attitudes and ideological values and continuing to improve the research on ideological and political education in college English courses.

Funding

2022 Teaching Reform Research Project of Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University (Project No.: JGYB202250); 2023 Guangdong Provincial Undergraduate Teaching Quality and Teaching Reform Project, “Exploration of Ideological and Political Construction in College English Curriculum from the Perspective of Cultivating Cross-Cultural Communication Ability”; 2023 Guangdong Provincial Philosophy and Social Sciences Planning Project, “Research on the Intervention Model of Digital Empowerment of Foreign Language Learners’ Learning Engagement” (GD23WZXC01-03)

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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