The Problems and Model Construction of Ideological and Political Education in College English Course

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Abstract: The integration of Ideological and political education into college English courses represents a curriculum reform and an exploration of new possibilities. However, the current implementation of ideological and political education in English teaching in many colleges lacks organization and coherence, which significantly affects the moral education for college students in English teaching. This article examines the problems faced in implementing ideological and political education in college English courses and identifies several key issues: 1. Misunderstandings in cognition. 2. Overgeneralized application of theoretical concepts. 3. Insufficient inclusion of traditional cultural elements in English textbooks. 4. Coexistence of diverse values in society. 5. Conflicting values among educators. 6. Lack of evaluation and guidance. Based on these problems, a model for implementing ideological and political education is proposed, consisting of five components: 1. Top-level design. 2. Teacher training. 3. Content development. 4. Integration strategies. 5. Quality evaluation system. Each component addresses different aspects of teaching and forms a systematic structure that emphasizes key factors for successful ideological and political education, such as motivation, capability, teaching methods, content, quality supervision, and top-level management. The objective of this study is to provide guidance and serve as a reference for the reform of ideological and political education in college English courses.

Keywords: College English; Ideological and political education (IPE); Model construction; Integration; Quality evaluation system

I. Introduction

In December 2017, the Ministry of Education released "*The Implementation Outline of the Quality Improvement Project for Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities.*" This document strongly advocated for the development of IPE as the primary focus of the Top Ten Education Quality Improvement Systems. The aim of Curriculum IPE is to integrate ideological and political principles into all university courses, achieving a harmonious blend of value shaping, knowledge imparting, and skill development. Its essence lies in utilizing courses beyond ideological and political theory to fulfill its educational role [1]. College English, a mandatory foundational course offered in universities, predominantly reflects western language and culture, often idealizing western values to an excessive extent. This curriculum involves in a diverse student body with varying professional backgrounds and significant differences in their ideological and political awareness. Consequently, students may be susceptible to confusion caused by incorrect values. Therefore, incorporating IPE into the college English course is not only a curriculum reform but also a fundamental requirement for achieving the goal of nurturing morally educated individuals in universities. Simultaneously, establishing a standardized model for implementing IPE in the college English course holds immense practical significance in effectively conducting moral education and establishing teaching norms.

II. Misunderstanding in congnition

During the implementation of IPE in college English courses, several issues arise concerning the content and format of this form of education.

2.1 Misunderstanding in the new curriculum theory

Some educators mistakenly believe that curriculum IPE should create a completely new type of curriculum, where the purpose of IPE must be emphasized through teaching methods. They forcefully implement explicit IPE, aiming to differentiate the English course with IPE from traditional English course. However, this understanding misinterprets the essence of curriculum IPE.

Curriculum IPE is not simply a combination of English courses with IPE, nor is it an attempt to create new curriculum types. Instead, it is a curriculum concept that subtly incorporates moral elements, allowing learners to unconsciously receive IPE without disrupting the teaching focus or shifting the learning emphasis. The core of "curriculum IPE" lies in integrating IPE into all aspects of curriculum instruction, achieving the goal of cultivating and nurturing students imperceptibly [2]. When this understanding is misconstrued, English curricula often adopt a distinct political education style, and the process of IPE during teaching can become rigid preaching. This approach easily dilutes the teaching focus and hinders the cultivation of modern talents.

2.2 Overgeneralized application on IPE

Some English educators, in their efforts to strengthen ideological and political guidance to students, believe that IPE in English courses should be consistently reinforced, which usually leads to generalization phenomenon on IPE. These educators analyze every language point solely from the perspective of IPE, overlooking their professional responsibilities on English teaching and transforming their role as professional English educators into IPE instructors.

During the teaching process, teaching material that does not inherently pertain to moral education is forcefully interpreted through IPE methods. Every details of the teaching content is excessively interpreted with the belief that "every sentence reflects the philosophy of life, and each word reflects the emotion of family and country." The teaching content about knowledge, emotions, attitudes, linguistics originally used to cultivate imagination, promote humanistic literacy and language skills is forcibly interpreted in an ideological and political manner.

This generalization of IPE undermines the inherent value of the teaching content, restricts the emphasis on open thinking in the humanities, disrupts the process of self-construction in humanistic literacy, and fosters indoctrinated IPE. It is important to recognize that IPE in courses does not need to be present at all times or in every class. Instead, it should be treated as a seasoning added selectively to enhance education quality. Just as salt is added appropriately to a feast, IPE should be incorporated when necessary and omitted when unnecessary in order to maintain the essential delicacy of knowledge itself.

When exploring ideological and political resources, it is crucial to avoid fabricating connections where none exist, using insignificant elements to fill significant gaps, or mechanically incorporating unrelated content that blurs the focus of the curriculum. Such practices often lead to students developing aversion towards the subject [3].

III. The Necessity of IPE in College English Course

3.1 Characteristics of English textbook content

In universities, there are various types of college English textbooks, with the main ones being published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, Higher Education Press, and Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. However, the majority of these textbooks, including their reading, speaking, and listening materials, primarily focus on the cultural background of Britain and America. They mainly highlight the political, economic, cultural, educational, and linguistic aspects of British and American society, aiming to cultivate students' understanding of Western social culture.

Unfortunately, there is a significant lack of content related to the rich traditional Chinese culture in these textbooks. This omission has contributed to a phenomenon known as "Chinese cultural aphasia" in English teaching, where students lack knowledge and understanding of their own cultural heritage. In terms of curriculum IPE, this absence of local cultural elements in college English textbooks has a negative impact on promoting traditional Chinese culture and fostering students' cultural confidence. Courses in Philosophy and social sciences naturally have functions such as guiding value, cultivating national spirit, promoting ideological and moral development, and enhancing comprehensive quality [4]. Considering the aspect of current curriculum IPE, the absence of local cultural elements in present-day college English textbooks has a detrimental effect on the promotion of traditional Chinese culture and the development of students' cultural confidence.

3.2 The confliction of educators' values

The successful implementation of IPE in the curriculum largely depends on the political awareness of educators [1]. In today's context, many university English educators have extensive experience living and working overseas, leading to diverse cultural identities and value systems. Even for English educators trained in domestic universities, their language learning is heavily influenced by immersion in various British and American cultural resources, aiming to acquire authentic English language skills and thinking. Consequently, this exposure inevitably contributes to the recognition of western values, some

of which may be inconsistent with China's mainstream values.

Some educators deliberately idealize and praise European and American society during classroom instruction, expressing admiration and reverence for western culture. In some cases, they may even discuss topics that contradict core social values both inside and outside the classroom. The implementation of IPE in the curriculum not only provides an opportunity for students to shape their values but also serves as a chance for educators to enhance their own ideological and political awareness. Throughout this process, educators can improve their cultural literacy, strengthen their cultural confidence, and independently reassess their values.

3.3 Social characteristics of the times

This is an era of rapid development and intense conflicts among various values and diverse value orientations. This characteristic of the times necessitates placing higher requirements on the moral cultivation of college students. The current ideological landscape in the international community is constantly evolving, with prominent social contradictions in various aspects within China. There is a fierce clash of various social ideologies and concepts, some of which are detrimental to the growth of college students and can misguide their outlook on life, values, and spiritual pursuits. During this critical period of forming college students' outlook on life and values, it is easy for them to be misled by false information and negative values.

Only by adhering to the right values, perspectives, and educational methods can we cultivate students with high cultural literacy and a correct ideological and political stance. This will enable them to resist the harm caused by misinformation, regressive thinking, and erroneous statements that may negatively impact students.

IV. The Problems in the Implementation of IPE

4.1 The lack of clear and reasonable evaluation mechanism

The evaluation mechanism serves as feedback for education, detecting and presenting the effectiveness of IPE in the curriculum. It is an important guarantee for the long-term systematic operation of this education. For teaching, the evaluation mechanism provides valuable guidance. However, there is currently a lack of clear and reasonable evaluation mechanisms for IPE in college English courses. The criteria for evaluation, such as

process evaluation or result evaluation, single or multidimensional evaluation, quantitative or qualitative evaluation, vary in the perspectives of different education officials.

As a result, the absence of an evaluation system on IPE leads to a state of collective unawareness in curriculum-based IPE. The current management either lacks detailed rules or is one-sided and unreasonable [5]. The lack of an evaluation mechanism often results in inconsistent actions or short-lived enthusiasm. Without a clear and unified evaluation mechanism, IPE in college English courses becomes fragmented, making it difficult to establish a systematic, refined, consistent, and coherent education system. Ultimately, this not only hinders the progress of professional language teaching but also weakens the effectiveness of education.

4.2 Experience Insufficiency of implementing IPE

For a considerable period, college IPE has primarily been conducted through a unified curriculum of ideological and political theory. Consequently, many English educators perceive IPE as solely the responsibility of theory course instructors, with no relevance to their role as English educators. English educators typically prioritize "teaching" rather than "educating," resulting in spontaneous and subjective approaches to IPE by the teacher's personal interests, hobbies, and preferences. As a result, IPE in English classrooms is largely absent.

While it is not the fault of educators for this situation, it does indicate a fundamental neglect of duty on the part of English educators. Both English educators and professional ideological and political theory educators have a duty to impart knowledge and educate students, making IPE an integral part of their responsibilities [6]. Educators who have primarily focused on imparting knowledge throughout their teaching careers now face the challenge of implementing IPE, presenting ideological and political content in a scientifically sound manner, and striking the right balance in incorporating IPE into English teaching. This poses a significant challenge for English educators who may lack practical experience and theoretical knowledge in IPE.

4.3 Insufficiency of IPE capability

The challenges surrounding IPE in English teaching primarily stem from educators' capabilities rather than their willingness or motivation [7]. Previous English teaching did not emphasize the need for teaching abilities in IPE. To truly fulfill the educational function of IPE in English teaching, it is

crucial to explore new methods, adopt innovative thinking, and address new problems.

English educators who generally lack theoretical literacy often encounter the following issues in terms of their ideological and political teaching abilities. Firstly, there is a lack of political sensitivity that ideological and political professionals have. The distribution of ideological and political resources in the teaching materials is uneven, and the ability to quickly and accurately identify and deeply explore these resources depends on each teacher's level of political sensitivity. Insufficient political sensitivity often leads to overlooking ideological and political elements, resulting in superficial IPE. This not only wastes valuable resources but also deviates from the original intent of curriculum content arrangement.

Secondly, educators often struggle to explore ideological and political content and find a suitable starting point for IPE in English courses. Changes in content necessitate corresponding changes in ideological and political themes, placing higher demands on educators' theoretical knowledge reserves. Educators with inadequate theoretical knowledge often resort to forced moralizing or mechanical persuasion in their IPE, which fails to effectively achieve the goals that should be attained through IPE in the English curriculum.

Thirdly, educators lack the ability to integrate ideological and political content into their teaching and struggle to utilize ideological and political elements for educational purposes. The incorporation of ideological and political elements into the teaching content is often either too superficial, deviating from the core focus of English teaching, or merely a formality. Consequently, classroom instruction becomes a monologue by educators that fails to achieve the objectives of IPE within the course.

V.   The Model Construction of IPE in College English Curriculum

5.1 The top-level design of IPE

The strategic planning and design of IPE in college English courses serve as the comprehensive blueprint for implementing IPE and are crucial for achieving the goals of higher education. The content resources for IPE in universities are diverse and scattered. To create a cohesive educational force, it is essential to strengthen top-level design and conduct comprehensive planning from a global perspective [8]. This top-level design should encompass all aspects of implementing IPE, focusing on the

fundamental questions of what to cultivate, how to cultivate, and for whom to cultivate. It should involve macro-level deployment to establish programmatic planning and requirements for various tasks, such as the training plan, teaching outline, and evaluation of teaching quality. The top-level design includes at least four key aspects: the development of ideological and political content within the curriculum, the enhancement of ideological and political teaching methods, the formation of competent ideological and political teams, and the establishment of an evaluation system. By comprehensively advancing these specific areas, it effectively promotes a situation where individuals are willing, capable, knowledgeable, and successful in carrying out IPE. This approach facilitates the education of students' worldviews, outlooks on life, and values based on moral principles.

5.2 Training reinforcement for educators

The success of IPE relies on the educators, and the key lies in unleashing their enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity. Educators of IPE should plant the seeds of truth, goodness, and beauty in students' hearts and guide them to take their first steps in life [9]. Cultivating educators' awareness, knowledge, and abilities in IPE is a prerequisite and foundation for implementing curriculum-based IPE. This cultivation can be achieved through centralized training, lectures, and online learning. It is crucial to strengthen educators' understanding of ideological and political theories and their teaching abilities, ensuring that their curriculum-based IPE is both theoretical and scientific. Enhancing the level of ideological and political theory aims to develop sensitivity towards IPE, preventing educators from teaching recklessly. Focusing on improving ideological and political teaching abilities involves strengthening scientific approaches to IPE. This enables educators to understand how to engage students willingly and effectively, how to connect with their emotions, and how to motivate and inspire them. By elevating the level of IPE among educators with varying foundations to a unified standard, and by creating a professional teaching team with excellent political qualities, we can ensure that IPE in English teaching is carried out with passion.

5.3 The content construction of IPE

The English teaching department in universities should actively integrate English educators and resources to form an English ideological and political teaching and research team. This team should focus on content construction for IPE, which is the core of the curriculum. Content construction addresses the question of what content

should be presented to students. There are two channels through which content construction can be implemented. Firstly, through communication, discussion, and collective lesson preparation, educators can explore ideological and political materials in various teaching materials such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They can transform hidden ideological and political content into collective teaching resources. Secondly, themes such as morality, emotions, patriotism, and culture should be considered, and ideological and political materials from sources outside of textbooks should be collected and organized. The team should gather the latest news stories, concepts, and trends to create meaningful stories and cases that resonate with students' lives. This approach ensures that IPE remains relevant to the times and maintains freshness for students. With a rich collection of content, educators will have engaging stories to tell. They will be clear about which motivational stories inspire students, which warning stories educate them, which philosophical stories enlighten them, and so on. Only educators with a clear understanding can speak with substance, reason, and evidence. This ensures high-quality IPE and avoids superficiality.

5.4 The Integration construction of curriculum and IPE

The main challenge in English curriculum IPE is how to effectively integrate professional knowledge with ideological and political content, and how to implement this education within the curriculum. One of the fundamental characteristics of IPE is its integration, which emphasizes its seamless connection with other subjects, knowledge, and elements [10]. While there are principles that educators should follow in their teaching, there is no fixed principle that can guarantee successful teaching due to the diverse nature of students. When implemented properly, IPE can be seamlessly integrated into the English curriculum without altering its core position. However, if this integration is not executed properly, the English curriculum and IPE may appear disconnected, resulting in an awkward English teaching experience that fails to achieve the goals of moral education or deliver effective instruction.

The integration of IPE content with the English curriculum can be approached both inside and outside the classroom. In-class integration primarily focuses on the teacher's ability to create an infectious classroom environment. This includes the teacher's personal qualities, adherence to behavioral norms, and the skillful handling of both English course material and IPE. The integration should be implicit and natural, without altering the core position of the English course. When done successfully, the integration of IPE enhances the attractiveness and popularity of English classroom teaching among students. It is important to note that IPE should never be forcefully imposed during this process.

Out-of-class integration primarily emphasizes students' ability to construct their own ideological and political literacy. This involves incorporating spiritual and cultural literacy content into English learning tasks in a moderate manner. By doing so, students' awareness of morality, emotions, patriotism, culture, and other aspects can be enhanced. This approach addresses the previous shortcoming of solely focusing on language skill development while neglecting the improvement of students' ideological and political literacy in previous English education.

Overall, achieving a successful integration of IPE within the English curriculum requires a balanced and thoughtful approach that respects the core position of the English course while effectively incorporating relevant content and promoting students' ideological and political literacy.

5.5 Establishing a quality evaluation system for curriculum IPE

The evaluation system for the ideological and political quality of college English courses serves as a measure of the courses' ideological and political achievements, as well as an assessment of the teaching methods and concepts employed during the instruction. A well-designed evaluation system can effectively guide, motivate, diagnose, and inform decision-making. To provide clear guidance, it is important to establish a quantifiable and measurable indicator system. This evaluation system should assess both the process of IPE by educators and the outcomes achieved by students.

When evaluating educators, the focus should be on assessing their effectiveness in delivering IPE. The sufficiency, popularity, and integration quality of this education should be evaluated using corresponding indicators within the quality evaluation system. On the other hand, evaluating the results of IPE aims to gather feedback on its quality. However, due to the abstract and ambiguous nature of ideological and political achievements, it is challenging to measure them using intuitive and quantitative methods.

One of the main challenges in the quality evaluation system for IPE is how to assess content that is difficult to quantify or measure. To address this

issue, a questionnaire survey can be conducted to gauge students' perception of educators' IPE. This feedback can serve as valuable information to encourage educators to adjust their thinking and methods in order to deliver high-quality and satisfactory IPE.

In summary, an effective evaluation system for the ideological and political quality of college English courses should encompass both the process of teaching by instructors and the outcomes achieved by students. It should strive to provide clear guidance through quantifiable indicators while also addressing the challenge of assessing immeasurable content through methods such as questionnaire surveys for student feedback.

VI. Conclusion

The IPE in college English courses is an important component of ideological and political work in universities. Implementing IPE in college English courses not only compensates for the long-standing lack of IPE in English teaching but also serves as a crucial guarantee for improving the quality of English teaching and achieving comprehensive education goals. The low quality of IPE in college English courses can be attributed to both individual factors of educators and objective conditions and institutional factors.

The construction of a model for IPE in college English courses involves top-level planning, teacher training, content development, teaching methodology exploration, and quality evaluation system deployment. Specifically, this model enhances educators' ideological and political literacy, corrects their values, and ensures high-quality teaching in implementing IPE. It also addresses the issues of insufficient and low-quality materials in the teaching process and integrates ideological and political content with professional knowledge, thereby improving educators' teaching skills. Furthermore, it establishes a system for quality supervision and feedback in implementing IPE, ensuring the quality of such teaching.

Only through the organic integration of IPE with the content of English courses can a mutually beneficial relationship be achieved, where English education enriches IPE, while IPE enhances the appeal of English education. To achieve this, it is crucial for the management department overseeing college English education to establish top-level design and planning, mobilize and supervise English educators at all levels to effectively carry out IPE within their courses, and establish a long-term mechanism. By doing so, the overall goal of fostering morality and talent within universities can be achieved.

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