

# The Integration of Ideological and Political Education in College English Teaching—Taking the Comprehensive English Course as an Example

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It is the requirement of the Chinese Ministry of Education that all the colleges and universities should take “morality education-oriented” class teaching reform in order to realize the unification of both ideological and political education and knowledge system. This paper is an exploratory attempt to integrate morality education in the college English teaching in hope that it can provide English teachers with some reference in this regard.

*Keywords:* ideological and political education, morality teaching, integration

## Introduction

As is known to everyone, Chinese people have always attached great importance to education because education is considered the foundation of building a modern society and realizing national rejuvenation. According to President Xin Jinping, the fundamental task of education is to cultivate people who are morally virtuous, which means we need to fully implement the Party’s educational policy and solve the fundamental problem of who, how, and for whom to train (Yan, 2021). Xi has vowed to provide the people with high-quality education, an education that is high in morality, teaches students patriotism, makes them socially more conscious, and helps promote creativity and innovation (Kang, 2020). Undoubtedly, the ideological and political courses cannot achieve this goal alone. Morality education (an alternative term for “ideological and political education”) should be integrated throughout the whole curriculum ranging from primary schools to colleges and universities. This paper mainly talks about the integration of ideological and political education into college English teaching by taking the comprehensive English course as an example. Questions to be answered in this paper are as follows:

1. What is the concept of “ideological and political education throughout curriculum”?
2. Why is it necessary to integrate ideological and political education into college English teaching?
3. How to integrate—an exploratory case?
4. What should teachers do?

## The Background of Ideological and Political Education

In recent years, the concept of “ideological and political education integrated throughout curriculum” has

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been a hot topic in the education and teaching reform of colleges and universities at home. It is also an important aspect of the new mode of education and teaching reform in the new era.

### **The Origin of the Concept**

The concept of “ideological and political education integrated throughout curriculum” was put forward by the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission as early as 2014 and was tested with good results in some colleges and universities in Shanghai. In 2016, President Xin Jinping clearly pointed out in the ideological and political work of colleges and universities across the country that it is necessary to “carry out ideological and political work throughout the whole process of education and teaching, realize all-round education, and strive to create a new situation for the development of China’s Higher Education. Without question, Xi’s instruction has provided a strong support for the further development of ideological and political education. In 2020, the Ministry of Education issued *Guidelines of Ideological and Political Education Construction for Colleges and Universities* (hereinafter referred to as *Guidelines*) that points out the purpose of the ideological and political education is to integrate values shaping, teaching, and ability training in one and to help students form a correct and positive outlook towards life, values, and the world.

### **The Connotation of the Concept**

If the ideological and political course is an important element that constitutes the morality education of schools, curriculum-based ideological and political education will be an effective means to strengthen the morality education.

In terms of the connotation of “ideological and political education throughout curriculum”, many scholars have given their own interpretations. According to He Yuhai (2019), curriculum-based ideological and political education is an activity and process of providing students with all-round ideological and political education through all the courses in all disciplines (not just the ideological and political theory courses) and the participation of all the teaching staff (not just the ideological and political theory teachers). Curriculum-based ideological and political education is also a necessity of morality education and teaching reform for colleges and universities, the core of which lies in tapping the ideological and political education resources of different disciplines and professional courses and establish a unified curriculum system (Min, 2017).

Despite the different interpretations of the concept by different scholars, there is one thing in common. Both the connotations abovementioned have emphasized the involvement of all the courses in all disciplines. Obviously, the development of curriculum-based morality education is no longer the mere task of the ideological and political courses and their teachers. Instead, each teacher of every single course has responsibility to incorporate ideological and political education in his or her teaching. There is no exception for college English courses.

### **The Necessity to Integrate Ideological and Political Education Into College English Teaching**

*College English Teaching Guide* (2020) (hereafter referred as *Guide*) clearly points out that the mission of college English teachers is to make well-educated people who have both international visions and patriotic feelings. The *Guide* has provided accurate instructions for college English teachers as how to carry out English teaching of the new era. As the President Xin Jinping says, “We should educate and guide young people to view the world properly, to understand the national conditions comprehensively, and to grasp the trend of the

era” (Xin, 2019). College English course, esp. comprehensive English course serves as a good platform to carry out morality education.

Comprehensive English course is a required course set up for all the college students from first year through junior grade. Superficially it is a course to teach language. But profoundly, it is more like a cross-culture course. The text books contain a wide range of topics concerning education, economics, literature, history, philosophy, and social issues, etc. Apart from introducing western cultures, it is more important for teachers to guide students to establish positive culture awareness. Not everything in the textbooks needs to be accepted. It is not uncommon that some students worship western cultures and admire foreign people. So it is of great necessity to incorporate ideological and political education in the college English teaching. This will largely help students to improve their cultural confidence, ability of critical thinking as well as creativity and innovation.

### **Incorporating Ideological and Political Education Into Comprehensive English Course**

From September, 2021, the writer of the paper began an attempt to integrate morality education into her English teaching process. Before the real implementation, much work had been done by the writer and her colleagues of this course. First, they set up the general course goals based on the *Guidelines* issued by the Ministry of Education. With the general goals in hand, they continued to explore each unit in the text book for ideological and political education resources in preparation for the formation of the course syllabus. Finally, the course teachers began to design their teaching process and to write their lesson plans according to the syllabus they have formulated.

In this paper, the writer will demonstrate one-unit teaching process integrated with ideological and political education.

#### **The Description of the Textbook and the Students**

As is universally known, the choice of English text books is of great importance for the implementation of language teaching, esp. for the integration of ideological and political education. With this, *An Integrated English Course 3* (the 3rd edition) published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press was chosen by the course team as the textbook. It covers substantial contents concerning a wide range of topics such as “war and peace”, “science and ethics”, “human and nature”, “marriage and family” etc., all of which can not only enable students to broaden their personal visions and overall quality, but also help teachers to conduct morality integration.

The students using the textbook are the juniors of Chinese-education majors under a seven-year program in the school of International Communication of BISU. These students attended BISU when they finished their middle school education. When the research started, these students were in the third year of their college studies.

#### **The Ideological and Political Teaching Goals of Each Unit**

As is previously mentioned, before the real implementation started, the writer and her colleagues have worked together to formulate the specific morality goals of each unit in the textbook (see Table 1). Unit 5 and 12 are deleted for the reason of class hours.

Table 1

*The Ideological and Political Teaching Goals of Each Unit in the Textbook*

Units	Topics	Morality goals
1	New start at college	Guide student to form right attitudes towards taking college education and reconsider the responsibility they should shoulder in the society.
2	Workaholics	Guide students to better understand work and life and encourage them to have career plans of their own.
3	Poem writing	Guide students to appreciate the beauty of both western and Chinese poems and incorporate Chinese poem cultures teaching by contrast.
4	Communication	Guide students to express themselves accurately and let them realize the importance of spreading Chinese culture in English.
6	White lies	With combination of the topic, integrate honesty and sincerity education as well as the education of Chinese socialist core values.
7	Love	Guide students to establish correct outlook on love and marriage.
8	Dependence of cars	Inspire students to think about the results of overdependence of cars and introduce them the notion of human nature alienation.
9	Overscheduling	Guide students to view the question of overscheduling dialectically and think about the real happiness of life.
10	Home	Guide students to set up correct attitudes towards home and family and to attach great importance to the Chinese traditional culture about home.
11	Knowledge and wisdom	Organize students to discuss the relationship between knowledge and wisdom and guide them to love knowledge, pursue the truth, and above all, let them know wisdom is to pursue knowledge for noble purposes.

**The Description of the Unit for Demonstration**

With the unit morality goals in hand, the writer of the paper embarked on the journey of ideological and political teaching. In this paper, the writer decides to demonstrate Unit 7 “The Chaser” as an example.

“The Chaser” was written by John Collier (1901-1980) who is a British playwright, poet, and novelist. He was famous for numerous short stories in his lifetime which always feature an acerbic wit and are ironic and dark in tone. “The Chaser” was originally published in *The New Yorker* in 1940. The short story is a fable of love with a strong sarcastic tone. The protagonist, Alan Austen is deeply in love and wants to possess his lover entirely. Instead of pursuing his love in a fair and square way, he wants to find an easy solution to the problem of winning love by purchasing a love potion. However, it’s not the love potion that the old man intends to sell primarily, but “life cleaner”, because the unnamed old man does not believe in love at all. The theme of “The Chaser” is the cynicism of experience, portrayed on a field of Alan’s youthful naivety and the old man’s pessimistic certainty.

**The Teaching Process**

The story serves as a negative example where the writer greatly satirizes people’s view of love at his time. Instead of spoon-feeding the ideas to students, the writer wants to guide students to view the main characters Alan and the old man in a critical way through discussion and writing. Below is the teaching process which adopts the PWP mode.

## 1. Pre-reading questions.

(1) Have you ever loved anyone? Or have you ever been loved?

(2) In today’s highly commercialized society, love is often associated, to a surprising extent, with wealth, social status, and other material concerns. How do you think of it? Do you believe in pure, true love?

(3) If you fall in love with someone, but unfortunately, you cannot get any responses from him or her, what would you do with your one-sided love?

(4) Do you believe that love can be fostered? If so, how is love effectively fostered?

Pre-reading questions are raised to students at the lead-in section. Its purpose lies in finding out the students' general attitude towards love, which helps the writer to provide specific guidance for the students. After the Q&A section, most students' views of love have been expressed. The majority (excluding those who did not speak) shows a positive attitude towards love. However, some students argue that love is associated with wealth, social status, and other material concerns. It seems that these students are somewhat materially conscious. Actually here comes a very good timing for students to have a debate over whether pure love is established on money and the writer does so. Through the debate, students can express their love views to the full and meanwhile they can also convince each other with reasonable evidence. Finally, the writer gives her summary by emphasizing that it is not unacceptable that love is associated with money, but pure love does not necessarily come with money. What lovers really need is equality, mutual trust and respect, and a true heart. In this way, the writer has set a good foundation for the students to read further during the while-reading section.

2. While-reading questions.

(1) How do you understand the title "The Chaser"?

(2) Does the title "The Chaser" have some symbolic meanings? What are they?

(3) What is Alan's understanding of love?

(4) What is the old man's view of love? How do you know?

(5) Why does the old man sell the love potion for only one dollar while the life-cleaner 5,000?

(6) How do you look at Alan and the old man's love outlook? Do you agree with them? Give your reasons.

These questions are asked by the writer during the while-reading section. The students have a either a group discussion or a pair work before they report their ideas. The result proves satisfactory. Nearly all the students think that both Alan and the old man have a negative view of love. They argue that the Alan-like young men do exist in the world. When they start to like someone, they often seek the quickest means to achieve their purposes. Once they obtain the heart of their beloved, they do not cherish it. In addition, people like the old man are not uncommon in the world either. For some reason, they no longer believe in love. They think love is one of the most unreliable things in the world. Finally, they will end up losing love.

Undoubtedly, these questions are just like clues with which the writer can instill correct love outlook in her students. On the other hand, the students will not feel they are preached because they have involved all the way through discussions. Consequently, the effective morality teaching is not to preach, but instill in them unconsciously.

3. After-reading activity.

If the first two parts are input section, the after-reading part will be the output one. This section provides the students with an opportunity to use English comprehensively. In this part, the writer has designed an activity of story continuation. The students are required to continue the story with a new ending based on reasonable and logical thinking and imagination. Here demonstrates some excerpts from the students' works (see Table 2).

Table 2

*The Excerpts From the Students' Compositions*

S1	Alan hastily rode his bike home. He wanted to end this relationship as soon as possible. Any other minute with Diana now was sheer torture.
S2	So Diana left Pell street with her deformed love and glove cleaner. Maybe Diana's miserable life had finally ended, or it was only Alan's life that had ended.
S3	"Love? Made by potion? That is not love!" Alan exclaimed, shaking the jar containing the love potion, "Love is not about controlling! Love is respect."
S4	This is the sincerity you have earned through your efforts. Alan finally realized that there are no shortcuts to love.
S5	He embraced Diana, in the same position they first kissed, and jumped into the sea with her in his arms.
S6	Three years later, Alan walked up the creaky stairs again to the shabby cottage, carrying a heavy bag. After opening the door the old man from the dark corner slowly came out and said, "Oh, dear, there you are."

In terms of the new ending, most students made a tragic one. This is because they all know that any love based on deception will not last long. On the path to love, there is no shortcut either. Therefore, the love between Alan and Diana is doomed to end.

This is the whole teaching process practiced by the writer to integrate ideological and political education in her everyday English teaching. From the students' compositions, we can see the integration has proved effective. After the unit learning, the students all set up a correct attitude towards love which may in turn bring some positive influence on their future love path.

### Teachers' Roles

In the process of ideological and political teaching, teachers' roles need to change accordingly. Teachers are no longer the knowledge giver only, but also an explorer of the morality elements in the textbooks. They should provide the students with familiar topics and content that can generate discussions and arguments which are essential for the development of critical thinking skills. In addition, they are also a guider of values and ideology for the students. Teachers are supposed to realize value guidance through activity design and meaning exploration, thus bringing ideological and political education along into the knowledge teaching system.

### Conclusion

Nowadays, ideological and political education integrated throughout curriculum has become the top priority of many language colleges and universities in China. Language is the carrier of culture. Through language teaching, we not only enable students to learn western cultures, but it is more important to help them set up correct values and visions of life and the world. Therefore, as a college teacher, the writer feels a strong obligation to carry out morality education in her everyday teaching. As the demonstration in this paper is only the first foray made by the writer, there can be some unavoidable limitations. For example, the assessment to students is still language-based. Therefore, some further studies will be continued in the near future.

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