

## College English Construction and Practice From the Perspective of Ideological and Political Education: Case Study of *New Horizon College English*

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### Abstract

As a general education course, College English had both instrumental and humanistic attributes (Cai, 2017), and it was an important carrier of ideological and political education. Starting from the current research status of ideological and political education of College English, this research carried out the exploration and practice of the construction approaches of it. Integrating theory with teaching practice, this research took the third version and book 3 of *New Horizon College English* as an example, chose part of the students of non-English majors of Grade 2019 in a university as the experimental class, and adopted the qualitative and quantitative analysis to explore the construction and practice approaches of the ideological and political education of College English from three aspects, ie. teacher's quality, teaching resources and teaching content, so as to improve the teaching effect of ideological and political education of College English, and provide a set of approaches and methods which was universal for ideological and political education of College English. This research could also give some inspiration and guidance for the teaching reform and practice of ideological and political education of the foreign languages and other courses.

**Key words:** College English construction and practice; Ideological and political education; *New Horizon College English*; Teaching reform

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

At the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities, General Secretary Xi pointed out: "We must continue to take the moral education as the central point, and integrate the ideological and political work into the whole process of education and teaching to realize the all-round education, and strive to create a new situation in the development of higher education in China" (Zhang, 2016). At present, the ideological and political education in colleges and universities should change from "ideological and political curriculum" to "ideological and political education", which is a change of educational idea. This indicates that curriculum education should pay attention to the cultivation of moral education, students' good ideological and moral quality improving, and students' sound personality shaping. In the past, the teaching goals of any curriculum only paid attention to the knowledge and skills, namely, the scientific aspect of the curriculum. But under the ideological and political education period, teaching goals of the curriculum should be the integration of the scientific and humanistic quality, ie. gather knowledge in the value expansion, and emphasize value guidance in the knowledge spreading, so as to help students set up the correct three views of the world, life and value (Li, 2020). Through the exploration of the integration and application of the ideological and political elements in English teaching, this research actively explored the construction approaches of ideological and political education of College English, so as to innovate English teaching and create ideological and political golden curriculum with high-quality and Chinese characteristics, and to highlight the curriculum function of paying equal attention to skills

and moral education, and also to build a good foundation for the all-round development of students. It was also conducive to promoting the connotative development of college English teaching, and it had certain enlightenment and guidance significance to the teaching reform and practice of ideological and political education of college English. At the same time, it also played a positive role in promoting the realization of the “three-in-one education” proposed by the CPC Central Committee and The State Council, namely, the overall pattern of all-member, all-round and whole-process education.

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## 2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

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Language is not only a part of culture, but also the most effective medium to spread ideology and culture (Huang, 2012). As a general language course offered by universities for non-English majors, College English is no exception. It is an integral part and important field of quality education. College English, which mainly consists of English language knowledge learning and application, strategies learning and cross-cultural communication (Higher Education Department of Education Ministry (2007), has always played an indispensable role in meeting the needs of China’s social development and international communication, and in cultivating builders and successors of the socialist cause who are well developed morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically and artistically (Huang, 2020, pp.466-472). Under the background of innovation era, making effective use of English curriculum resources and infiltrating ideological and political elements to set up good values and development views for students have become a key project for contemporary teachers to research.

With the further implementation and deepening of the relevant spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress and the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities, a new upsurge of innovative ideological and political work methods had been carried out in colleges and universities across the country. Yu Lijuan, deputy secretary general of Shanghai Municipal People’s Government, introduced the initiative practice of “discipline moral education” of Shanghai city (Yu, 2017), and they constructed a great ideological and political education system with all staff and all curriculums at the macro level; Jiao Lianzhi, a doctor of law from Fudan University, emphasized the importance of promoting the awareness of education of the whole staff, and highlighted the role that university Party committees, party branches of teachers and teachers who were the party members should play in the construction of ideological and political education (Jiao & Huang, 2017). As to the ideological and political education of College English, Lu Junping (2019) and Song Lihua (2019) from Henan Normal University

analyzed the necessity and feasibility of ideological and political education of College English from the perspectives of teachers, students and classroom through logical reasoning and philosophical speculation, and they emphasized the urgency of the times that College English curriculum and ideological and political curriculums should be integrated; Xia Wenhong and others from Beijing Union University emphasized that the teaching of ideological and political education of College English was of great significance for cultivating students’ morality, especially for enhancing cultural confidence (Xia & He, 2019). Young students should be guided to learn western culture from a critical perspective, and their confidence in national culture should be cultivated; Chen Xuezhen (Chen, 2019) from Fujian Normal University analyzed the current situation and reasons of the weakening of ideological and political education of College English, and put forward the realization way of ideological and political education of College English from the perspective of optimization theory; From the perspective of internet big data, Li Jing and others from Guangxi University discussed the strategies of integrating ideological and political education into college English classes (Li, Yu, & Guo, 2019). These researches discussed and summarized the innovative measures, realization way and valuable experience of ideological and political education from different perspectives, but most of them made theoretical discussion and conception at the macro level. In order to improve the quality of College English curriculum, it is of great practical significance to integrate ideological and political ideas into classroom teaching and explore the construction and practical approaches of ideological and political education of College English.

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## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

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Through the specific exploration of the construction and practice of ideological and political education of College English, this research aims to construct a set of approaches and practices worthy of reference for College English teaching, foreign language teaching as well as the teaching of other courses.

By analyzing the integration and application of ideological and political elements in English classroom teaching, this research innovates English teaching and highlights the curriculum function that emphasizes both curriculum education and moral education, so as to lay a good foundation for students’ all-round development.

Through the implementation of ideological and political education of College English, young students will unconsciously learn the knowledge, such as major national and world policy, Chinese and world excellent traditional culture and socialist core values, etc. during the English language& culture learning and ability enhancing, so as to promote the common improvement of their language

and moral accomplishment, strengthen their ability to participate in international competition, and make them well-prepared for the contribution to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Design of the Study

Based on the theory of constructivism theory, this research took the third version and book 3 of *New Horizon College English* as an example, and chose part of the students of non-English majors (students mainly major in Mathematics and Chemistry) of Grade 2019 in a university as the experimental class to explore the construction and practice approaches of the ideological and political education of College English from three aspects, ie. enhancing teacher's quality, improving teaching resources and optimizing teaching content and methods. In this research, some research methods were adopted, such as literature review method, questionnaire survey, interview, experimental teaching method and comparative study method, etc., and all the data received were analyzed by SPSS Statistics 26.0 to verify the effectiveness of this construction and practice.

### 4.2 Method of Data Collection and Analysis

**Literature Method.** According to the content, this research consulted, summarized and analyzed the teaching theory and related ideological and political literature as the theoretical basis.

**Questionnaire Survey.** Before the experiment, the author investigated the experimental class to get their opinions about ideological and political education, so as to put forward the necessity of the construction and practice approaches of ideological and political education of the College English. After the experiment, a questionnaire survey was also made among these students to investigate their learning effect and evaluation on the integration of

ideological and political education with College English.

**Interview.** According to the final test results of College English of the experimental class, six students of three levels were selected to talk about their feelings on College English construction and practice from the perspective of ideological and political education.

**Teaching Experiment Method.** Carry out the construction and practice of College English from the perspective of ideological and political education in the experimental class from three aspects, ie. enhancing teachers' quality, improving teaching resources and optimizing teaching content and methods to verify the effectiveness of it.

**Comparative Study.** Changes of students' opinions in the questionnaires before and after the implementation of the College English construction and practice were compared to verify the influence of this teaching model on their thoughts and interests. In addition, compare the final College English test scores of the experimental class (students mainly major in Mathematics and Chemistry in Grade 2019 ) and that of the Controlled Class(students of the same major in Grade 2018) to test the efficacy of this teaching model in improving students' final scores.

### 4.3 Process of the Research

#### 4.3.1 Preliminary Survey

**Questionnaire Survey.** A questionnaire survey was conducted among 120 students majoring in Mathematics and Chemistry of Grade 2019 in a University to analyze these students' awareness of ideological and political education of the College English and their opinions to the integration of ideological and political education and English teaching, so as to put forward the necessity of the construction and practice approaches of ideological and political education of the College English.

**Data Display.** A total of 106 valid questionnaires were received in this survey, and the results were analyzed as follows:

**Table 1**  
**College Students Awareness of Ideological and Political Education**

Question	Opinion	Number	Proportion
Do you know ideological and political education?	Yes, I know.	24	22.64%
	Yes, but it's not very clear.	37	34.91%
	No, I don't know.	45	42.45%
Can you distinguish ideological & political curriculum and ideological & political education?	Yes, I can.	22	20.75%
	Yes, but it's not very clear.	26	24.53%
	No, I can't.	58	54.72%
What do you think of the integration of the ideological & political education with the professional courses?	It is well integrated.	23	21.7%
	It is not well integrated.	65	61.32%
	It is seldom integrated.	18	16.98%
Are you interested in the ideological and political content in the professional courses?	Yes. I'm very interested in it.	29	27.36%
	Reluctant	35	33.02%
	No, I'm not interested in it.	42	39.62%

**Data Analysis.** Through the analysis, we could see vividly that, students' understanding of the concept of "ideological and political education" was not very clear. Only 22.64% of students were familiar with the concept, 34.91% of students were not clear about it, and 42.45% didn't know what it was. In addition, 20.75% of the students could clearly distinguish the two concepts of "ideological and political curriculum" and "ideological and political education", 24.53% were not very clear about them, and 54.72% could not distinguish them at all. Therefore, the concept of "ideological and political education" had not really gone deep into the hearts of students, and the construction of ideological and political education in colleges and universities needed to be strengthened and deepened.

Ideological and political teaching had not been effectively integrated with students' professional courses. Further speaking, ideological and political teaching in university had not been integrated with professional courses in a diversified, whole-process and all-round way. It could be seen directly from the data that, only 21.7% of the students thought that they had been effectively integrated, 61.32% showed that their integration was not so well, and 16.98% said that they had not been integrated at all. This showed that professional courses in colleges and universities only emphasized the teaching of professional knowledge and skills, and ideological and political education had not been subtly carried out to students during teaching. In other words, ideological and political education had not been integrated into professional courses, and the integration of professional courses teaching and ideological and theoretical education was neither deep nor broad.

Students were not interested in the didactic ideological and political education. As shown in the table, only 27.36% of the students were interested in the ideological and political education. Some students thought that ideological and political education was very important, but they did not have interest in it because of the old content and the tedious way. This showed that the ideological and political content of current college curriculums were not well combined with students' reality, and it was difficult to stimulate students' interest in learning.

### **4.3.2 Approaches to Construct and Practice "Ideological and Political Education" of College English**

In consideration of the above status of ideological and political education in colleges and universities, this study proposed the following approaches to construct and practice ideological and political education of the College English:

#### **4.3.2.1 Enhancing Teachers' Quality**

At the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in colleges and universities, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that "College teachers should

attach importance to study, and insist that educators should receive education first, and also strive to become disseminators of advanced ideology and culture, firm supporters of the Party's governance, and instructors and leaders for students' healthy growth."<sup>1</sup> As English teachers of colleges and universities, they should seriously acquire the knowledge, such as Marxism-leninism, Mao Tse-tung Thought, Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and current events, etc., they should also constantly enrich themselves in the political, economic, scientific, cultural and other fields, guide the students with a firm political stance and profound knowledge, broaden students' horizon, and arm the minds of students with rich ideological and political theories to truly achieve preach, impart knowledge and solve doubts. In addition, they should also improve the ideological and political education skills, eg. grasping the scientific world outlook and methodology, understanding the students' learning and development rule of body and mind, making full use of the main channel of ideological elements in classroom teaching, ensuring that the ideological and political elements in each unit were included in the important items and content of classroom teaching, integrating knowledge education with values education, and changing each class into an effective teaching carrier of socialist core values in a way that students were pleased with, etc., so as to ensure that students' ideals and beliefs would be influenced and encouraged in a smooth and silent way to achieve the teaching goal of integrating morality and wisdom.

#### **4.3.2.2 Improving Teaching Resources**

Teaching resources should be improved comprehensively. Such as, promote the learning of socialist core values through a variety of approaches actively, eg. the integration of online and offline teaching, wechat and other media presenting, case study and special lectures of successful people in society, etc.; thoroughly implement Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era into the teaching materials, into the classroom and into the mind; integrate current affairs, hot spots, positive energy element in English textbooks, patriotism, national feelings, socialist ideology, health concept and life education into the English teaching; make full use of the resources, such as Ted Speech, VOA, BBC, China Daily, idiomatic English expression of patriotism and Chinese culture, etc. to capture vivid teaching content with positive energy, so as to find the students' interest directly and quickly.

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<sup>1</sup>At the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities, Xi Jinping stressed that ideological and political work in colleges and universities is related to the fundamental question, ie. what kind of people universities train, how they train people and for whom they train people? [N]. People's Daily, 2016-12-19(001).

#### 4.3.2.3 Optimizing Teaching Content and Methods

Take the third version and book 3 of *New Horizon College English* as an example. In addition to the basic language knowledge teaching in the textbook, in order to realize ideological and political education, each unit adopted the operation of “ideological and political guidance-teaching objectives-activity design”, and the details were as follows:

**Lead-in.** According to the special content of College English, the ideological and political elements contained in the text book should be deeply explored, so as to ensure the well integration of the curriculum content and moral education, and arouse students’ interest. Such as: Unit 1 The way to success, this unit told students that every person could succeed as long as they stuck to their dream, so teachers could use some Chinese proverbs to figure out the secrets of success in them, such as, Little strokes fell great oaks; Where there is a will, there is a way; and No steps, no miles, etc.. Another example, unit 3 Life stories, this unit narrated, analyzed and interpreted the important facts of one prominent figure in the movie domain, eg. Audry Hepburn’s noble endeavor and her contribution to the cause of UNICEF. To arouse students’ interest and their awareness to devote themselves to the society, teachers could use some movie clips about the contribution of Audry Hepburn to guide them.

**Processing of New and Core Words.** D.A. Wiking, a famous linguist, pointed out: “No grammar, little expression, no vocabulary, zero expression”<sup>2</sup>. Having a solid and considerable vocabulary is the foundation of foreign language learning. Every English teacher was well aware of the importance and difficulty of vocabulary learning. When explaining the content of the text, she would naturally give new examples about the new words and core words in it, and ask students to translate and discuss the meaning conveyed by the words and new examples. In this part, teachers should not only adopt and carry forward the original teaching content and excellent examples in the teacher’s book, but also delete or improve the old and tedious examples, so as to explore the ideological and political elements related to these words and the context, and consciously carry out ideological and political education for students. For example,

Word 1 “perish” in Unit 2 Beat your fear, vi, it meant die, esp. in a terrible or sudden way.

New sentence: when everything has to be done by the book, when thinking turns rigid and blind faith is the fashion, it is impossible for a party or a nation to make progress. Its life will cease and that party or nation will perish. (---*Emancipate the Mind, Seek Truth from Facts, Unite and Look forward* from Deng Xiaoping)

Word 2 “ascend” in Unit 2 Beat your fear, v. it meant rise, go up, climb up.

New sentence: China’s social and economic development level and its people’s living standards are not high. It is not easy to govern such a country, so I must ascend a height to enjoy a distant view while planting my feet on solid ground. (---*The Governance of Xi Jinping*, Volume 1)

Word 3 “trivial” in Unit 4 Let’s go, adj. it meant not very interesting, serious, or valuable.

New sentence: Do not consider any virtue as unimportant, and therefore neglect it; do not consider any vice as trivial, and therefore practice it. (---*Annals of The Three Kingdoms, Shu Shu, Biography of Our Ancestors*)

**Class Presentations.** During the class time of each unit, the teacher would spare about 10 minutes for the students, ie. ask two or three students to the platform to give speech presentation associated with the theme of this unit, the topic of the speech presentation was encouraged to include the moral education elements of patriotism, socialist core values and Chinese excellent traditional culture etc.. The students participated in this activity actively, and they also made careful preparations. Students could not only share the deeds of advanced figures, excellent traditional Chinese culture and knowledge of party history, but also could present the domestic and foreign political news. For example, When teaching Unit 3 Life Stories, some students shared Zhong Nanshan’s contribution to the fight against coronavirus, Zhang Guimei’s contribution to girls’ high school and Bai Qiu’en’s contribution to internationalism, etc.. In Unit 5 When Work is a Pleasure, some students shared the story of Shi Chuanxiang, a dung worker who took pride in his work and dedicated his life to serving the people. These speeches not only improved students’ awareness of learning English, enhanced their oral English and practiced their speech ability, but also improved students’ socialist core values and played a good role in moral education.

**Assignment Part.** When giving assignments, such as the assignments about English reading, translation, writing and other exercises, teachers should also carefully select content containing ideological and political elements, and integrate them into the language practice. For example, the following translation assignment not only expanded students’ vocabulary, improved students’ translation theory and practical ability, but also carried forward Xi Jinping’s new thoughts on governance, so as to enable students to promote the truth, the good and the beautiful, spread the positive energy, and make their contribution to the development of the Chinese nation and the world: Paragons of morality are important banners for building public ethics. We need to carry out campaigns to publicize such paragons of morality and let people learn from them, foster the true, the good and the beautiful, and spread positive energy. We should inspire the people to esteem virtue, perform good deeds and emulate virtuous people. Moreover, we should encourage the whole of society

<sup>2</sup> BaiduEncyclopedia. (2021). [http://www.360doc.com/content/20/0214/22/8541396\\_892076964.shtml](http://www.360doc.com/content/20/0214/22/8541396_892076964.shtml)

to cultivate morality by practicing virtue and to exert a positive influence through ethical behavior. In this way, we will marshal strong spiritual and ethical support for realizing the Chinese Dream of national renewal (---*The Governance of Xi Jinping*, Volume 1).

## 5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### 5.1 Questionnaire Findings and Analysis

After a semester's application of ideological and political education of College English, a questionnaire survey was conducted on the students of the experimental class of Grade 2019 at the end of the semester. The questionnaire which involved 10 questions was given to the 120 students, and the students were asked to talk about their feelings. At last, 101 valid questionnaires were received. As to question 2: In College English class, teachers integrated some ideological and political education into English teaching, such as "Seize the day and never lose the time", how did you feel about this?, 92.08% of the students chose "very good" and no students chose "bad"; As to the question, why did they feel good in question 2, 86.13% of students chose "inspirational" and "practical". As to question 9, did "ideological and political education" of College English enhance your interest in learning English? the number of people who chose "yes" was 89, accounting for 88.11%. Thus it could be seen that students had a very high evaluation on the integration of ideological and political education in College English teaching.

### 5.2 Interview Findings and Analysis

To investigate the learning situation of the students in the experimental class, six students were interviewed by the author according to their final exam scores, and they were classified into three levels: excellent, good and passed. The content mainly focused on the effectiveness of the ideological and political education of College English teaching on their learning interest and results. The interview results showed that, all the students of the three levels agreed that the ideological and political education of College English extended their knowledge horizon of the current society and world, and improved their patriotism and love to the world. The students who passed the exam said that their learning interest were improved, this helped them actively participate in various activities in class; Good students showed that they were willing to learn more in class, and their autonomous learning ability had also been greatly improved, because they were eager to search more about the current information of the society and the world; Excellent students answered that the teaching content was easy to understand, their language application ability was improved through the presentations and interactions in class.

### 5.3 Comparison of Final Test

To test the effectiveness of the ideological and political education, the author compared the final exam scores of the experimental class ( part of the students major in Mathematics and Chemistry in Grade 2019) with that of the controlled class ( part of the students in the same major in Grade 2018). These two classes had the same teaching materials, same teacher, and their English foundation and gender distribution were also similar, so it was reliable to make a comparative study. All the data received were analyzed by SPSS Statistics 26.0, independent sample t-test was adopted to analyze the comparison of final scores between the experimental class and controlled class, and the results were shown in the table below:

**Table 2**  
**Comparison of Final Exam Scores**

Class	Number	Mean	Std. deviation	T	P
Experimental class (Grade 2019)	120	70.90	7.07	3.012	0.003
Controlled class (Grade 2018)	135	68.23	6.73		

It is shown from the table that, after a semester's application of ideological and political education of College English, the final exam scores of the experimental class had a little progress. The P value of 0.003 met the requirement of statistical significance. So, we could see that the application of ideological and political education of College English was effective and could improve students' English level to some extent. And the author will do further research in the future to maximize the effect of the application of ideological and political education of College English.

## CONCLUSIONS

Through the specific implementation of ideological and political education of College English, this research breaks the isolation situation of the professional courses from the ideological and political education. It promotes the integrative development of the professional courses and the ideological and political education, and achieves all-member, whole-process and all-round of education during the western culture studying, language consolidation and English skills improvement. In addition, through the specific exploration and practice of the construction approaches of ideological and political education of College English, this research has constructed a set of approaches and methods which is valuable for the construction and practice of ideological and political education of foreign languages and other courses, so, it has great significance and guidance for the reform of foreign languages and other courses in colleges and universities.

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