

# **Research on Enhancing Teaching Quality of Ideological and Political Education in College English Curriculum Based on Cognitive-Affective Theory**

**Yang Haini, Yang Huanhuan, Liu Xiongbo, Zhang Zange, Yang Lu, Liu Lei**  
*Shaanxi Technical College of Finance and Economics, Xianyang, Shaanxi, China*

**Abstract:** In the context of the new era, college English courses serve not only as a platform for cultivating language proficiency but also as a critical field for integrating ideological and political education. Grounded in cognitive-affective theory, this study explores effective methods to enhance the quality of ideological and political teaching in college English. Employing a combination of literature review and theoretical construction, the research systematically examines domestic and international studies on cognitive-affective theory and curriculum-based ideological and political education. It further analyzes the integration of cognitive and affective teaching objectives in college English courses. The study develops a theoretical framework to illustrate how cognitive-affective theory fosters students' intellectual engagement, emotional resonance, and value recognition. Recommendations are proposed across dimensions such as instructional design, faculty development, and assessment mechanisms, alongside the construction of an optimization model guided by cognitive-affective theory for ideological and political teaching. Findings indicate that integrating cognitive-affective theory into college English significantly improves students' ideological identification, enhances their learning motivation and language skills, and promotes comprehensive attainment of ideological and political goals. This research provides theoretical support and practical guidance for improving the quality of ideological and political teaching in college English, laying a foundation for future studies in the field.

**Keywords:** Cognitive-Affective Theory; College English; Ideological and Political

**Education; Teaching Quality; Path Research**

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Research Background and Significance**

As China's higher education transitions from expansion to quality enhancement, the Ministry of Education emphasizes that "curriculum-based ideological and political education" is a key approach to fulfilling the fundamental mission of fostering virtue through education. Language education, as a crucial medium for cultural exchange and value construction, holds immense potential in this domain.

College English, beyond its primary function of teaching language proficiency, also bears the responsibility of cultivating intercultural communication skills and shaping values. Within the context of globalization and cultural diversity, college English courses can incorporate socialist core values and traditional Chinese culture through textual analysis and intercultural discussions. By leveraging the discipline's unique advantages, ideological and political elements can be seamlessly integrated into the classroom, achieving a synergy between language competency development and value education.

Education fundamentally revolves around "developing individuals." However, the current integration of ideological and political content into college English curricula has not fully realized its potential. The introduction of cognitive-affective theory offers a new perspective for addressing this challenge. The theory emphasizes the holistic consideration of learners' cognitive and emotional processes, aiming to stimulate positive learning motivation and emotional resonance to enhance teaching outcomes. Building on this foundation, this study seeks to explore

effective strategies to improve the quality of ideological and political education in college English, providing actionable guidance for educators.

## **1.2 Literature Review**

International scholars have made significant contributions to understanding the interplay between cognition and emotion in education. Early works, such as Piaget's cognitive development theory, identified emotion as a driving force for cognitive growth. Subsequently, theories of emotional learning emphasized the role of emotions in education. In recent years, global higher education has embraced "holistic education," leveraging language courses to promote intercultural awareness and value education. For example, U.S. universities' "Global Citizenship Education" programs integrate foreign language learning with critical thinking and cultural immersion activities to cultivate students' global perspectives and social responsibility.

In China, research on curriculum-based ideological and political education primarily focuses on theoretical framework development. Recent years have seen the Ministry of Education implement multi-level policy initiatives, aiming to extend ideological and political education beyond political theory courses to encompass all disciplines. Regarding college English, scholars widely acknowledge its natural integration with cultural education, which offers inherent advantages for ideological and political teaching. For instance, Han Xueping et al. argued that language courses could effectively embed socialist core values through discussions of literature, culture, and global issues [1]. However, existing research predominantly emphasizes theoretical discussions, with limited attention to systematic practical pathways or measurable teaching outcomes.

## **1.3 Research Objectives and Questions**

Given the research landscape, this study aims to systematically explore strategies for improving the quality of ideological and political education in college English from the perspective of cognitive-affective theory. On the one hand, it investigates the applicability of cognitive-affective theory in instructional

design; on the other hand, it offers actionable teaching optimization plans tailored to the practical needs of ideological and political education.

This research seeks to address the following questions:

How can cognitive-affective theory enhance the effectiveness of ideological and political education in college English?

How can cognitive and affective goals be effectively integrated into teaching practices?

The findings aim to enrich the theoretical foundation and provide practical guidance for reforming college English curricula.

## **2. Theoretical Foundation**

### **2.1 Overview of Cognitive-Affective Theory**

The core idea of cognitive-affective theory is that emotion and cognition are inseparable dimensions in the learning process. Students' learning motivation, interests, and emotional experiences directly influence the efficiency of their cognitive processes. In the field of education, emotions not only serve as a regulator of classroom atmosphere but also act as a driving force for knowledge construction. For instance, when students read an English article rich in cultural connotations, positive emotional experiences can encourage them to delve deeper into the cultural logic and values behind the text. This process exemplifies the interaction between cognition and emotion.

In recent years, the role of emotional factors in language learning has received widespread attention. Research shows that emotional experiences in language learning are significantly positively correlated with cognitive outcomes. When students resonate emotionally with the learning content, their language skills develop more rapidly [2]. This finding provides theoretical support for implementing ideological and political education (IPE) in college English courses: by stimulating students' emotional resonance, the attractiveness of teaching content and the effectiveness of ideological education can be enhanced.

### **2.2 The Connotation and Theoretical Foundation of Ideological and Political Education (IPE)**

As a strategic initiative promoted by the Ministry of Education in recent years, IPE

aims to integrate ideological and political education imperceptibly into the knowledge systems of various disciplines through course content and classroom teaching. Its core concept is the organic unity of "knowledge transmission" and "value cultivation." In college English courses, teachers can design teaching activities related to socialist core values, such as discussions on topics like environmental protection, equality, and peace. These activities help students enhance their language skills while strengthening their value recognition.

The theoretical foundation of IPE originates from Marxist pedagogy, constructivist learning theory, and aesthetic education theory. From an educational perspective, teaching should not be limited to knowledge transmission but should also focus on holistic human development. By integrating the IPE concept into college English courses, educators are required to incorporate cultural and value education into language instruction, fostering internationally-oriented talents with critical thinking skills and a sense of social responsibility.

### **2.3 Analysis of the Convergence Between Cognitive-Affective Theory and IPE**

Cognitive-affective theory and the IPE concept are highly compatible, as both revolve around the holistic development of individuals. In college English teaching, cognitive-affective theory provides pedagogical support for IPE. Specifically, it can promote the achievement of IPE goals in the following ways:

By stimulating learning interest and emotional engagement, it enhances students' acceptance of IPE content.

Through the interaction of emotion and cognition, it strengthens students' identification with socialist core values.

By fostering emotional experiences, it facilitates the internalization of values, laying a foundation for students to develop a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values in future cross-cultural communication.

## **3. Current Situation of IPE in College English Teaching**

### **3.1 Current Status of Ideological Elements in College English Courses**

At present, most universities have attempted to integrate IPE elements into their college

English courses. For example, analyzing the themes of humanistic care and social responsibility in English literature helps students understand the integrative value of traditional Chinese culture and world cultures. However, in actual classrooms, the integration of IPE elements often appears simplistic, with content lacking systematic organization, making it difficult to fully realize the educational potential of IPE. A survey of 100 English teachers from various universities revealed that over 60% of respondents expressed a lack of effective IPE resources and instructional design guidance [3].

### **3.2 Challenges in IPE Implementation in College English Teaching**

Although the concept of IPE has been widely accepted, its practical implementation still faces numerous challenges. On the one hand, some teachers focus more on language skills training in their teaching, neglecting the achievement of IPE objectives. On the other hand, the existing textbook content and teaching resources insufficiently explore IPE elements, resulting in course content having low relevance to students' real lives. Additionally, students' low emotional engagement poses another challenge. Many students perceive English learning as a task, lacking emotional investment in the learning content, which hinders the improvement of classroom teaching effectiveness.

### **3.3 Analysis of the Causes of Existing Problems**

The issues stem primarily from the following factors:

**Insufficient Teacher Training and Support:** Many English teachers have not received systematic training in IPE and lack professional guidance and teaching case references.

**Incomplete Evaluation Mechanisms:** Current course assessment systems focus more on testing students' language abilities, overlooking the pathways to achieving IPE objectives.

**Misalignment Between Course Content and Reality:** The selection of textbook content has low relevance to students' real-life and cultural backgrounds, making it difficult to evoke students' emotional resonance.

#### **4. Optimized Design of Ideological and Political Teaching in College English Based on Cognitive-Affective Theory**

##### **4.1 Dual Positioning of Cognitive and Affective Teaching Objectives**

Traditional college English teaching objectives often focus on developing language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, this singular focus falls short of meeting the requirements of character-building in the new era. Guided by cognitive-affective theory, college English teaching objectives should achieve dual positioning in both cognitive and emotional dimensions, integrating ideological and political education with language learning to form a unified process.

At the cognitive level, the objectives should emphasize students' systematic understanding of language knowledge, cultural connotations, and critical thinking skills. For example, analyzing humanistic values or social phenomena in Western literature enables students to accumulate cultural knowledge and enhance intercultural critical thinking. At the affective level, the objectives should evoke emotional resonance in students, such as fostering patriotism and cultural confidence by guiding them to reflect on China's role in global affairs during discussions on globalization.

By designing teaching objectives that balance cognitive and emotional elements, educators can help students simultaneously improve their language abilities and develop their value systems.

##### **4.2 Mining and Integrating Ideological and Political Resources in Teaching Content**

College English encompasses abundant linguistic and cultural resources, rich in ideological and political educational elements. However, effective resource integration requires attention to textbooks, supplementary materials, and current societal issues. While current textbooks are relatively systematic in language learning, they often lack sufficient ideological and political content. Educators can reframe textbook materials with humanistic value by integrating socialist core values. For instance, while studying environmental texts, teachers could incorporate examples of China's contributions to global

environmental governance to deepen students' understanding of international affairs.

Supplementary materials should align with students' interests and societal trends, embedding ideological and political education into diverse language materials. Examples include English reports on China's technological achievements or international materials on the COVID-19 response. Additionally, introducing current events enhances classroom relevance, such as discussing global perspectives on the Belt and Road Initiative to help students grasp cultural differences and national development strategies comprehensively.

##### **4.3 Strategies to Stimulate Cognition and Emotion in Teaching Methods**

Teaching methods based on cognitive-affective theory emphasize triggering emotional engagement to foster cognitive participation and knowledge internalization. In the context of college English, strategies can focus on classroom interaction, multimodal instruction, and task-based learning.

**Classroom Interaction:** Interactive activities, such as peer collaboration or group discussions, stimulate emotional engagement. For example, students could debate the impact of globalization on local cultures and share perspectives, creating a dynamic environment for diverse value exchanges.

**Multimodal Instruction:** Integrating textual, audio, and visual materials enriches sensory experiences. For discussions on topics like gender equality or environmental protection, using documentaries or speeches helps students understand complex cultural phenomena while eliciting emotional resonance.

**Task-Based Learning:** Complex tasks enhance language skills and ideological understanding. For instance, a simulated Model United Nations activity allows students to role-play as representatives of different nations, expressing positions on global issues, fostering responsibility and critical thinking.

##### **4.4 Establishing and Refining Evaluation Mechanisms**

Evaluating ideological and political teaching outcomes requires a scientific framework that addresses both language proficiency and ideological goals. Evaluation criteria should

consider cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions.

**Cognitive Dimension:** Assess students' understanding of course content through essays or quizzes on topics related to core values.

**Emotional Dimension:** Monitor students' participation and emotional expression during class discussions to evaluate engagement.

**Behavioral Dimension:** Observe students' real-life actions, such as applying learned values in social practices.

## **5. Pathways to Enhance Teaching Quality of Ideological and Political Education in College English Based on Cognitive-Affective Theory**

### **5.1 Fostering and Enhancing Teachers' Ideological and Political Teaching Competence**

Teachers are the key implementers of ideological and political education, and their competence directly impacts teaching quality. Universities should provide systematic training programs, such as workshops on ideological and political teaching strategies, advanced concepts, and best practices. Encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration with political theory educators can also provide teachers with additional resources.

Practical methods, such as simulated classrooms with expert feedback, can help teachers refine their instructional strategies. Additionally, sharing experiences and reflective practices among educators fosters continuous improvement in teaching methodologies.

### **5.2 Guiding Students' Emotional Resonance and Value Identification**

Students' emotional involvement and value recognition are crucial to the success of ideological and political education. Emotional and value guidance can be achieved through classroom scenarios and extracurricular activities. For instance, incorporating relatable scenarios into teaching materials triggers emotional resonance, while activities like volunteer programs or cultural exchanges extend ideological education beyond the classroom.

Studies indicate that students who participate in cultural exchange programs exhibit significantly higher recognition of socialist

core values than those who do not [3]. This demonstrates the effectiveness of practical activities in deepening emotional experiences and value alignment.

### **5.3 Optimizing Course Resources and Exploring School-Based Practices**

Optimizing resources should leverage institutional strengths and regional cultural characteristics. For example, universities in Northeast China could integrate the spirit of the Anti-Japanese Resistance Army into English courses, fostering patriotism through historical narratives. Schools can also develop localized textbooks to establish unique ideological and political education systems.

### **5.4 Enhancing Collaborative Efforts to Boost Effectiveness**

The implementation of ideological and political education requires collaboration across departments and external partnerships. Universities can establish practice bases by partnering with enterprises, communities, and government agencies. For example, collaborating with local businesses to discuss workplace ethics in English courses or organizing international culture festivals with community involvement enhances students' understanding of cultural diversity and the interplay between local and global cultures.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study explores the integration of cognitive-affective theory with ideological and political education in college English, proposing optimized pathways for improving teaching quality. A systematic theoretical framework is constructed across goal-setting, content design, methodological innovation, and evaluation mechanisms. Additionally, reform recommendations are presented from four dimensions: teacher development, student guidance, resource optimization, and internal-external collaboration.

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