

Research on the Significance and Strategies of Integrating Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education into Middle School Reading Instruction

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Abstract

Ideological and Political Education crucially resolves the dilemma of skills over values in middle school English reading instruction by fostering virtue through education. This study addresses teachers' limited awareness and underutilized textbooks through organic integration strategies. Findings demonstrate its dual capacity to reshape English educational value while enhancing students' cultural-national identity and teacher development. Implementation requires a "objectives-instruction-evaluation" trinity framework: integrating language and ideological literacy via textbook analysis; designing "learning and understanding, applying and practice and transferring and creating" pathways for language and value synergy; establishing collaborative evaluation converting implicit literacy into observable indicators. This research provides practical paradigms for cultivating globally competent, culturally confident English learners.

Keywords

Ideological and Political Education; middle school English; English reading instruction

1. Introduction

In December 2016, Present Xi emphasized at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Higher Education: "We must leverage classroom teaching as the primary channel; while continuously strengthening ideological and political theory courses through improvement to enhance their relevance and appeal in meeting students' developmental needs, all other disciplines should retain their proper roles and fulfill their due responsibilities, ensuring alignment with ideological and political theory courses to achieve synergistic effects." This conference propelled Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education into widespread aca-

demic focus. The Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) underscores adherence to educational objectives while highlighting the value of English courses in holistic education. However, current middle school English teaching still suffers from teachers' insufficient awareness of Ideological and Political Education and neglect of ideological content in textbooks, resulting in ineffective or absent implementation in English class. Against this backdrop, this study analyzes the value and significance of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education into middle school English teaching, explores practical approaches for its incorporation into reading instruction, addresses implementation dilemmas, enhances the teaching quality, and advances the educational mission of fostering virtue through education.

2. New Requirements for Integrating Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education into Middle School English Reading Instruction

2.1. The Definition of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education

The concept of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education was originated by the Shanghai Municipal Committee and Municipal Government. Since 2014, major universities in Shanghai have implemented related reforms guided by the educational principle of “cultivating talent with moral education as the priority,” strengthening ideological-political education in higher education curricula to develop students' ideological and ethical qualities. In December 2016, the General Secretary's pivotal speech at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Higher Education emphasized centering on fostering virtue through education, enabling ideological-political work to permeate the entire teaching process through synergistic integration across all disciplines. The 2020 Guidelines for Integrating Ideological and Political Education into Higher Education Curricula marked its transition from ad hoc implementation to systematic practice. While academia lacks a unified definition, it is broadly characterized as: (1) a holistic curricular concept overcoming the limitation of confining ideological education to specialized courses by positioning talent cultivation as the core objective across disciplines (Luo Man, 2025) ; and (2) an educational framework embedding Marxist theory throughout instruction, strategically excavating discipline-specific ideological resources to construct an integrated system encompassing ideological and political theory, comprehensive literacy, and professional education (Wang Kun, 2023) . This paper views Curriculum-based Ideological Education as an implicit educational approach that integrates ideological and political elements into subject teaching. By identifying these elements and presenting them accessibly, it achieves the dual goals of knowledge transmission and moral cultivation. Specifically, in secondary English, it integrates knowledge instruction with value guidance. Promoting interdisciplinary

nary coordination, it collaborates with Ideological and Political education to achieve coordinated outcomes, fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education.

2.2. New Requirements for Middle School Reading Instruction

The New Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) emphasize helping students develop correct values, key competencies, and essential character through English learning (2022). Its core objective takes as the ultimate goal the cultivation of new-generation talents with Chinese cultural identity, global perspectives, and cross-cultural communication capabilities. In dimensions including educational orientation, nature, and connotation, The New Curriculum Standards demonstrate high compatibility with the philosophy of ideological and political education. This alignment indicates that the rich educational value inherent in secondary school English curricula can be fully realized through Curriculum-based Ideological and Political development, which simultaneously imposes new requirements on English reading instruction in secondary schools.

The core components of middle school English reading including discourse teaching, thematic content, and cultural knowledge contain abundant ideological and political elements, serving as effective vehicles for realizing curriculum-based educational values. This manifests concretely in two dimensions. Firstly, deepening thematic meaning exploration. As the core task of reading instruction, themes play a decisive role in connecting and guiding other elements, creating contexts for language learning and character development. Discourse, as thematic carriers provide diverse materials integrating language and culture, while cultural knowledge supplies resources for establishing students' humanistic foundations, cultivating scientific spirit, shaping moral character, and forming correct values. This requires teachers to guide students in exploring texts' cultural connotations and value orientations through discourse-based reading activities. Secondly, cultivating cultural awareness and global vision. The New Curriculum Standards mandates developing Chinese cultural identity and firm cultural confidence while expanding international vision and enhancing global understanding through English reading. Practically, teachers can organically integrate ideological and political elements including character development, social responsibility, national identity, and cultural pride into classroom content, subtly guiding student cognition to maximize value-oriented education (Shun Lijuan, 2024). Furthermore, reading practices help students develop interpersonal skills, emotional management strategies, and value judgment abilities. These form the bedrock of students' comprehensive development.

3. The Significance of Integrating Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education into Middle School English Reading Instruction

3.1. Educational Dimension: Resolving the “Overemphasizing Skills at the Expense of Values” Dilemma

The fundamental mission of mission of education is fostering virtue and cultivating talents (Xi Jinping, 2022). The New Curriculum Standards positions developing core competence to fulfill this mission as a foundational principle, clarifying that English reading instruction is not simply linguistic skill training, but in essence a comprehensive educational process that combines instrumentality and humanity, knowledge imparting and value guidance. Integrating Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education serves as the critical pathway to translate curricular principles into practice, ensuring the cultivation of key competence to addresses the essential educational question of “what to cultivate, how to cultivate, and for whom to cultivate.” This integration delivers two core values: firstly, reshaping the educational value of reading instruction by guiding students to deeply comprehend China’s traditional, revolutionary, and socialist advanced cultures, thereby strengthening cultural confidence and national identity in cross-cultural contexts (Luo Zubing & Liao Xingli, 2023); Secondly, resolving the dilemma of emphasizing skills over values. Through teachers’ systematic excavation and creative integration of ideological and political elements into all instructional phases via in-depth textual analysis and creative material application. Only thus can the intrinsic unity of imparting knowledge and cultivating character be achieved, advancing students’ linguistic abilities and ideological literacy toward holistic development.

3.2. Teacher Professional Development Dimension: Enhancing English Teachers’ Competencies in Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education

Under the framework of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political education, middle school English teachers evolve from knowledge transmitters to value shapers and ideological guides, shouldering the core mission of fostering virtue through education. Enhancing ideological and political pedagogical competence entails coordinated development in three areas: recognizing educational value, analyzing ideological and political elements, and implementing pedagogical transformations (Zhang Wenxia, 2022). Firstly, deepening cognitive competence. Teachers must carefully analyze textual materials to identify embedded ideological and political elements such as cultural connotations, social responsibilities and so on, transforming language learning into value-oriented guidance. This process enhances their ability to perceive and grasp the deep educational value of the curriculum (Goh & Wong, 2014). Secondly, enhancing the ability to excavate ideological and political elements. Teachers should closely track current affairs and social issues, dynamically explore and introduce ideological and political cases that are contemporary and typical to students. This ongoing resource integration enhances teaching relevance, but boosts engagement in the reading class. Thirdly, developing reflective capacity. Imple-

menting curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education necessitates ongoing evaluation through diversified assessment methods like classroom observation, student feedback, outcome analysis. These assessments give evidence to scientifically evaluate goal attainment and strategic effectiveness, subsequently refining instructional design to establish a self-improving mechanism. This facilitates comprehensive summarization and critical self-reflection on implementation outcomes, where leveraging the principle of teaching-assessment integration enables pedagogical adjustments via diversified methods.

3.3. Student Dimension: Cultivating Deep Cultural Confidence and Patriotic Sentiment

The New Curriculum Standards identifies fostering students' cultural awareness as a pivotal objective, emphasizing the importance of understand outstanding global civilizations, discern cultural distinctions, develop cross-cultural communication skills, and deepen comprehension and identification with Chinese culture to establish a global perspective and firm cultural confidence. Within this context, integrating ideological and political education into middle school reading instruction delivers core value: through disciplinary practice, it effectively nurtures a sense of belonging and strengthens confidence, and cultivates their sense of responsibility (Bourke & Prendeville, 2020). This manifests in two critical dimensions: Firstly, deepening cultural understanding and inclusiveness. Through exposure to diverse texts, students systematically learn about Western customs and values, rationally discern cultural differences, and acquire respectful and open-minded attitudes that lay foundations for mutual civilizational learning (Luo Zhubin & Liao Xinli, 2023). Secondly, shaping competence in effectively telling China's stories. Based on the global context, English curriculum aims to cultivate new generation of the era who can effectively spread Chinese culture, which directly responding to The New Curriculum Standards' call to enhance the influence of Chinese civilization. It not only elevates national cultural soft power and international discourse influence but also cultivates youth capable of cross-cultural communication, thereby significantly amplifying the global impact and appeal of Chinese cultural dissemination.

4. The Significance of Integrating Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education into Middle School English Reading Instruction

4.1. Educational Dimension: Resolving the "Overemphasizing Skills at the Expense of Values" Dilemma

The fundamental mission of education is fostering virtue and cultivating talents (2022). The New Curriculum Standards establishes core competence cultivation as foundational, clarifying that English reading instruction is not merely linguistic training but a holistic process integrating instrumental and humanistic education,

knowledge transmission, and value guidance. Integrating Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education translates curricular principles into practice, addressing the essential question of “what to cultivate, how to cultivate, and for whom to cultivate.” This integration delivers dual benefits: first, reshaping reading instruction’s educational value by guiding students to comprehend China’s traditional, revolutionary, and socialist advanced cultures, thereby strengthening cultural confidence and national identity (Luo Zubin & Liao Xingli, 2023); second, resolving the imbalance between skills and values. Through systematic excavation and creative integration of ideological elements into all instructional phases, teachers achieve the intrinsic unity of knowledge and character cultivation, advancing students’ linguistic and ideological development.

4.2. Teacher Professional Development Dimension: Enhancing English Teachers’ Competencies

Under the framework of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education, middle school English teachers evolve from knowledge transmitters to value shapers and ideological guides. Enhancing their pedagogical competence requires development in three areas: recognizing educational value, analyzing ideological elements, and implementing pedagogical transformations (Zhang Wenxia, 2022). First, deepening cognitive competence involves analyzing texts to identify embedded ideological elements, such as cultural connotations and social responsibilities, transforming language learning into value-oriented education (Goh & Wong, 2014). Second, improving excavation ability entails tracking current affairs to introduce contemporary cases, enhancing teaching relevance and engagement. Third, developing reflective capacity involves using diversified assessments—classroom observation, student feedback, outcome analysis—to evaluate effectiveness and refine instructional design, establishing a self-improving mechanism through teaching-assessment integration.

4.3. Student Dimension: Cultivating Deep Cultural Confidence and Patriotic Sentiment

The New Curriculum Standards identifies cultural awareness as pivotal, emphasizing understanding global civilizations, discerning cultural differences, and deepening identification with Chinese culture to build a global perspective and firm cultural confidence. Integrating ideological education into reading instruction nurtures belonging, confidence, and responsibility (Bourke & Prendeville, 2020). This manifests in two aspects: first, deepening cultural understanding and inclusiveness by exposing students to diverse texts, enabling them to rationally discern differences and develop respectful attitudes (Luo Zhubin & Liao Xinli, 2023); second, shaping competence in telling China’s stories, cultivating a generation capable of spreading Chinese culture globally. This directly responds to the call to enhance Chinese civiliza-

tion's influence, elevating cultural soft power and amplifying the global impact of Chinese cultural dissemination.

5. Strategies for Integrating Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education into Middle School English Reading Instruction

For effective integration of Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education into English reading instruction, teachers must establish an integrated framework addressing what to teach, how to teach, and how to assess in the context of reading instruction.

5.1. Pre-Class Preparation: Teacher-Led Ideological and Political Instructional Design

In the pre-class phase, teachers should focus on goal orientation, element analysis, and resource development to lay a solid foundation for integration. Goal design must equally prioritize linguistic competence and ideological-political literacy, constructing a hierarchical system that aligns national educational objectives with unit and text-specific goals. For instance, in teaching a text like “The New Age of Invention,” objectives include mastering technical terms and comprehending textual structure (linguistic dimension), as well as analyzing innovations to internalize the spirit of innovation and patriotic responsibility (ideological dimension). Element analysis requires deep excavation of ideological-political elements within textbooks, accurately identifying integration points across thematic, cultural, and linguistic dimensions based on the three thematic pillars of Human and Nature, Human and Society, and Human and Self. Teachers should avoid over-excavation that leads to cognitive overload. Resource development involves integrating multimodal resources—such as documentaries, news reports, comparative visuals, and digital platforms—to enrich teaching materials and vividly present ideological-political content. For example, using clips from “China's Mega Projects” to showcase technological achievements, or digital human models for ethical discussions on AI, enhances learning engagement and contextualizes value guidance (Hu Jiaxin, 2021). Resource selection must align with dual-dimensional objectives, ensuring appropriateness, ideological depth, and timeliness.

5.2. In-Class Implementation: Three-Phase Competency Development Pathway Centered on Students

Classroom implementation should adhere to the Activity-based Approach, designing a three-phase pathway of Learning and Understanding → Applying and Practicing → Transferring and Creating to achieve deep integration. In the Learning and Understanding phase, teachers create thematic contexts, activate prior knowledge, and guide students to perceive textual language, structure, and surface-level value ori-

entations through strategies like skimming, scanning, and gist summarization. For example, in “The New Age of Invention,” students extract key information on inventions and identify textual structure through guided questioning. The Applying and Practicing phase focuses on transforming knowledge into competence through reasoning, analyzing, and internalizing activities. Students engage in communicative tasks—such as in-depth questioning, comparative analysis, and role-plays—to deepen value discernment and critical thinking. In “The New Age of Invention,” students analyze the author's attitude toward future inventions and design responsible invention presentations. The Transferring and Creating phase emphasize output beyond the text, where students apply learning to new contexts through speeches, creative writing, or role-plays, internalizing ideological-political elements. For instance, students role-play as “Young Inventors” to share innovative ideas, fostering innovation spirit and social responsibility (Nie Xilin & Lu Menghan, 2024). This three-phase pathway ensures the organic unity of language application and value internalization.

5.3. Post-Class Assessment: Establishing a Collaborative Developmental Evaluation Mechanism

A scientific and diversified evaluation mechanism is crucial for examining integration effectiveness and promoting teacher-student reflection. Evaluation content should encompass dual dimensions: linguistic comprehension and application, and ideological-political literacy (e.g., value understanding, cultural awareness). Evaluation subjects must be diversified, incorporating teacher assessment, student self-assessment, and peer assessment to fully leverage students' agency. Evaluation methods should combine formative and summative assessments, with emphasis on dynamic formative evaluation—such as using learning evaluation sheets to track growth in productive activities (Zhang Lina, 2025). For example, for “The New Age of Invention,” teachers can design an assessment sheet with indicators like accurate information extraction, analysis of implicit values, and demonstration of cultural confidence and patriotic sentiment. The effectiveness of evaluation depends on transforming implicit ideological-political literacy into observable and quantifiable indicators, enabling precise feedback and collaborative improvement of language ability and value cognition.

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