

Difficulties in Implementing Ideological and Political Education in High School English Continuation Writing Instruction and Corresponding Solutions

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Abstract

High school English learning is a crucial period for helping students establish correct worldviews, life perspectives, values, and noble ideological and moral qualities. The newly introduced question type in this year's college entrance examination—continuation writing—precisely enables teachers to integrate the concept of subject-based education into the classroom. This paper focuses on the implementation of ideological and political education in high school English continuation writing instruction. It provides an in-depth analysis of the current difficulties in implementing such education, including the forced integration of ideological and political elements, insufficient teacher competence, and an underdeveloped evaluation system. Furthermore, it explores the underlying causes, such as the challenge of integrating subject-specific features with ideological and political objectives, inadequate teacher training mechanisms, and outdated educational concepts. Based on these analyses, the paper proposes corresponding solutions, including thoroughly exploring ideological and political resources in textbooks, strengthening teacher training and professional development, and constructing a diversified evaluation system. The aim is to provide useful reference and insights for improving the effectiveness of moral education in high school English continuation writing instruction, thereby contributing to the realization of the goal of building a strong education nation.

Keywords

High School English; Continuation Writing; Moral Education; Instructional Design

1. Introduction

With the continuous advancement of educational reform, ideological and political education has become an important topic in the field of education. The National English Curriculum for Senior High Schools (2017 Edition, Revised in 2020) proposes that in English classrooms, teachers should help students "establish correct life perspectives, worldviews, and values, enhance their sense of social

responsibility, and comprehensively improve their humanistic literacy." At the same time, the curriculum also emphasizes the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, requiring that ideological and political education be integrated throughout the entire process of teaching and learning. As a key subject in basic education, high school English not only cultivates students' language proficiency but also shoulders the important responsibility of enhancing their ideological and political competence. Continuation writing, as an effective teaching approach, not only improves students' comprehensive English application skills but also provides ample space for the implementation of moral education. Nevertheless, it still faces many challenges in actual teaching practice, and in-depth research on its implementation difficulties and corresponding solutions holds significant practical relevance.

1.1. Background of the Study

High school students are in the critical stage of adolescence, characterized by rapid physical and mental development. During this period, as their understanding of society deepens and their social participation increases, their values and moral concepts gradually take shape. In view of this, there is an urgent need to strengthen the integration of moral education to prevent the occurrence of problematic behaviors (Zhang, 2024). As an effective English teaching approach, continuation writing has been widely applied in high school English instruction in recent years. We can make full use of this new question type to consciously implant several educational concepts into students' minds through cross-cultural language learning in classroom teaching, thereby progressively achieving our goal of "fostering virtue through education" (Zou, 2022). Continuation writing not only assesses students' comprehensive language application ability, creativity, and logical thinking skills but also provides ample space for the implementation of ideological and political education. It organically integrates ideological and political education with language learning, achieving a synergistic resonance between knowledge transmission and value guidance. Nevertheless, the implementation of ideological and political education in high school English continuation writing instruction currently still faces numerous challenges.

1.2. Significance of the Study

Conducting in-depth research on the difficulties and solutions for implementing ideological and political education in high school English continuation writing instruction holds significant practical relevance. From an educational perspective, it helps promote the effective implementation of moral education in high school English teaching, further improve the high school English teaching system, fully leverage the educational function of the English discipline, and achieve the educational goals of educating all students, educating students throughout the

entire process, and educating students in all aspects. From the perspective of student development, integrating ideological and political education into continuation writing instruction can guide students to establish correct worldviews, life perspectives, and values during the language learning process, cultivate their core competencies such as a sense of national belonging, social responsibility, and innovative spirit, and thereby lay a solid foundation for their lifelong development. From the perspective of national development needs, this research aligns with the requirements set forth in the policy document China's Education Modernization 2035—namely, to cultivate well-rounded socialist builders and successors who are developed morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and labor-wise—and provides robust talent support for building an education powerhouse and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

2. Difficulties in Implementing Ideological and Political Education in High School English Continuation Writing Instruction

Firstly, the integration of ideological and political elements appears forced, lacking both naturalness and contextual relevance. Gao and Zong (2017) proposed that "curriculum ideology and politics" is essentially a curricular concept. It does not entail adding a new course or an extra activity, but rather integrating ideological and political education into all aspects and stages of curriculum teaching and reform, thereby achieving the goal of fostering virtue through education in a subtle, imperceptible manner. This perspective emphasizes that "curriculum ideology and politics" functions as a curricular approach that attains educational objectives through a process of silent influence. However, in high school English continuation writing instruction, some teachers hold a rather superficial understanding of curriculum ideology and politics, simply labeling and mechanically attaching ideological and political elements to the continuation content, resulting in a disconnect between such elements and the original plot or theme of the text. For example, in continuation writing tasks based on everyday-life themes, awkwardly inserting grand narrative expressions of patriotic sentiment appears incongruous and out of place. Such practice not only fails to achieve the desired educational effect but may also undermine students' overall comprehension and appreciation of the text.

Secondly, Insufficient Teacher Awareness and Competence in Curriculum Ideology and Politics. At present, although the state has emphasized, from a strategic perspective, the importance of fostering virtue through education and implementing quality education, some teachers still lack adequate understanding (Cui, 2023). Many high school English teachers have long focused on the transmission of language knowledge and skills. Following the introduction of the curriculum ideology and politics concept, they lack a clear recognition of their own role

transformation and fail to fully appreciate their ideological and political responsibilities in the process of educating students. Furthermore, teachers' deficiency in their own ideological and political literacy also constrains the effective implementation of curriculum ideology and politics. Due to the lack of systematic training in the theories and methods of ideological and political education, teachers encounter difficulties in excavating ideological and political resources from textbooks and designing ideological and political teaching activities, making it challenging to skillfully integrate ideological and political education into continuation writing instruction.

Thirdly, the lack of a well-established evaluation system for curriculum ideology and politics. In classroom practice, teachers often overlook the positive role of evaluation, rarely engaging students in self-assessment or adopting diversified evaluation models (Li, 2023). Currently, the evaluation of high school English continuation writing mainly focuses on language expression and plot coherence, with little attention paid to assessing the attainment of curriculum ideology and political objectives. The absence of clear, operable evaluation criteria to measure students' development of ideological and political literacy in the process of continuation writing makes it difficult for teachers to judge the effectiveness of curriculum ideology and politics implementation, nor does it help motivate students to actively integrate ideological and political elements into their writing.

3. Reasons for the Difficulties in Implementing Ideological and Political Education in High School English Continuation Writing Instruction

First, the integration of disciplinary characteristics with ideological and political objectives is inherently difficult. The English discipline is strongly instrumental and cross-cultural in nature, with its teaching content largely involving foreign language and cultural knowledge. When integrating this content with ideological and political objectives that carry distinct ideological attributes, cultural conflicts and conceptual clashes are prone to occur. In other words, in high school English continuation writing instruction, there is inherent difficulty in merging ideological and political objectives with the characteristics of the discipline (Liu, 2023). Teachers need to invest substantial effort in identifying appropriate entry points so that ideological and political elements can be naturally integrated into instruction without violating the essence of the discipline.

Second, the teacher training system is inadequate. Although curriculum ideology and politics has received widespread attention, specialized training content targeting ideological and political education remains relatively scarce in high school English teacher training programs. The forms and methods of training are rather monolithic, mostly focusing on theoretical explanations while lacking practical guidance and case analyses, thus failing to effectively enhance teachers' competence

in implementing ideological and political education in continuation writing instruction.

Meanwhile, outdated educational concepts also constitute an important factor hindering the implementation of ideological and political education. Deeply ingrained traditional educational concepts lead some teachers and school administrators to place excessive emphasis on students' English examination scores, centering teaching entirely on the transmission of language knowledge and the drilling of test-taking skills, while neglecting the cultivation of students' comprehensive competencies and the long-term educational value inherent in curriculum ideology and politics. Consequently, there is insufficient investment in ideological and political education in teaching practice.

4. Recommendations for Implementing Ideological and Political Education in High School English Continuation Writing Instruction

4.1. In-depth Excavation of Ideological and Political Resources in Textbooks for Seamless Integration

China's Education Modernization 2035 emphasizes the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, requiring all disciplines to integrate ideological and political education throughout the entire teaching process. In high school English continuation writing instruction, thoroughly exploring ideological and political resources in textbooks and achieving natural integration is a key measure to attain this goal.

First, conduct in-depth textual analysis to excavate diverse ideological and political connotations. Wang Beilei et al. (2024) proposed that educational researchers and frontline teachers should employ various methods to explore both explicit and implicit ideological and political elements in textbooks, thereby fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, which provides theoretical support for excavating the ideological and political connotations of textbook materials. High school English textbooks offer a rich variety of continuation writing materials covering different themes and cultural backgrounds; teachers need to conduct in-depth analysis to excavate their multiple ideological and political connotations. In continuation writing materials related to campus life, teachers can guide students to consider how to demonstrate peer friendships based on solidarity, mutual assistance, and the positive, persevering spirit in confronting difficulties—all of which are manifestations of socialist core values in the school context. For texts involving traditional cultural themes, teachers can encourage students to inherit and promote excellent traditional Chinese culture while enhancing cultural confidence. For example, in a continuation writing task about traditional festival celebrations, teachers can guide students to delve into the cultural significance, family heritage, and national cohesion embedded in the festivals, enabling students to profoundly

appreciate the value of traditional culture while improving their English language proficiency.

Second, integrate contemporary hot topics to rejuvenate ideological and political elements. Thoroughly exploring curriculum ideological and political elements in textbooks and actual teaching, and closely linking ideological and political education with the contemporary context, helps students understand the application of ideological and political elements in real life and enhances their ideological and moral awareness (Liu & Lei, 2023). Combining textbook continuation writing content with current hot topics can revitalize ideological and political elements, rendering them more practically relevant. Against the backdrop of globalization and the Belt and Road Initiative, for continuation writing on the theme of international exchanges and cooperation, teachers can guide students to demonstrate China's role as a major country actively participating in international affairs and promoting shared development, thereby cultivating students' international perspective and awareness of a community with a shared future for mankind. In light of the current upsurge in technological innovation, for continuation writing on technology-related themes, teachers can encourage students to embody the spirit of innovation, rigorous scientific attitudes, and persistent pursuit of truth in their stories, stimulating students' enthusiasm for exploring science and technology.

Third, design targeted teaching activities to facilitate natural integration of ideological and political elements. Xu Bimei (2003) pointed out that teachers need to look beyond surface appearances to identify and address underlying issues. By carefully designing teaching activities, the excavated ideological and political resources can be skillfully integrated into continuation writing instruction. Regarding the organization of ideological and political education in continuation writing activities, conscious design is necessary, and attention should be paid to the multiple factors that promote students' ideological and political development (Wang, 2020). In the pre-writing discussion stage, teachers can organize student discussions centered on the ideological and political points of the text, encouraging students to share their views and experiences, thereby stimulating their thinking and deepening their understanding of the ideological and political connotations. During the writing process, teachers provide timely guidance, prompting students on how to naturally embody ideological and political elements in their continuation writing, achieving an organic integration of linguistic expression and value transmission. In the post-writing evaluation stage, feedback should be provided not only in terms of linguistic accuracy and fluency but also with regard to the depth and appropriateness of the ideological and political elements presented, guiding students to reflect and improve. Additionally, group collaborative continuation writing activities can be implemented, allowing students to explore together how to integrate ideological and political elements into their stories through communication and cooperation, thereby fostering teamwork spirit and correct

value orientations.

4.2. Enhancing Teacher Training and Professional Development

Yao (2022) pointed out that it is necessary to strengthen teacher training and enhance teachers' professional competence and teaching ability to better guide students in continuation writing. Integrating curriculum ideology and politics into high school English continuation writing instruction places higher demands on teachers' professional competence and ideological-political capability, making it urgent to strengthen teacher training and professional development.

To begin with, conduct thematic training on ideology and politics to enhance teachers' ideological-political literacy. Schools and educational authorities should regularly organize thematic training on ideology and politics for high school English teachers, systematically teaching theoretical knowledge of ideology and politics, such as the basic principles of Marxism, the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and the core socialist values, so that teachers can deeply understand the connotations and objectives of ideological and political education. Case analysis sessions should be included in the training, selecting typical continuation writing teaching cases to analyze how ideological and political elements can be skillfully integrated, guiding teachers to master the methods of excavating ideological-political materials and combining them with teaching content. Experts in ideological and political education and outstanding teachers should be invited to deliver lectures and share experiences — experts explaining the importance and implementation pathways of ideological and political education in subject teaching from a theoretical perspective, while outstanding teachers share their successful experiences in actual teaching as well as the problems encountered and their solutions, thereby broadening teachers' horizons and enhancing their understanding and practical ability regarding curriculum ideology and politics.

Secondly, promote interdisciplinary exchanges to broaden teachers' teaching perspectives. Encourage high school English teachers to engage in interdisciplinary exchange activities with ideological and political teachers as well as teachers of other subjects. Organize joint teaching and research activities to explore together how to implement curriculum ideology and politics in respective subject teaching. English teachers can draw on the teaching methods and strategies of ideological and political teachers—such as context creation, question guidance, and case-based teaching—and apply them to the integration of ideology and politics in continuation writing instruction. At the same time, they can exchange ideas with Chinese and history teachers to explore common ground among different subjects in ideological and political education and achieve resource sharing. Conduct interdisciplinary teaching seminars using a particular theme in continuation writing instruction, such as "inheritance of traditional culture," where English, Chinese, and history teachers each elaborate from their disciplinary perspectives on how to conduct teaching

around this theme, enabling English teachers to consider the integration of curriculum ideology and politics from multidisciplinary perspectives, enriching teaching methods and improving teaching effectiveness.

Lastly, encourage teachers to conduct teaching research and explore effective teaching models. Schools and educational authorities should establish special research projects to encourage high school English teachers to conduct teaching research on the implementation of curriculum ideology and politics in continuation writing instruction. Teachers can start from teaching methods, teaching resource development, and student learning effect evaluation, exploring teaching models suitable for student characteristics and actual teaching contexts. Teachers can investigate how to use project-based learning methods, enabling students to naturally integrate ideological and political elements in the process of completing continuation writing projects, thereby cultivating students' collaboration skills, innovation ability, and correct values. In the process of teaching research, teachers should continuously summarize experiences and lessons, adjust teaching strategies in a timely manner, and actively apply research findings to teaching practice, testing the effectiveness of the findings through practice. Research shows that by conducting teaching research, teachers can gain a deep understanding of students' learning needs and characteristics, better integrate curriculum ideology and politics into continuation writing instruction, and enhance teaching quality.

4.3. Constructing a Diversified Evaluation System for Curriculum Ideology and Politics

In the process of integrating curriculum ideology and politics into high school English continuation writing instruction, constructing a diversified evaluation system for curriculum ideology and politics is of critical importance. Such a system not only accurately measures students' development in the ideological and political dimension but also effectively promotes the improvement of teaching quality.

First of all, establish evaluation criteria that integrate ideological and political dimensions. Traditional evaluation of continuation writing has mostly focused on linguistic aspects such as linguistic accuracy and plot coherence. Nowadays, evaluation of continuation writing instruction should incorporate an ideological and political dimension. In terms of content evaluation, it assesses whether the stories students continue convey positive values. For example, in a continuation writing task on the theme of teamwork, it observes whether students embody qualities such as solidarity, cooperation, and mutual support. In terms of emotional attitudes, it examines whether students demonstrate positive feelings and a sense of responsibility toward the nation, ethnicity, and society. In a continuation writing piece about a campus environmental protection activity, if a student not only accurately describes the process of the activity in English but also profoundly expresses a commitment to environmental protection and a sense of initiative to

start with oneself, that student should receive a high score on the ideological and political dimension.

In addition, adopt diversified evaluation subjects and methods. Break away from the single teacher-evaluation model and introduce student self-assessment and peer assessment. In self-assessment, students reflect on how they have embodied ideological and political content in their continuation writing, consider how their own values have been expressed in their writing, and cultivate self-awareness and reflective ability. In peer assessment, students exchange ideas with one another, learning different expressions of values from their peers and broadening their thinking. Teacher evaluation, meanwhile, focuses on guidance, providing professional instruction and feedback based on the results of student self-assessment and peer assessment. For example, after a continuation writing task on the theme of inheriting traditional culture, students analyze in self-assessment whether their understanding of traditional culture is accurate; in peer assessment, they exchange ideas on how to better showcase the charm of traditional culture; and the teacher then evaluates from the perspectives of integration of language and ideology and politics, depth of cultural excavation, and so forth, thereby facilitating student improvement.

Thirdly, integrate process-oriented and summative evaluation. Process-oriented evaluation focuses on students' ideological and political performance throughout the entire process of learning continuation writing, such as their level of participation and intellectual engagement in classroom discussions on ideological and political issues, and their attitudes in group collaboration regarding value exchange and teamwork. Summative evaluation, in contrast, provides a comprehensive assessment of students' final continuation writing products. Over the course of a semester's continuation writing instruction, teachers can record students' daily classroom contributions to discussions on ideological and political topics, as well as their performance in group collaborative continuation writing tasks, as the basis for process-oriented evaluation. At the end of the term, based on the quality of the students' final continuation writing products, teachers can award comprehensive scores from the perspectives of language, plot, and ideological and political embodiment, providing a summative evaluation. By combining the two, teachers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the trajectory and outcomes of students' development in curriculum ideology and politics.

5. Case Analysis of Integrating Curriculum Ideological and Political Education into High School English Continuation Writing Teaching

5.1. Teaching Content

This section takes the reading text "The Freshman Year" from Unit 1 "Teenage Life" in the People's Education Press (PEP) High School English Compulsory Book 1 as an

example. The text primarily describes the challenges and confusions faced by the protagonist in high school freshman life, such as interpersonal issues with roommates and academic pressure.

5.2. Objectives of Curriculum Ideology and Politics

The ideological and political objectives of this continuation writing task are to guide students to appreciate the importance of qualities such as understanding, tolerance, and communication demonstrated by the protagonist in getting along with roommates, to cultivate students' awareness and ability to actively resolve conflicts and live in harmony with others in interpersonal interactions, and to instill the core socialist value of friendship (or "kindness").

5.3. Continuation Task

Students are required to continue writing the story based on the original plot, depicting how the protagonist, after a conflict with roommates, ultimately resolves the disagreement and improves the relationship through positive communication and earnest efforts. The length of the continuation writing should be approximately 150 words.

5.4. Teaching Process

Firstly, introduction and discussion. The teacher guides students to review the original text by asking questions such as, "What problems did the protagonist face in his freshman year?" and "How did he feel when he had a conflict with his roommate?" Then, the teacher organizes students to discuss in groups the question, "What do you think is the best way to solve such conflicts?" and encourages students to share their own views and experiences. During the discussion, the teacher guides students to reflect on the importance of understanding, tolerance, and communication in interpersonal interactions, thereby laying the groundwork for integrating ideological and political elements into the subsequent continuation writing.

Then, continuation writing guidance. The teacher presents students with a set of vocabulary and expressions relevant to the theme of the continuation task, such as "apologize to sb.," "understand sb.'s feelings," and explains their usage and meaning. The teacher then guides students to consider how to use these words and expressions in their continuation writing to describe how the protagonist actively resolves the conflict with his roommates. At the same time, the teacher reminds students to pay attention to the logical coherence and consistency of the plot, as well as how to naturally integrate ideological and political elements into their writing, such as the qualities of friendship (kindness) and understanding demonstrated by the protagonist in the process of resolving the conflict.

What's more, student continuation writing. Based on the teacher's guidance and the

outcomes of the group discussion, students independently complete the continuation writing task. The teacher circulates around the classroom, promptly addressing any problems students encounter during the writing process and providing appropriate guidance and suggestions.

Fourthly, evaluation and feedback. After students complete their continuation writing, the teacher provides them with an evaluation rubric for the continuation task, guiding students to engage in peer assessment and offer their own suggestions. Students then revise their own writings based on the feedback, continuously improving their work. Finally, the teacher invites several students to share their continuation writings with the whole class.

6. Conclusion

Through strategies such as deeply excavating textbook resources, strengthening teacher training, and improving the evaluation system, the implementation effectiveness of curriculum ideology and politics in high school English continuation writing instruction can be effectively enhanced. This allows the English discipline to fully fulfill its educational function, making a positive contribution to cultivating well-rounded socialist builders and successors who are developed morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and labor-wise, and thereby supporting the steady realization of the goal of building a strong education nation. Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations, such as its focus on a single textbook (the PEP edition) and the absence of quantifiable tools in the ideological and political evaluation system. Therefore, future research should extend to studies on multiple textbook versions and school-based curricula, as well as develop an evaluation scale for ideological and political education.

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