

# A Study on Curriculum-based Political and Moral Education in Public English Courses at Vocational Schools

Jia Zhang\*, Hongyan Leng

<sup>1</sup>Department of Basic Teaching and Research, Changchun University of Finance and Economics, Changchun 130122, Jilin, China

*\*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

**Copyright:** © 2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

**Abstract:** Public English carries significant moral education responsibilities as a core general education course in vocational schools. By organically integrating English teaching content with moral education, it achieves the unity of knowledge imparting and value guidance. The course should fully leverage its educational function by strengthening humanistic care and psychological counseling, guiding students to develop self-awareness, understand their responsibilities, and establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values, ultimately fostering well-rounded development.

**Keywords:** Vocational school; English Teaching; Curriculum-based Political and Moral Education

**Online publication:** 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the study

#### 1.1.1. The demand for the development of vocational education

Vocational education has provided crucial talent support for China's socio-economic development, with the modern vocational education system framework established <sup>[1]</sup>. As industrial upgrading accelerates, the demand for skilled personnel becomes increasingly urgent, making vocational education ever more important. However, current vocational education development still faces bottlenecks: as the main source of future skilled workers, vocational students need significant improvement in political awareness, moral cultivation, and socio-cultural literacy. How to promote students' well-rounded development through scientific teaching methods has become a pressing issue. This concerns both the quality of talent cultivation and the sector's social appeal and ability to serve economic needs.

#### 1.1.2. The demand for cultivating talents of the new era

China has entered a new socialist era that places greater emphasis on talent cultivation, where moral character

serves as a crucial criterion - as the saying goes, “ethics with competence make quality talents, while competence without ethics creates hazards.” Amid globalization and widespread internet access where diverse values collide, vocational students are precisely at the formative stage of adulthood with unconsolidated worldviews. Therefore, students must develop proper value judgment before entering society. Integrating moral education into curricula helps students recognize required professional ethics and standards. Incorporating moral elements into classroom teaching facilitates the development of correct worldviews and sound morality, ultimately cultivating talents who meet the developmental demands of the new era.

## **1.2. Definition of key terms**

### **1.2.1. Vocational school English teaching**

Vocational schools cultivate skilled workers for national development, requiring not only professional training but also specialized knowledge and technical skills tailored to industry needs <sup>[2]</sup>. As a compulsory cultural foundation course, vocational English adheres to the principle of “practicality first, adequacy as standard,” aiming to equip students with basic English proficiency and practical application abilities. By integrating China’s fine traditions and ideologies into teaching, educators enhance the exemplary, contemporary, and professional nature of education, thereby improving students’ humanistic and professional qualities.

### **1.2.2. Curriculum-based political and moral education**

“Curriculum-based political and moral education” refers to an integrated educational approach that synergizes all courses with political and moral theory courses through a comprehensive framework of all-member, whole-process, and all-curriculum education <sup>[3]</sup>. This approach incorporates moral education elements—including theoretical knowledge, values, and spiritual pursuits of ideological education—into various disciplines to subtly influence students’ thinking and behavior. As teaching facilitators, educators should artfully integrate these elements into instruction to achieve the organic unity of knowledge delivery and value guidance, helping students establish correct worldviews and cultivate well-rounded development through imperceptible moral influence.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Critical review of relevant literature**

Both domestic and international education systems place high importance on students’ moral education. In the United States, against a multicultural backdrop, although there is no unified education system, cultivating the American spirit among all citizens has always been the overarching goal of moral education. The school-based moral education curriculum in the U.S. includes civic education, character education, religious courses, and political and social systems, among others <sup>[4]</sup>.

In China, the construction of curriculum-based political and moral education was first implemented in Shanghai. After 13 years of exploration, Shanghai’s universities have established a trinity ideological and political education curriculum system, with political and moral education courses at the core, comprehensive literacy courses as support, and specialized courses as extensions <sup>[5]</sup>.

Regarding implementation, Gao <sup>[3]</sup> argue that the development of curriculum-based political and moral education should focus on three aspects: strengthening teachers’ awareness and ability in moral education, precisely identifying and integrating moral education resources, and improving teaching evaluations to form a scientific and reasonable teaching system. In terms of reform, Zhang Han <sup>[6]</sup> analyzed the current state of moral education in universities through questionnaire surveys and proposed suggestions such as guiding students’

thinking, innovating teaching content, and increasing the diversity of teaching methods. Overall, research on curriculum-based political and moral education is thriving, providing a theoretical foundation and reference for related studies.

## **2.2. Research gap**

However, there are certain limitations:

- (1) Existing studies fail to differentiate among various types of institutions and disciplines, with insufficient research on curriculum-based political and moral education in English education, particularly in public English courses at vocational schools.
- (2) There is a lack of empirical investigations. Most studies focus on macro-level design and theoretical elaboration while neglecting micro-level application and teaching practices. The perspectives of frontline teachers and students are often overlooked, leaving little understanding of how English instructors perceive and implement ideological and moral education in their classrooms.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Research design**

This study focuses on tourism majors (Class of 2023) at a vocational college in Jilin Province. First, it reviews literature on moral education and vocational English teaching to establish a theoretical foundation. Next, it analyzes current issues in integrating curriculum-based political and moral education into public English courses through questionnaires and teacher interviews. Finally, it proposes solutions by designing a teaching framework that incorporates political and moral education into course objectives, content, and evaluation, aiming to innovate and refine English teaching practices under this concept.

### **3.2. Research methods**

#### **3.2.1. Literature research method**

Systematically examines theoretical connotations, research progress, and policy requirements of curriculum-based political and moral education through databases and library resources to provide theoretical support for disciplinary integration.

#### **3.2.2. Questionnaire survey method**

Designs a tri-dimensional survey (English course awareness/curriculum-based political and moral education awareness/integration awareness) for vocational students. Data collected via Questionnaire Star is analyzed using SPSS.

#### **3.2.3. Interview method**

Conducts semi-structured interviews with English teachers, focusing on integration status, implementation challenges, and improvement suggestions to obtain frontline teaching evidence.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. Student-related results**

According to the survey results, vocational school students need improvement in professional competence,

vocational skills, and English proficiency, as well as in task attitude, work efficiency, and overall capabilities. While 60% of students are unfamiliar or only slightly familiar with curriculum-based political and moral education, and only 8.56% have a thorough understanding, 80% believe it is important, and 82% recognize its value for future career development. This highlights the responsibility of vocational educators to integrate curriculum-based political and moral education into various courses.

Students receive political and moral education through multiple channels, including homeroom teacher guidance, class activities, school lectures, and specialized courses, facilitating the incorporation of curriculum-based political and moral education into professional teaching. In public English courses, most students agree that integrating curriculum-based political and moral education benefits their careers and personal lives. They believe it enhances English learning interest and efficiency, strengthens patriotic sentiment, national confidence, social responsibility, and professional identity, while also fostering civility and proper values. Therefore, vocational educators should effectively combine curriculum-based political and moral education with English and other subjects to promote students' holistic development.

## **4.2. Teacher-related results**

Interviews with teachers revealed unanimous agreement on the necessity of implementing curriculum-based political and moral Education. They believe it not only helps students establish proper values and professional confidence, but also cultivates higher-quality skilled talents for social development. However, in practice, some teachers tend to apply moral education mechanically, with their understanding often limited to superficial interpretations, such as simply incorporating traditional culture or policy directives, rather than grasping its broader educational significance.

Regarding English courses, teachers identified several implementation challenges: students' weak English foundation requires prior language skill enhancement; instructors must thoroughly study teaching materials and analyze student conditions to effectively identify political and moral elements; teaching methods need flexible adaptation to student receptivity to avoid preachiness; meanwhile, teachers themselves need continuous improvement in both professional competence and political-moral awareness. Only with solid professional expertise and curriculum-based political and moral education teaching capabilities can teachers achieve the "subtle yet profound" educational effect, genuinely elevating students' moral level.

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1. Cultivating high-quality English teaching faculty**

Guide teachers to actively practice the "Four-Haves" good teacher standards (having ideals and beliefs, solid knowledge, moral integrity, and benevolence) and consciously pursue noble teacher ethics. In terms of teaching capacity, provide targeted and exemplary teaching guidance on curriculum-based political and moral education for college English teachers through various means such as online forums and training programs. Facilitate exchanges and collaboration between English teachers and political theory course instructors, creating opportunities for joint classroom teaching, theory study, and discussion.

### **5.2. Incorporating moral education concepts in teaching objectives**

While helping students gain international perspectives through Western cultural concepts, we effectively integrate socialist core values and excellent traditional Chinese cultural values into the English curriculum. Establish cultural confidence and cultivate Chinese cultural awareness. Beyond focusing on language

knowledge and skills, emphasize the underlying emotions, attitudes, and values in language learning to strengthen the timeliness, effectiveness, and ideological nature of English teaching.

### **5.3. Infusing curriculum-based political and moral education elements into teaching content**

Move beyond traditional English learning objectives to incorporate knowledge about China's national conditions, history, culture, and reform achievements. Enable students to correctly understand China's historical and cultural context while making objective comparisons with Western countries. Transform the purpose of English learning from cultural input to cultural output - using English as a tool to share China's stories, showcase its rich history, excellent culture, and reform achievements in the new era.

### **5.4. Reforming the evaluation system for English curriculum-based political and moral education**

The new teaching reform necessitates corresponding changes in evaluation methods. The effectiveness of curriculum-based political and moral education must ultimately be measured by students' sense of gain. Expand evaluation dimensions from purely professional criteria to include humanistic qualities and social responsibility, while refining the assessment of teaching activities and learning outcomes in regular evaluations.

## **6. Conclusion**

Public English is an important general education course in vocational schools, serving both academic and moral education purposes. By integrating political and moral education into teaching practices, it achieves the organic unity of curriculum-based political and moral education and professional knowledge instruction. The course emphasizes nurturing values, providing humanistic care and psychological guidance, helping students develop self-awareness, recognize their responsibilities, and establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. This fosters well-rounded development, shaping them into high-quality professionals.

## **Funding**

2024 Jilin Province Vocational and Adult Education Teaching Reform Research Project, "Ideological and Political Education in Public English Curriculum of Vocational Schools: Construction and Practice" (Project No.: 2024ZCY352)

## **Disclosure statement**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

## **Author contributions**

Z.J. conceived the idea of the study and wrote the paper. L.H.Y. analyzed the data.

## **References**

- [1] Sun S, 2021, The Chinese Approach to Modern Vocational Education System Construction. Educational Research,

42(5): 108–117.

- [2] Ministry of Education and Eight Other Departments, 2020, Action Plan for Improving Quality and Excellence in Vocational Education (2020–2023). Jiao Zhi Cheng, 7.
- [3] Gao D, Zong A, 2017, Curriculum Ideology and Politics: The Inevitable Choice for Effectively Utilizing the Classroom as the Main Channel of Education. *Journal of Ideological & Theoretical Education*, 2017(1): 31–34.
- [4] U.S. Department of Education, 2018, *Advancing Civic Learning and Engagement in Democracy*, Washington.
- [5] Shanghai Student Moral Education Development Center, 2022, *Annual Development Report on Curriculum-Based Political and Moral Education Reform in Shanghai Higher Education Institutions*. Shanghai Education Publishing House, Shanghai, 15–18.
- [6] Zhang H, 2024, A Multidimensional Examination of Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education in the New Era. *China Higher Education*, 2024(1): 45–49.

**Publisher's note**

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.