Strategies for Integrating Ideological and Political Education into College English Reading Instruction: A Case Study

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Abstract

The strategies for integrating ideological and political education into College English reading instruction are explored through a case study of *A Child's Clutter Awaits an Adult's Return* using the production-oriented approach. The comprehensive development of freshman non-English majors is addressed by combining English language learning with cultural and moral education. Key pedagogical innovations include comparing Chinese and Western concepts of maternal love, integrating traditional Chinese culture with contemporary political discourse, and incorporating personalized learning through students sharing their name stories. The results show successful integration that unifies knowledge transmission, skill development, and value formation. Students demonstrate greater engagement, stronger cross-cultural awareness, better critical thinking skills, and deeper appreciation for family values and social responsibility while improving their English proficiency.

1. Introduction

College English is a foundational course for freshman undergraduate non-English majors that aims to enhance students' comprehensive English abilities and foster ideological and political literacy.

The research examines Unit 2 of *New Horizon College English (4th Edition) Reading and Writing Course 1 (Ideological and Political Wisdom Edition)*. The selected text, *A Child's Clutter Awaits an Adult's Return*, depicts maternal love through a mother's behavioral and psychological changes after her daughter becomes an adult and leaves home. The theme resonates with freshman students experiencing similar life transitions and emotional challenges.

2. Overview of the Production-Oriented Approach

The Production-Oriented Approach (POA) emphasizes output-driven input and designs instruction around targeted learning outcomes. In the case study, the POA

integrates ideological and political education into English instruction, cultivating students' ideological literacy, cultural confidence, language competency, and comprehensive development while preparing them for globalized academic and professional environments.

Wen (2015) established POA's theoretical framework comprising teaching principles ("learning-centered," "learning-using integration," and "whole-person education"), teaching hypotheses ("output-driven," "input-enabled," and "selective learning"), and teacher-mediated procedures [1]. Wang (2021) applied POA to English major writing courses, integrating ideological and political education through driving, enabling, and evaluation phases to achieve unified knowledge transmission, capability development, and value formation [2].

Subsequent research has demonstrated POA's effectiveness across various contexts. Wen (2020) analyzed three experienced teachers implementing POA, revealing how teachers enhance student motivation through four developmental stages: exploratory, interpretive, innovative, and liberating [3]. Wen and Sun (2020) clarified production scenario design through four elements—topic, purpose, identity, and setting—identifying unclear identity as a common design problem [4].

Chen and Wen (2020) found that POA effectively improved nominalization instruction in academic English writing over one semester [5]. Tao (2021) used a "reading-speaking" mode with peer and teacher-student evaluation, significantly improving classroom participation and communication willingness [6]. Zhang (2021) constructed and validated a theoretical model for blended "golden courses" through progressively challenging tasks [7].

Recent studies have expanded applications of POA. Wang (2022) demonstrated significant improvement in blended online-offline teaching through experimental data from tests, surveys, and interviews [8]. Huang (2023) integrated diagnostic assessment into POA's cycle, helping identify gaps in oral expression and promoting assessment literacy [9]. Liang (2023) applied POA to doctoral academic presentations, enhancing students' ability to communicate with non-specialist audiences [10]. Nie et al. (2023) used POA in business English negotiation courses, facilitating knowledge transfer through flexible input material selection [11].

Research consistently shows that POA stimulates student interest through authentic scenarios and production tasks, improving reading and writing abilities while enhancing language application skills and academic writing awareness (e.g., Matsuda, 2017 [12]; Wei, 2024 [13]). The approach innovates teaching models, improves effectiveness, and promotes autonomous learning capabilities (e.g., Ellis, 2017 [14]; Wen, 2018 [15]; Wang, 2025 [16]).

3. Strategies for Integrating Ideological and Political Education

In classroom implementation, activities such as comparative analysis of "Chinese-style" versus "Western-style" maternal love, name meaning exchanges, and discussions all center on student output. The POA effectively stimulates intrinsic motivation, enabling students to achieve knowledge acquisition, skill development, and emotional literacy enhancement while maintaining engagement and significantly improving teaching outcomes.

3.1. Lead-in Activities

The lead-in session begins with a CGTN-produced multimedia presentation featuring "The Song Painted," introducing the theme of maternal love through Wang Qihan's fan painting—*Women and Children by a Lotus Pond*. Students observe and describe the artwork's scenes and emotional content.

The instructor guides reflection through key questions: "What emotions do you perceive from this painting? How does the mother's care manifest? What similarities exist between ancient and contemporary maternal love?" These inquiries establish that "emotions remain constant across millennia," emphasizing maternal love's timeless, selfless nature.

The digital exhibition includes modules for Companion, Folk, Performance, Beauty, Scholar, and Immortal, corresponding to different life stages. Wang Qihan's painting belongs to the "Companion" module, depicting a gentle woman in a pavilion attentively watching a sleeping infant, her eyes filled with concern and tenderness that exemplifies maternal love's delicacy. It enhances understanding of maternal love through

companionship while adding distinctive brilliance to pedagogical innovation.

3.2. Detailed Reading

The POA is used to facilitate students' comprehension of the text's structure and vocabulary while emphasizing key ideological and political dimensions. Students explore how the daughter's transition from dependence to independence reflects evolving responsibilities, guiding reflection on their growth toward personal, familial, and social responsibility. The mother's silent dedication—preserving her daughter's belongings and spaces—cultivates appreciation for family warmth and parental sacrifice. Her evolution from misunderstanding to accepting her daughter's growth teaches students tolerance and understanding in interpersonal relationships.

When discussing maternal concern, the instructor references Mencius's principle of "caring for one's own elderly and extending that care to others' elderly, caring for one's own young and extending that care to others' young," connecting traditional virtues of respecting elders and caring for children to contemporary society. This includes introducing the Four Books and Five Classics and stories like "Zengzi Changes His Mat on His Deathbed," demonstrating how love should extend beyond individual families to encompass society.

Moreover, textual themes are connected to President Xi Jinping's 2019 Spring Festival speech, emphasizing that "the foundation of the world lies in the nation, the foundation of the nation lies in the family." Students are also guided to recall the scene of National Day in 2024 where flag bearer Zhang Wei embraced his mother after completing the flag-raising ceremony at Tiananmen Square. This moment illustrates the perfect unity of loving family and loving country—demonstrating national loyalty through duty while expressing deep family attachment.

The approach exemplifies the university's integration of Four Cultures (China's traditional culture, revolutionary culture, craftsman spirit, and innovation-entrepreneurship culture) into ideological education, helping students develop proper values and moral perspectives. Furthermore, the examples show that patriotic sentiment serves as inner strength, inspiring service to the nation while cherishing family bonds, thereby practicing family-nation unity in their own lives.

3.3. Discussion Activities

The instructor presents video segments from CCTV's *Classics of China: The Travel Diaries of Xu Xiake*, highlighting the emotional bond between Xu Xiake and his mother, Wang Ruren. Students observe and record key information, then discuss how Xu Xiake's mother supported him, comparing "Chinese-style" and "Western-style" maternal love to cultivate critical thinking abilities.

Students engage in group discussions examining maternal love across different cultures, combining textual content, video observations, and personal experiences. Group representatives share findings while the instructor provides guidance.

The instructor contextualizes Xu Xiake's era, when "When parents are alive, do not travel far" was a dominant moral principle. Despite this, Xu Xiake pursued his ideals with his mother's support. Wang Ruren's encouragement represented emotional transmission filled with trust and understanding of her son's aspirations. She built a spiritual foundation, ensuring that he carried maternal warmth wherever he traveled.

In contrast, "Western-style maternal love" in the text emphasizes shaping independent personalities, encouraging children to leave family protection early and face challenges independently through more direct approaches. This comparative analysis cultivates cross-cultural understanding and critical thinking. Students recognize that both Chinese maternal love's implicit support and Western maternal love's direct promotion of independence originate from deep maternal love and expectations.

3.4. Idea-Sharing

Students share about their names' meanings, discussing the parental expectations learned from family members. Group representatives present to the class while others provide feedback. This activity deepens understanding of parental love while exercising English expression and fostering closer student relationships.

Names serve as unique identifiers carrying parental love and expectations from inception. They function as cultural codes where every Chinese character, radical, and pronunciation reflects careful family consideration,

containing cultural heritage, values, and hopes for children. Having students explore their name origins represents a journey into family emotional worlds.

During sharing, teachers and students hear moving stories. Some names contain classical poetry characters symbolizing auspiciousness and noble character, reflecting hopes for inheriting traditional Chinese cultural qualities. Others feature radicals with special significance, carrying wishes for positive life attitudes, or pleasant pronunciations with homophonic, beautiful meanings.

For freshmen from diverse geographical regions who remain unfamiliar with each other, this communication proves particularly valuable. Through sharing name stories, students gain a deeper understanding of classmates and find emotional resonance points, quickly drawing closer and creating warm, harmonious classroom atmospheres with humanistic care.

The instructor encourages English expression of name stories, effectively exercising productive skills and enhancing practical application abilities while experiencing maternal love. This achieves an organic combination of emotional education and language skill cultivation, highlighting this research's positive role in multidimensional student development.

3.5. Theme Elevation

Following student sharing, the instructor presents CCTV Spring Festival Gala's public service advertisement *Names*, guiding deeper contemplation of names' carried love and their relationship to family and personal growth. The instructor emphasizes that names represent life's starting point, carrying parental love, expectations, and cultural inheritance. Students are encouraged to cherish their names, appreciate parental nurturing, and strive to serve family, society, and nation.

Coinciding with the Double Ninth Festival, the instructor presents CGTN's bilingual video on the silver economy, directing attention to elderly people's lives and societal care for aging populations. The video concludes with Meng Jiao's *Song of the Wandering Son*, whose simple language vividly portrays maternal love's greatness, touching the softest places in human hearts.

Combined with CGTN's AI-generated video, these emotions become tangible, enabling students to transcend time and witness a mother sewing under lamplight thousands of years ago, experiencing maternal love's profundity and selflessness. This allows students to comprehend maternal love through literary and artistic cultivation while nurturing their spiritual worlds within rich cultural atmospheres, inheriting excellent Chinese cultural traditions.

3.6. Skill Enhancement

Following the video, the instructor explains key vocabulary, including CET-6 terms such as "elderly care models," "elderly care service institutions," "elderly care facilities," "elderly people," and "aging population." Students reflect on caring for elderly people in daily life, cultivating social responsibility and awareness of helping others. Through bilingual video learning, students improve English listening and translation abilities, achieving integration of ideological curriculum with language skill enhancement and coordinated advancement of knowledge transmission and value guidance. High accuracy rates on final examination translation questions regarding filial piety demonstrate training effectiveness.

3.7. Assignment Design

The assignments consolidate understanding of familial themes while developing expression abilities and emotional comprehension. Students first organize classroom discussions about name stories, then post them to the Chaoxing platform for peer interaction. They conduct video calls with parents, sharing university experiences, knowledge, and campus insights while inquiring about parental well-being and expressing sincere gratitude for continuous support.

Students write essays about memorable experiences with their mothers—maternal care during illness, encouragement during setbacks, or joy during achievements. This English writing exercise strengthens output abilities while helping students treasure maternal relationships through reviewing precious memories, making maternal love tangible, and creating lasting emotional treasures.

Students may also view maternal-love-themed films, experiencing warm or thought-provoking plots for subsequent classroom sharing that expands understanding of parental love through mutual communication and inspiration.

Through combining classroom content with assignments, students are expected to experience parental love from multiple perspectives while developing various abilities, internalizing familial warmth as spiritual nourishment for growth, and enhancing emotional and humanistic literacy, aligning with this research's focus on emotional education and comprehensive capability cultivation.

4. Pedagogical Innovations

By drawing on the universal nature of maternal love, some pedagogical innovations to boost student engagement and improve learning outcomes can be summarized. They include cross-cultural comparative analysis to develop critical thinking skills, multidisciplinary integration to expand students' knowledge and overall capabilities, and personalized educational methods that link emotional experiences with academic learning. A comprehensive learning environment can be fostered where students not only acquire language skills but also deepen their cultural understanding, emotional intelligence, and capacity for personal reflection.

4.1. Cross-Cultural Comparison and Critical Thinking

By comparing Western-style maternal love from the text with Chinese-style maternal love from supplementary resources, students develop cross-cultural communication awareness and critical thinking abilities. It enables students to perceive cultural diversity and commonalities while improving cultural literacy and analytical skills.

4.2. Multidisciplinary Integration and Comprehensive Enhancement

The research integrates English instruction with history, culture, and ideological education. Historical elements are introduced through "The Song Painted," ideological components through Mencius's teachings and President Xi Jinping's speeches, and bilingual videos on the silver economy enhance both economic knowledge and English skills. Students broaden their knowledge base while developing comprehensive qualities and well-rounded capabilities.

4.3. Personalized Assignments and Emotional Education

Personalized assignments exploring students' name meanings connect personal experiences to parental love and expectations. This integration of emotional education into English instruction enables students to experience family warmth while learning, strengthening emotional awareness and gratitude, and promoting holistic student development.

5. Pedagogical Reflection

The strategies successfully integrated ideological and political education into English teaching, stimulating student interest while enhancing language abilities and comprehensive qualities. Students actively participated in discussions, demonstrating deep understanding of textual content and ideological themes, experiencing maternal love across cultures and patriotic sentiments while developing critical thinking through cross-cultural comparisons and personalized tasks.

Future instruction can incorporate additional cases and examples, combining student experiences with social issues for accessible explanations. For group discussions, clearer advance specification of roles and rules, strengthened supervision, and timely problem resolution should ensure active participation. Regarding time management, more careful instructional design and reasonable segment allocation should ensure smooth completion and effective objective achievement.

6. Conclusion

The strategies successfully integrate ideological and political education into College English instruction, achieving unity of knowledge transmission, ability cultivation, and value guidance. The approach establishes foundations for cultivating students with solid English abilities and excellent ideological literacy, demonstrating potential for meaningful integration of language learning with moral and cultural education in higher education.

The research shows that integrating cultural elements, cross-cultural comparisons, and personalized learning significantly enhances both language acquisition

and character development. These findings contribute to discussions about effective foreign language pedagogy while addressing contemporary educational needs for comprehensive student development. Future research should explore optimal methods for balancing language objectives with broader educational goals, ensuring students develop the linguistic competence and cultural understanding necessary for globalized environments.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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