



# Exploring Reform and Innovative Models for English Teacher Education Curriculum within the Holistic Ideological and Political Education Framework

Miaomiao Dong

Department of Foreign Language, Qilu Normal University, Jinan, China

Email: dongmiao8877@163.com

**How to cite this paper:** Dong, M.M. (2025) Exploring Reform and Innovative Models for English Teacher Education Curriculum within the Holistic Ideological and Political Education Framework. *Open Access Library Journal*, 12: e14605. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1114605>

**Received:** September 25, 2025

**Accepted:** November 30, 2025

**Published:** December 3, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and Open Access Library Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

## Abstract

Grounded in China's national strategy of Holistic Ideological and Political Education, this study investigates the reform of courses and teaching models within English teacher education programs at the university level. Through questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews conducted in universities across Shandong Province, it systematically investigates the current state of ideological and political education within these courses. The research identifies that the key constraints preventing its development from a tangible presence to effective implementation are systemic issues, primarily difficulties in transforming teaching paradigms and the lagging orientation of the evaluation system. To address these challenges, this study constructs a teaching framework centered on the core principles of competency orientation, value leadership, and holistic integration. It innovatively proposes a 4A Project-Based Learning model (comprising Assignment, Analysis, Active learning, and Assessment), designed to organically unify knowledge acquisition, competency development, and value cultivation through project-based learning. Furthermore, a whole-process, multi-dimensional evaluation system is designed to resolve the longstanding issue of prioritizing knowledge over values in assessment. This research holds significant theoretical and practical value for enhancing the quality of teacher candidate development and fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education.

## Subject Areas

English Education, Teaching Evaluation

---

## Keywords

Holistic Ideological and Political Education, English Teacher Education Curriculum, 4A Project-Based Learning, Whole-Process and Multi-Dimensional Evaluation

---

## 1. Introduction

In May 2020, China's Ministry of Education issued the *Guidelines for Ideological and Political Education in All University Courses*, formally establishing its integration as a strategic measure to fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education [1]. As the primary pathway for cultivating future English teachers, the teacher education curriculum for English majors carries an especially urgent need for reform. It is imperative to achieve a deep integration of value shaping, knowledge impartation, and capacity building within its framework.

Notwithstanding the preliminary progress made by universities, three major challenges persist in practice: the often-forced extraction and superficial inclusion of ideological-political elements, a lack of depth in their integration with specialized instruction, and the absence of effective pedagogical models and supportive evaluation systems. To address these issues, guided by the Holistic Ideological and Political Education framework and focusing on the English teacher education curriculum, this study aims to systematically explore pathways and innovative models for its pedagogical reform. The ultimate objective is to enhance the practical effectiveness and overall quality of education within the ideological and political dimensions of the curriculum.

## 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Foundations

### 2.1. Current State of Research

Since the issuance of the *Guidelines*, domestic scholars have explored Ideological and Political Education in teacher training curricula from multiple perspectives. Scholars have analyzed its positive value, noting that it helps to deeply embed ideological and political principles [2], further develop the systematic construction of Curriculum Ideology and Politics [3], and establish a collaborative educational framework for teacher education within the Holistic Ideological and Political Education paradigm [4], alongside a systematic top-level design structure [5]. Basic pathways for its implementation have been proposed, suggesting teacher education courses as the vehicle through which ideological and political education is permeated throughout the curriculum process [6]. Further research has delved into refining the content of Curriculum Ideology and Politics [7], reshaping the objectives of teacher education programs, and reconstructing curricular content [8], reflecting a range of practical investigations [9] [10]. Overall, scholarly efforts have concentrated on value analysis, framework development, educational path-

way design, and teaching practices, providing a valuable foundation for this research. However, these studies are often characterized by insufficient empirical evidence and a lack of comprehensive, systemic solutions.

Although no direct conceptual equivalent to Curriculum Ideology and Politics exists in international scholarship, practices in general education, holistic education, and the implicit integration of values into disciplinary teaching such as in fostering intercultural communicative competence offer valuable insights for this study.

## 2.2. Theoretical Foundations

### 2.2.1. Theory of Collaborative Education

Collaborative Education Theory is a systemic educational philosophy. Its core principle lies in breaking down various barriers within the educational landscape. It aims to form a unified and organic educational force by integrating and connecting diverse educational resources, stakeholders, and processes, thereby achieving an optimal “1 + 1 > 2” educational effect. This theory emphasizes the participation of all members, the continuity across the entire process, and comprehensive integration, collectively constituting the macro framework of Three-Wide Education.

Building a multi-stakeholder educational community for all-member participation. This moves beyond the model where ideological and political education operates in isolation. It focuses on constructing an educational community involving teachers of ideological and political courses, English subject instructors, education discipline faculty, student affairs officers, renowned frontline schoolteachers, distinguished alumni, and cross-cultural education experts. This shift from isolated instruction to coordinated, multi-pronged engagement pools diverse perspectives and professional expertise to collectively empower the growth of student-teachers.

Systematically designing the curriculum for whole-process cohesion. The cultivation of professional ethics and teacher development is embedded throughout the entire training process for English student-teachers. Curricular design ensures seamless integration from core courses, such as *A Course in English Language Teaching* and *English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools*, to micro-teaching, teaching observation, and practicum. Value guidance is deeply infused into every facet of English teaching, like salt dissolving in water. This encompasses textbook analysis, instructional design, and classroom management, ensuring the sustainability and coherence of the educational mission.

Bridging the two classrooms for all-round integration. This actively promotes the organic integration of the small classroom of formal instruction with the large classroom of society. Initiatives, such as English language volunteer teaching, international cultural exchange programs, bilingual social practice projects, and Telling China's Stories in English are transformed into dynamic platforms for education. This allows student-teachers to practice professional ethics, deepen their understanding of the teaching profession, and enhance their sense of mission

within authentic socio-cultural contexts. Consequently, they internalize the values of the “Four-Good” teacher model, achieving a unity of knowledge and action.

### **2.2.2. Outcome-Based Education (OBE)**

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is a student-development-centered educational paradigm that takes ultimate learning outcomes as both its starting point and final goal. It emphasizes a backward design approach, where curriculum and instruction are reverse-engineered from the final intended student outcomes (outputs) [11]. This process establishes a dynamic evaluation-feedback-improvement assessment system, leveraging evaluation to enhance teaching, learning, and refinement, thereby elevating overall educational quality. Within English teacher education curricula, the OBE concept is systematically integrated from top-level design down to specific teaching practices.

Backward design of the curriculum. This process starts by clearly defining the ultimate outcomes: the precise competencies and qualities student-teachers are expected to attain upon graduation, including the aspiration to become regional key teachers and Four-Good educators. Subsequently, teaching content and methods are restructured, moving beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries to integrate knowledge modules around the core objective of cultivating future English teachers. Methods such as project-based learning, case-based teaching, and micro-teaching are widely adopted, enabling students to actively construct knowledge, develop skills, and internalize values through completing authentic or simulated teaching tasks.

Constructing a teaching implementation loop focused on outcome achievement. The 4A Project-Based Learning model proposed in this study serves as a quintessential vehicle for the OBE philosophy. Assignment: Defining specific project tasks that are explicitly aligned with the final learning outcomes. Analysis: Deconstructing the tasks to identify the requisite knowledge, skills, and ideological-political elements for achieving the outcomes. Active learning: Students engage in practice-oriented learning centered around the outcomes, ensuring the process remains tightly focused on the goals. Assessment: Evaluating the degree to which the outcomes have been achieved and utilizing the feedback for optimization, thereby forming a closed teaching loop.

Establishing a multi-dimensional continuous improvement evaluation system. A whole-process, multi-dimensional evaluation system for curriculum ideology and politics has been designed. This system emphasizes diversified content, procedural methods, and data-driven results, consistently asking, “Have students achieved the intended learning outcomes?” The data gathered is then used to drive instructional improvement. This continuous improvement evaluation system endows the curriculum with self-optimizing vitality, thereby effectively ensuring and enhancing the quality of teacher candidate development.

The Theory of Collaborative Education addresses the persistent challenges of the isolated instruction and fragmentation in ideological and political education by establishing an educational ecology characterized by all-member, whole-pro-

cess, and all-round engagement. This systemic approach provides an expansive practical arena and diverse stakeholder support for value guidance. The Outcome-Based Education (OBE), conversely, ensures the operationalizability and measurability of ideological and political education goals through its backward design and continuous improvement principles, effectively resolving the implementation and efficacy evaluation dilemmas.

Together, these frameworks form a comprehensive closed loop spanning top-level design to concrete implementation, and from resource integration to outcome assessment: the Theory of Collaborative Education constructs the macro-structure and implementation field for organic integration, while the OBE concept provides precise navigation and sustained optimization mechanisms for this process. This dual theoretical framework accurately addresses the core issues targeted by this study particularly the disconnection between philosophy and practice, and the absence of robust evaluation systems, thereby establishing a solid and appropriate theoretical foundation for developing a new paradigm in English teacher education.

### **3. Research Design and Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research Questions**

How can the organic unity of knowledge acquisition, skill development, and value shaping be achieved through the systematic integration of Ideological and Political Education in English teacher training curricula within the Holistic Ideological and Political Education framework?

#### **3.2. Research Participants**

This study selects instructors of English teacher education programs from universities in Shandong Province as its research participants. The investigation uses their perspectives as a lens to examine the current state of teaching practices in Curriculum Ideology and Politics.

#### **3.3. Research Methods**

To ensure both breadth and depth, this study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative strategies. Multiple data collection methods are used to complement and triangulate each other, enabling a comprehensive and in-depth exploration of the current teaching practices, challenges, and reform pathways for English teacher education curricula within the Holistic Ideological and Political Education framework.

**Questionnaire Survey:** Informed by a review of relevant policy documents and existing literature, a self-designed questionnaire titled Survey on the Current State of Ideological and Political Education in English Teacher Education Curricula was developed. The questionnaire encompassed sections on instructors' demographic information, their cognitions and attitudes towards Curriculum Ideology and Politics, teaching practices, assessment methods, perceived challenges, and support

needs. A sample of instructors teaching English teacher education courses in universities across Shandong Province was surveyed. 150 questionnaires were distributed, with 132 valid responses retrieved, yielding an effective response rate of 88.0%. The data were cleaned, subjected to descriptive statistics, and cross-tabulation analysis to systematically identify predominant challenges, resource gaps, and teacher competency development needs, thereby providing quantitative evidence for analyzing the current situation.

**In-Depth Interviews:** To compensate for the limitations of the questionnaire in probing underlying reasons and individual experiences, semi-structured interviews were conducted based on a pre-designed protocol. The interviews focused on instructors' understanding of the core concepts of Curriculum Ideology and Politics, their strategies for integration into teaching, assessment practices, and intrinsic challenges. Follow-up questions were posed flexibly during the interviews based on the respondents' answers.

Three instructors from different universities in Shandong Province, with significantly varying years of teaching experience (7, 20, and 30 years respectively), were purposively selected as interviewees. This selection aimed to capture the unique challenges and perspectives of teachers at different career stages (induction adaptation, professional maturity, and expert leadership), pursuing maximum heterogeneity and representativeness until thematic saturation was achieved. The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim to create textual data. Thematic analysis was then employed to code, categorize, and analyze the transcripts, with the goal of identifying key factors and underlying mechanisms that influence the transition of Curriculum Ideology and Politics from a tangible presence to effective implementation.

## 4. Research Findings and Discussion

Based on a comprehensive review and in-depth analysis of the questionnaire survey and interview data, this study identifies the current state and challenges of ideological and political education within English teacher training curricula. The core challenges are distilled into "Three Major Gaps", with the specific findings detailed below:

### 4.1. Established Conceptual Acceptance with Nascent Practical Exploration

Survey data indicate that the conceptual value of integrating ideological and political education into the curriculum has gained widespread recognition among instructors. Approximately 85% of the surveyed teachers considered it "very important" or "relatively important" in English teacher education, demonstrating a solid conceptual foundation. This high level of acceptance was corroborated in the interviews, as articulated by a mid-career teacher with 20 years of experience: "Curriculum ideology and politics is not an optional add-on, but an essential component in cultivating future teachers. It brings teacher education back to its fun-

damental purpose of fostering holistic development.” Concurrently, teaching practices show active exploration, with contemporary pedagogical methods such as case-based teaching and project-based learning being preliminarily applied. The integration of new technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, to enhance teaching has also become a focal point of teacher interest and experimentation. This marks a transition where curriculum ideology and politics development has moved from conceptual advocacy into a phase of practical exploration.

#### **4.2. Core Challenges: The “Three Major Gaps” Impeding Quality and Efficacy**

Despite preliminary progress, the deepening of curriculum ideology and politics from tangible coverage to effective implementation faces profound challenges, centrally manifested as the following “Three Major Gaps”:

##### **4.2.1. The Practice Gap: High Acceptance vs. Low Integration**

Quantitative data reveal that a significant 78% of teachers reported difficulty in “naturally integrating ideological and political elements with specialized content”. Interview data further illuminate this dilemma, manifesting in two typical forms in practice: the “superficial tagging” observed among senior teachers (e.g., awkwardly appending value-laden conclusions after disciplinary instruction) and the “mechanical superimposition” prevalent among mid-career teachers (e.g., simply bundling ideological-political objectives with disciplinary tasks). The root cause lies in teachers’ incomplete transition from the traditional role of knowledge transmitter to that of value guide. This failure to undergo a deep pedagogical paradigm shift means ideological and political education often remains an external formal attachment rather than becoming the inner soul of professional teaching.

##### **4.2.2. The Instructor Competency Gap: Strong Willingness vs. Weak Capacity**

The research identifies distinct, generation-specific internal challenges for teachers in advancing curriculum ideology and politics, constituting a competency divide. Survey results indicate that over 76% of instructors call for more systematic professional development support, which resonates with the stratified dilemmas uncovered in the interviews: senior teachers are constrained by long-established instructional path dependence, struggling to break away from existing teaching models. Mid-career teachers face a design bottleneck in sustaining innovation, often compounded by feelings of professional burnout. Early-career teachers commonly experience a lack of confidence in ideological-political theory and consequent classroom facilitation anxiety. As one early-career teacher with 7 years of experience conceded, “I recognize the importance of ideological and political education, but I worry my theoretical understanding is insufficient, making me hesitant to facilitate discussions openly in class.” This stratified competency dilemma highlights the absence of a systematic and targeted teacher development support system.

### **4.2.3. The Evaluation System Gap: Formative vs. Summative Assessment**

The evaluation system is identified as a critical bottleneck for deepening reform. 68% of teachers reported a lack of effective assessment tools. This sentiment was vividly captured by one interviewee who noted, “Our current evaluations primarily focus on teaching materials and student test scores. We lack effective tools to observe and assess whether values have been genuinely internalized by students.” Deficiencies in the current system include: reliance on single-point assessments like final exams, incapable of tracking the long-term and generative nature of value shaping; an emphasis on assessing knowledge reproduction and skill demonstration, making it difficult to measure value internalization and mindset change; and low weighting with ambiguous criteria for educational effectiveness within evaluation metrics. Consequently, the educational outcomes of curriculum ideology and politics cannot be scientifically measured or effectively incentivized.

## **5. Constructing Pathways for Teaching Reform**

In response to the core challenges identified in this study, a systematic reform plan aimed at propelling Curriculum Ideology and Politics from a tangible presence to effective implementation has been constructed, encompassing four dimensions: philosophy, model, evaluation, and support.

### **5.1. Establishing the Core Philosophy of Competency Orientation, Value Leadership, and Holistic Integration**

To address the practice gap between high acceptance and low integration, this study first establishes an overarching guiding philosophy for teaching Curriculum Ideology and Politics. This philosophy emphasizes a fundamental shift in curriculum and instruction from being knowledge-based to being competency-based. Guided by the ultimate learning outcomes of student-teachers, it positions value shaping as the soul and ultimate goal of the curriculum, thereby leading the entire process of knowledge impartation and skill development. This requires the organic unity and synchronized resonance of all three elements in instructional design and implementation, ensuring that the future teachers cultivated possess not only solid professional expertise but also firm ideals, convictions, and a profound sense of educational commitment.

### **5.2. Innovating the 4A Project-Based Learning Model as the Core Vehicle**

To translate the aforementioned philosophy into actionable classroom practice, This study innovatively proposes the 4A Project-Based Learning model. Grounded in the logic of Outcome-Based Education, the model creates an authentic context for the synergistic development of knowledge, competencies, and values through four interconnected phases. It is structured around a real-world project task: to design and implement an English cultural summer camp titled “Discovering Local Heritage, Telling China’s Stories to the World” for a rural middle school. The spe-

cific implementation procedure is as follows:

**Assignment:** Designing authentic, meaningful, and challenging project tasks based on the ultimate learning outcomes. In this case, the task requires student-teachers to integrate cultural awareness objectives, pedagogical content knowledge of English language teaching, and a sense of mission to serve grassroots education, culminating in a complete, actionable summer camp proposal. This establishes a clear learning direction that intrinsically integrates knowledge, competency, and value objectives.

**Analysis:** Guiding both instructors and students in deconstructing the project task to analyze the requisite core disciplinary knowledge, key pedagogical skills, and implicit ideological-political elements. Together, they dissect the knowledge needed (e.g., English expression of local cultural resources, principles of activity design), skills required (e.g., lesson plan development, classroom management), and implicit ideological-political elements (e.g., cultural confidence, national identity, educational equity), thereby clarifying the learning pathway towards achieving the value-laden goals.

**Active learning:** Engaging students in active inquiry and knowledge construction through collaborative research, simulated teaching, and field investigations. At this stage, student-teachers work in groups to research cultural materials, design teaching themes, conduct micro-teaching sessions with peer feedback, and coordinate with the target middle school. During this process, the instructor's role shifts to that of a facilitator and consultant, supporting students as they internalize professional values through solving authentic problems.

**Assessment:** Employing diverse evaluation methods for a comprehensive assessment of both the project process and outcomes, and establishing an iterative optimization mechanism based on assessment feedback. The evaluation system for this project incorporates formative assessment (e.g., records of group collaboration, iterative versions of lesson plans), summative assessment (e.g., final summer camp proposal, project presentation), and value-added assessment (e.g., student-teachers' reflective reports). The feedback gathered is subsequently used to refine the next cycle of project design, forming a teaching closed-loop of design-implementation-evaluation-improvement to ensure the continuous enhancement of teaching effectiveness.

### 5.3. Constructing a Whole-Process and Multi-Dimensional Curriculum Ideology and Politics Evaluation System

To rectify the traditional evaluation paradigm that overemphasizes summative assessment and knowledge acquisition at the expense of learning processes and value development, this study constructs a novel system integrating three evaluative dimensions: Formative assessment—Utilizing detailed classroom observation, project management logs, and embedded micro-assessments to provide continuous tracking and feedback on students' development of value cognition, level of engagement, and evolution of thinking throughout the learning process. Sum-

mative assessment—Reforming end-of-term evaluations by introducing simulations based on authentic teaching scenarios, in-depth reflective reports, and project outcome defenses. These methods focus on assessing students' depth of value internalization and their practical judgment abilities in complex situations. Value-added assessment—Establishing a Curriculum Ideology and Politics Growth Portfolio to document and appreciate individual students' progress and developmental trajectory relative to their own starting points. This approach aims to motivate the holistic development of every student, thereby achieving a more equitable and scientific measurement of educational effectiveness

## 6. Conclusions

This study has systematically addressed the reform needs for integrating ideological and political education into English teacher education curricula within the Holistic Ideological and Political Education framework. By constructing a theoretical framework of competency orientation, value leadership, and holistic integration, innovating the 4A Project-Based Learning model, and developing a whole-process, multi-dimensional evaluation system, it provides both a theoretical foundation and practical solutions for resolving current challenges.

This study has several limitations. First, the concentration of research participants within Shandong Province universities necessitates caution regarding the generalizability of its findings across broader national contexts. Second, given the policy-oriented nature of Curriculum Ideology and Politics, the potential for social desirability bias in both the questionnaire and interview responses must be acknowledged. Respondents may have been inclined to provide answers perceived as aligning with policy expectations, which could have introduced a potential influence on data objectivity.

Future research should expand the geographical scope of sampling. Furthermore, employing more anonymous data collection procedures, incorporating diverse methods such as artifact analysis, and integrating longitudinal tracking with action research are recommended to robustly validate the model's efficacy and facilitate its iterative refinement. At the practical level, it is recommended that higher education institutions strengthen top-level institutional design, deepen evaluation reform, and build systematic teacher professional development support systems. Consequently, a concerted effort can propel Curriculum Ideology and Politics from achieving mere tangible coverage to attaining profound effective implementation, thereby laying a solid foundation for cultivating "Four-Good" teachers in the new era.

## Funding

Research on the Reform and Innovation of English Teacher Education Curriculum under the "Holistic Ideological and Political Education" Framework: A 2022 General Project of the Undergraduate Education Reform Project of Shandong Province (Project No. M2022004).

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

## References

- [1] Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2020) Guidelines for Ideological and Political Education in All University Courses. [http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A08/s7056/202006/t20200603\\_462437.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A08/s7056/202006/t20200603_462437.html)
- [2] Zuo, J.N., Dong, S.S. and Li, Y.F. (2022) Exploration on the Implementation of Ideological and Political Education in Teacher Education Curriculum for Normal Majors in Universities. *Western China Quality Education*, **8**, 35-37.
- [3] Liu, B.D. and Feng, L. (2022) The Construction of an Ideological and Political System in English Major Curricula: Practical Dilemmas and Breakthrough Paths. *Technology Enhanced Foreign Language Education*, No. 4, 23-28, 112.
- [4] Fu, D.M. (2019) The Connotation and Contemporary Concerns of Teacher Education Curriculum Reconstruction from the Perspective of Curriculum Ideology and Politics. *Education Review*, No. 11, 106-110.
- [5] Liu, J.D. (2020) College Foreign Language Curriculum Reform under the Background of Curriculum Ideology and Politics. *Technology Enhanced Foreign Language Education*, No. 6, 38-42.
- [6] Pang, W.H. (2021) Exploration of the Educational Path in Teacher Education Curriculum from the Perspective of Curriculum Ideology and Politics. *University Logistics Research*, No. 5, 55-58.
- [7] Niu, D.H., Wang, G.L., Zhang, Y.F., et al. (2020) Research on Teaching Reform of Curriculum Ideology and Politics Based on the Background of the New Era. *Education Teaching Forum*, No. 35, 50-51.
- [8] Chen, X.M. and Zhou, B. (2022) Exploring the Integration Paths of Curriculum Ideology and Politics with Ideological and Political Courses in Universities in the New Era. *China Adult Education*, No. 8, 53-57.
- [9] Chen, M. (2022) Practical Exploration of Ideological and Political Education in College English Curriculum. *School Party Building and Ideological Education*, No. 16, 62-64.
- [10] Li, R. (2021) Construction and Empirical Research of a Precision Ideological and Political Model in College Foreign Language Courses in a Blended Learning Environment. *Language and Translation*, No. 4, 67-74.
- [11] Jia, J.P. (2022) Practice and Exploration of Law Curriculum Reform Based on the OBE Education Concept. *Journal of Changchun Normal University*, **41**, 137-143.