

Ideological and Political Value Mining and Teaching Paths of Western Classical Masterpieces in College English Reading and Writing Courses

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ABSTRACT

This work presents a review on the integration of ideological and political education into college English reading and writing courses by mining the ideological and political values of Western classical masterpieces. Through an analysis of domestic studies, this work summarizes the educational values of these works from the perspectives of humanistic care, freedom and responsibility, and moral ethics. It also discusses the interdisciplinary approaches and methodological characteristics reflected in current research. Furthermore, the paper reviews the teaching progress in integrating these values into reading and writing classes, including pre-class introduction, intensive reading, writing training, and post-class extension. It compares different teaching models across universities and regions, analyzes key influencing factors such as teacher roles, teaching resources, and student participation, and reflects on current research hotspots, disputes, and shortcomings. Finally, this study proposes future research directions, such as the integration of multimodal technologies, cross-cultural comparisons, constructing Chinese discourse systems, and improving long-term evaluation mechanisms. This study concludes that college English courses should organically integrate language learning with value guidance to achieve the fundamental goal of fostering virtue through education.

KEYWORDS

Western classical masterpieces; ideological and political education; college English; reading and writing; teaching path

1 Introduction

At present, higher education in China attaches great importance to integrating ideological and political education into various disciplines to implement the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. As a compulsory basic course in universities, college English reading and writing plays an important role in cultivating students' language application abilities and cross-cultural communication literacy. It is also an important channel for students to contact Western thoughts, cultures, and values^[1]. Therefore, how to explore the humanistic spirit and values contained in Western classical masterpieces in English reading and writing courses and effectively integrate them into teaching has become a hot topic in academia. This research is of great significance: on the one hand, it helps enrich the humanistic connotation of college English courses and cultivate students' humanistic literacy and critical thinking; on the other hand, it promotes students to establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values through value guidance, enhancing cultural confidence and social responsibility.

Based on the review of relevant literature, this work systematically summarizes the research status of ideological and political value mining and teaching paths of Western classical masterpieces in college English reading and writing courses. Firstly, it analyzes the research results of domestic scholars from the perspectives of humanistic care, freedom and responsibility, and moral ethics on the ideological and political values of Western classics, and discusses the interdisciplinary and methodological characteristics reflected in the existing research. Secondly, it summarizes the specific progress of integrating ideological and political values into college English reading and writing teaching, and sorts out typical teaching paths from four stages: pre-class introduction, intensive reading analysis, writing training, and post-class extension.

Then, it compares the teaching models of different universities and regions, and discusses key influencing factors such as the role of teachers, teaching resources, student participation, and evaluation mechanisms. After that, it summarizes the hot issues in current research and points out the disputes and shortcomings in the field. Finally, it proposes future research directions and teaching practice suggestions, such as strengthening multimodal integration, conducting cross-cultural comparison, constructing the Chinese discourse system, and improving long-term effect evaluation, and provides the conclusions and inspirations of the whole paper.

2 Research Status of Ideological and Political Values in Western Classical Masterpieces

2.1 Value Mining from the Perspective of Humanistic Care

From the perspective of humanistic care, domestic scholars focus on the humanistic spirit and sentiments contained in Western classical masterpieces. This type of research points out that foreign literary works often express profound

humanistic care through the depiction of characters' destinies and social realities. For example, British writer Charles Dickens's novels reveal the miserable experiences of the lower class during the Industrial Revolution, showing sympathy and compassion for the disadvantaged groups. These humanistic themes have become valuable resources for ideological and political education. Some studies emphasize that by guiding students to appreciate the compassion, equality, and love presented in the works, it can stimulate their empathy and social responsibility, and improve their humanistic literacy.

Generally speaking, the value mining from the perspective of humanistic care aims to cultivate students' quality of caring for life and others through literary classics, making the English reading and writing course better undertake the function of humanistic education ^[2].

2.2 Thematic Interpretation from the Perspective of Freedom and Responsibility

From the perspective of freedom and responsibility, researchers explore how Western classical masterpieces interpret the theme of personal freedom and social responsibility. Many Western classic works praise personal freedom and independent spirit, while also emphasizing individuals' responsibilities toward others and society. For example, in American literature, protagonists fighting for freedom often also take on responsibilities for family, nation, or morality at key moments, reflecting the balance between rights and obligations. Works such as *Gone with the Wind* and *A Tale of Two Cities* depict the pursuit of self-worth while also showing characters' choices and growth when facing family and social responsibilities.

Studies point out that through analyzing the plot conflicts and character choices in these texts, teachers can guide students to recognize the dialectical relationship between freedom and responsibility and clarify that "individual freedom must be based on social responsibility." This value interpretation helps students establish a correct view of freedom: to bravely pursue personal ideals while being willing to fulfill social obligations, integrating personal development into social development.

2.3 Text Interpretation from the Perspective of Moral Ethics

The perspective of moral ethics focuses on the in-depth interpretation of moral conflicts and value choices in Western classical masterpieces. Many Western classic stories contain strong ethical meanings: the virtues of positive characters are praised, while the immoral behaviors of negative characters are condemned. For example, French writer Maupassant's short story *The Necklace* shows the bitter consequences brought by vanity, warning people of the importance of honesty and integrity; Shakespeare's tragedies, through the moral choices of characters, highlight the price of greed and ambition, inspiring readers to reflect on the right path of life.

Through the ethical interpretation of these texts, teachers can guide students to think about what are the correct behavioral standards and strengthen their identification with virtues such as honesty, courage, and tolerance. Relevant studies point out that discussing the ethical conflicts and character destinies in literary works in English classes can help students reflect on their own values and enhance their moral judgment and character literacy. It can be seen that the value mining from the perspective of moral ethics achieves the organic integration of language learning and moral education goals.

2.4 Interdisciplinary and Methodological Characteristics in Existing Research

The current research on the ideological and political values of classical masterpieces shows obvious interdisciplinary orientation and methodological characteristics.

On the one hand, researchers often draw on theoretical frameworks from literature, ethics, education, and other disciplines to analyze the values of works from multiple dimensions. For example, some scholars use narratology, ethical criticism, and other theories to analyze the relationship between plot and values in novels; some also introduce psychological theories of moral development into classroom practice to observe the transformation process of students' values.

On the other hand, the research methods are diverse, including theoretical interpretation, case analysis, questionnaire surveys, and teaching experiments. Most studies are based on qualitative analysis, arguing the effect of integrating ideological and political elements through text interpretation and teaching cases; there are also a few empirical studies trying to quantitatively assess the changes in students' moral character and learning outcomes ^[3].

Overall, this field of research tends to integrate multiple disciplines, combining foreign language teaching with ideological and political education theories, and is mainly qualitative but gradually paying attention to data support. The use of interdisciplinary and diverse methods broadens the research horizons and lays a foundation for more in-depth and scientific empirical research in the future.

3 Research Progress of Integrating Ideological and Political Values into College English Reading and Writing Teaching

3.1 Pre-class Introduction and Situation Construction Strategies

Researchers generally believe that skillfully integrating ideological and political elements at the beginning of teaching can lay a good foundation for text learning. In the pre-class introduction stage, teachers can create situations close to the theme, raise guiding questions, and associate the core ideas of the works with students' life experiences or social realities, arousing students' thinking and interest. For example, before teaching texts covering the themes of "courage" or "honesty," teachers may play related short videos or quote famous sayings to introduce the values involved in the works; by telling a story similar to the theme of the text, they can create a scenario for students to preliminarily perceive the moral implications of the work. Through the above introduction strategies, students can initially recognize the theme of the text and resonate emotionally, and their classroom participation and critical thinking are significantly improved ^[4]. It can be seen that pre-class introduction and situation construction prepare well for the subsequent infiltration of ideological and political values and can concretize and contextualize abstract values, creating favorable conditions for intensive reading and analysis.

3.2 Value Penetration in Intensive Reading Analysis

Penetrating values into the intensive reading teaching process is the key link of curriculum ideological and political education. When leading students to deeply analyze the content and language features of the article, teachers consciously highlight the value highlights in the text and guide students to think and discuss. For example, teachers can set up questions around the moral choices in the story: "Do you agree with the protagonist's behavior? Why?" to encourage students to express their views and analyze the right and wrong in it. Classroom discussions, role-playing, debates, and other interactive methods are often used to let students exchange opinions on the life philosophy implied in the works and understand the value connotations from multiple perspectives. Some teachers also use the comparison method to compare the text situation with real life, guiding students to relate the values reflected in the story to their own experiences, deepening their understanding. Through the design of these intensive reading analysis sessions, ideological and political elements can be naturally integrated into the English classroom: students understand the language and content while receiving value guidance.

3.3 Writing Training and Value Reconstruction

The combination of reading and writing is an important way to cultivate students' critical thinking and expressive ability. After reading classical texts and discussing their value connotations, letting students reconstruct values through writing can further deepen the effect of ideological and political education. Teachers usually assign various writing tasks, such as writing reflections, commentary articles, or continuing the story from the perspective of a character in the work, to encourage students to internalize and output the values they have understood. For example, after learning a story on the theme of courage, students can write a short essay about their own experience or observations that reflect the spirit of courage, putting the qualities they felt in the work into words ^[5]. This writing process requires students to think about the connection between the theme of the work and real life, and to sort out and strengthen their values while choosing words and composing sentences. In the guidance and review, teachers focus on guiding students to express positive and correct positions and strengthen the value orientation through comments.

3.4 Post-class Extension and Practice Activity Design

To consolidate the value enlightenment obtained in class, the design of post-class extension and practice activities is also emphasized. Teachers often recommend extended materials related to the theme of the text (such as books, films, news reports) after class, encouraging students to read or watch them independently to broaden their horizons and deepen their understanding. For example, after studying a text on environmental protection, teachers may assign students to watch an environmental documentary or participate in a campus environmental protection practice and share their insights in the next class. Such extended tasks extend the value topics discussed in the classroom to real-life scenarios outside the classroom, deepening students' experience and thinking. As for the design of practice activities, it emphasizes the unity of knowledge and action: teachers can organize speech contests, debates, or social surveys, allowing students to express their opinions and take actions on the moral issues involved in the texts, and exercise their value judgment and social responsibility in practice. Through post-class extension and practice connection, ideological and political education extends from the classroom to daily life, producing a more lasting impact on students.

4 Comparison of Teaching Paths and Key Influencing Factors

4.1 Comparison of Teaching Models in Different Universities/Regions

Research shows that different types of universities have formed distinctive teaching models in integrating ideological and political education into college English reading and writing courses. Key universities, due to their strong faculty and higher student English proficiency, often adopt discussion-based and inquiry-based teaching, exploring the ideological connotations of the texts more deeply, with frequent classroom interaction; while some local universities, given students' relatively weak foundation, focus more on the transmission of language knowledge, and the integration of ideological and political elements is mostly teacher-centered, with relatively simple approaches. Regional differences also lead to variations in teaching models: universities in developed coastal areas have more convenient access to foreign cultural materials, often incorporating international current affairs and cross-cultural comparisons into teaching, highlighting a global perspective; while universities in central and western regions focus more on combining local realities and excellent traditional Chinese culture for value guidance.

4.2 The Role of Teachers and Teaching Resources

Teachers are the key to the implementation of curriculum ideological and political education, and their personal literacy and teaching ability directly affect the depth and effect of integrating ideological and political elements. Some studies point out that teachers' value recognition and integration awareness determine the effectiveness of classroom ideological and political education: teachers who actively engage are good at discovering the educational opportunities in textbooks and texts, guiding students to discuss value issues; while those lacking motivation or experience may only superficially integrate ideological and political elements. Some universities improve teachers' ideological and political education abilities through faculty training and teaching research activities, enabling them to better undertake the role of value guidance. Meanwhile, the richness of teaching resources also plays an important supporting role in curriculum ideological and political education. High-quality textbooks and extracurricular readings provide favorable conditions for integration—for example, in recent years, university English "ideological and political" textbooks with embedded elements of socialist core values in unit themes have been published, making it convenient for teachers to use directly. However, some universities still face the problem of insufficient teaching resources, and teachers need to develop or adapt materials themselves to meet teaching needs.

4.3 Student Participation and Evaluation Mechanism

Active student participation is an important guarantee for the effectiveness of curriculum ideological and political education. Only when students truly engage and think actively can value education be effectively implemented. Therefore, teachers need to adopt student-centered teaching methods to stimulate students' interest and sense of ownership, allowing them to actively express their views and share their feelings during discussions and writing activities. Some studies show that when students feel respected and autonomous in class, they are more willing to participate in value discussions and gradually internalize correct concepts in interaction. In addition, a scientific and reasonable evaluation mechanism also helps to promote student participation and test the effect of integrating ideological and political elements^[6]. At present, most universities mainly assess students' performance and assignment completion to evaluate their performance in ideological and political learning. For example, incorporating students' participation in discussions, the depth of reflection logs, and other aspects into the usual grades guides students to pay attention to value thinking.

5 Research Hotspots, Controversies, and Deficiencies

At present, the integration of ideological and political education into college English reading and writing courses has become a new research hotspot in education. Some frequently discussed topics include: how to construct an efficient curriculum ideological and political teaching model, how to cultivate students' critical thinking and cultural confidence, and how to develop multimodal teaching resources to support value education. Many studies explore innovative paths around specific teaching cases, such as using information technology to enrich ideological and political materials and incorporating elements of excellent Chinese culture into English textbooks to enhance students' sense of value identification. However, at the same time, there are also controversies and divergences in concepts and practices within academia^[7]. For example, some viewpoints worry that emphasizing ideological and political education too much may weaken the training of language skills, while another view believes that the two can promote each other; also, regarding certain content in Western classical masterpieces that are inconsistent with China's mainstream values, there are

discussions on the attitude teachers should adopt—some advocate focusing on the positive values and avoiding sensitive parts, while others advocate guiding students to think critically and embrace diversity. Overall, there are still certain deficiencies in the current research: first, many results remain at the level of theoretical discussion, lacking empirical data support, and the evaluation methods of teaching effects are limited; second, the research scope is relatively narrow, mostly focusing on case experiences, lacking comparative studies among different universities and student groups; third, the methods mainly lean towards qualitative analysis, and the overall research paradigm needs to be further standardized and diversified. These hotspots, controversies, and deficiencies point out directions for subsequent research, that is, the need to continuously test and improve the theories and methods of curriculum ideological and political education in practice.

6 Future Research Directions and Practical Suggestions

6.1 Deepening the Application of Multimodal and Technological Integration

In future teaching, more extensive use of multimodal means and modern technologies should be made to enhance the attractiveness and effectiveness of ideological and political education. On the one hand, exploring the integration of audio-visual segments, music, images, and other media into English reading and writing classrooms can enrich the experience of values through audio-visual combination; on the other hand, information technologies can be used to build interactive platforms, such as online discussion communities and virtual simulation scenarios, allowing students to immersively experience the ideological connotations of classical texts. In addition, intelligent technologies (learning analytics, big data, etc.) can also be used to monitor students' understanding of ideological and political content and changes in attitudes, providing timely feedback and improving teaching strategies. Deepening the integration of multimodal and technology requires teachers to have high digital literacy, and also calls for the development of more high-quality digital teaching resources.

6.2 Cross-cultural Comparison and the Construction of the Chinese Discourse System

In the future, it is necessary to strengthen the research of curriculum ideological and political education under the perspective of cross-cultural vision, and explore the path of telling Chinese stories and spreading Chinese values in English classrooms through the comparison of values between Chinese and Western classic works. This means that while using Western classic texts, teachers should also consciously introduce chapters of excellent traditional Chinese culture or contemporary Chinese materials, conducting comparative analysis with Western works. Through such cross-cultural comparison, on the one hand, it deepens students' understanding and tolerance of diverse values, and on the other hand, helps cultivate their cultural confidence and global vision. In addition, emphasizing the construction of the Chinese discourse system will also be a focus in the future. It is suggested to cultivate students' ability to explain Chinese value concepts in English, develop more bilingual teaching materials, embed concepts such as socialist core values and "community with a shared future for mankind" into English reading and writing content, and guide students to think about global issues from the Chinese perspective.

6.3 Long-term Tracking and Effect Evaluation Research

To comprehensively test the effectiveness of integrating ideological and political education into the curriculum, it is necessary to strengthen long-term tracking and scientific evaluation in the future. It is recommended to conduct longitudinal tracking of students who have received ideological and political education in English reading and writing, observing the development and changes of their values and comprehensive literacy during their college years. For example, regular questionnaire surveys, interviews, or situational tests can be used to understand students' recognition and acceptance of core values and their reflection in actual behavior. At the same time, quantitative evaluation tools should be improved, developing measurement scales for the growth of college students' moral character, and combining them with language ability indicators to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum ideological and political education. Future research can adopt comparative experimental designs, comparing classes with and without ideological and political integration, analyzing the differences between them in students' critical thinking abilities and cultural attitudes, so as to obtain objective data support.

7 Conclusion

Integrating the ideological and political values of Western classical masterpieces into college English reading and

writing courses has become an important teaching exploration. Existing studies have explored the rich educational connotations contained in Western classic works from perspectives such as humanistic care, freedom and responsibility, and moral ethics, and have constructed diverse teaching paths combining pre-class introduction, in-class reading and analysis, writing training, and post-class extension. By comparing different practices, it can be found that factors such as teacher competence, teaching resources, and student participation have significant impacts on the effectiveness of ideological and political integration. At present, academia not only focuses on utilizing new technologies and multicultural approaches to improve the effectiveness of ideological and political teaching but also reflects on the controversies and shortcomings in practice. In the future, it is necessary to test and improve the models of curriculum ideological and political education in broader educational contexts, continuously innovate methods, strengthen evaluations, and truly realize the organic integration of English reading and writing teaching with the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education.

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