

Integrating Value Shaping Into Task Design for Enhancing Ideological-Political Education in Foreign Language Courses

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The construction of ideological-political education within foreign language courses requires an integrated approach that encompasses value shaping, knowledge transfer, and competence cultivation. A critical challenge in this domain is the effective design and implementation of tasks that instill values, while also synergizing with acquiring knowledge and enhancing competencies. This paper delves into the philosophical underpinnings and operational principles of value-shaping task design and its practical application within the context of foreign language teaching. Utilizing *Contemporary College English (Integrated Coursebook 3)* as a case study, the paper explores value shaping-based task design in ideological-political education of foreign language courses, with the aim of providing references for the construction of ideological-political education in foreign language teaching.

Keywords: value shaping, ideological-political construction, foreign language course, task design

Introduction

The “Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Courses” explicitly emphasizes integrating value shaping, knowledge transfer, and ability cultivation to fulfill the task of fostering virtue through education, embedding value guidance in course teaching to help students form correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values (Ministry of Education, 2020). In the context of foreign language teaching, Xiao and Huang (2020) argued that ideological and political education in these courses should integrate value guidance with the impartation of knowledge and the cultivation of language skills.

Currently, the concept of ideological and political education has become deeply established among foreign language teachers and is reflected in their teaching activities. Teachers have a good understanding of the concept and the importance of ideological and political education in their language teaching practices. The imperative inquiry in contemporary higher education is how to seamlessly integrate value shaping, knowledge impartation, and language skills within foreign language courses to effectively address the pressing challenges in the development of ideological and political education. Using *Contemporary College English (Integrated Coursebook 3)* as an example, this paper focuses on value shaping-oriented teaching task design, discussing the principles and implementation of ideological and political education teaching tasks in foreign language courses. The aim is to explore the effective approach to ideological and political education in foreign language courses that integrates value, knowledge, and competence.

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Literature Review

Foreign language courses possess inherent advantages for ideological and political education, offering a natural platform for nurturing students' ideological and moral development subtly and effectively (Zhang & Wang, 2020; Shaaban, 2008). The effectiveness of ideological and political education in foreign language courses depends on teachers' recognition and integration of this education into their teaching practice to realize the "trinity" model of talent cultivation effectively (Xiao & Huang, 2020). To successfully integrate ideological and political education into foreign language courses, teachers should adopt a problem-oriented approach from an ideological and political perspective, explore the values conveyed through language, and uncover the ideological and political elements within discourse (Huan, 2020).

The teaching task design is crucial for teachers to deeply explore the ideological and political elements within foreign language courses, fully leveraging their inherent advantages for moral education. Meanwhile, it is essential to properly manage the relationship between teaching and learning properly. The concept of "task" in teaching naturally evokes the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach in foreign English education (Prabhu, 1987; Nunan, 2004; Long, 2015) and the Production-Oriented Approach (POA) with Chinese characteristics (Wen, 2015), both of which emphasize holistic education and learning by doing, with the former advocating a student-centered approach and the latter advocating a learning-centered approach (Bi, 2019). The author argues for a value-shaping approach to designing ideological and political education tasks in foreign language courses that is both student-centered and learning-centered. This means focusing on students' learning conditions, setting clear goals for their language and cultural knowledge, language skills, attitudes toward learning, and understanding of core values. It also means focusing on the learning process to ensure tasks effectively promote students' acquisition of knowledge, skill development, positive learning attitudes, and the cultivation of core values.

Foreign language teaching is a unique cognitive activity that involves instructors imparting language and cultural knowledge to cultivate students' language skills and facilitate their overall development. Effective learning requires the guidance and facilitation of teaching, naturally forming through the interaction between teaching and learning. Regarding value orientation and effectiveness, teaching guides the direction of learning and influences its outcomes. In specific teaching activities, instructors organize content and implement tasks to steer students' learning and development toward predetermined goals efficiently (Wang, 2012). The design of ideological and political education tasks in foreign language courses should create an ecological development system for teaching and learning, which embodies three relationships between teaching and learning through the construction and implementation of teaching tasks: teaching directs learning, teaching interacts with learning, and teaching facilitates learning.

Principles for the Value Shaping-Based Teaching Task Design in the Ideological-Political Construction of Foreign Language

Ideological and political education integrated into foreign language courses shares similarities with that in other specialized courses but also has its uniqueness, due to the embedded distinctive foreign cultures, values, and cultural ideas in foreign language courses (Xiao & Huan, 2020). It is essential that in designing ideological and political education tasks for foreign language courses based on value shaping, three basic principles should be followed: goal orientation, integration, and achievement. The principle of target orientation requires that task

design aligns with students' cognitive levels, being scientific, reasonable, progressive, and natural. The principle of integration emphasizes the need for task design to consistently promote the coordinated development of knowledge imparting, ability cultivation, and value guidance. The principle of achievement requires that tasks can be precisely implemented, logically coherent, and unify operability and challenge.

The integration of ideological and political education within university curricula constitutes optimizing the ideological and political content that focuses on national identity, patriotism, cultural literacy, and moral cultivation. The overall goal of ideological and political education is to internalize the core socialist values as a spiritual pursuit and externalize them as conscious actions. Guided by this overall objective, the design of teaching tasks should adhere to the cognitive development of students, establishing a hierarchical goal system for ideological and political education in foreign language courses.

The principle of goal orientation consists of three hierarchical objectives: understanding, believing, and practicing. Understanding is the foundation, emphasizing that task design should facilitate students' grasp of core socialist values through language learning and task activities, enabling them to articulate these values correctly. Believing is the advanced goal, emphasizing that task design should, based on students' understanding of the core meaning of values, stimulate their engagement in value reasoning, judgment, and selection, internalizing the core socialist values and making them the core of students' value system. Practicing is the higher-level goal, focusing on creating authentic communicative situations through task design to guide students in achieving language learning goals, internalizing values and externalizing them into actions, consciously practicing the core socialist values by changing their behaviors and positively influencing others.

The integration principle fully leverages the unique and implicit educational strengths for ideological and political education embedded in foreign language courses. Specifically, task design should first follow the principle of integrating values into learning and enhancing foreign language knowledge and skills within language input and output activities, allowing students to master the essence of values in authentic language learning and application. Second, task design should insist on triggering students' thinking imperceptibly through teaching tasks, enabling students to achieve unity of speech and thought (Zhang & Wang, 2020), embracing values that are genuine and practically applicable, and internalizing them into their value system. Third, task design should strive to enable students to integrate thought into actions and align words with deeds, starting with themselves and consciously practicing values in the process of learning and growing.

The achievement principle refers to the completability of task design should align with students' cognitive levels with appropriate difficulty levels. Firstly, teaching tasks should be authentic and natural, requiring that the materials provided are relevant to real life, and ideologically unpretentious yet imbued with the essence of values. The context and content of the tasks should be close to students' lives, enabling them to process authentic language information as much as possible, reflect on social phenomena, and engage in value judgments. Secondly, teaching tasks should be interconnected, requiring that the relationships and sequences of tasks be coherent in content and logic. Teaching tasks designed around the goals of foreign language courses and ideological and political education should be composed of multiple independently related activities with a unified goal and purpose. The difficulty of knowledge, skill, and cognitive condition of the tasks should progress step by step and rise in stages based on the three-level goals of understanding (speech), believing (thought), and practicing (action), with the completion of tasks leading to the achievement of teaching objectives. Thirdly, teaching tasks should be manageable, requiring that tasks match the course teaching, classroom teaching environment, and extracurricular

learning resources and environment to a high degree. To sum up, it is crucial to consider feasibility, completability, and challenge when designing tasks, aligning with students' needs and practical applications.

Teaching Task Design in *Contemporary College English*

The third volume of the series *Contemporary College English* features the emphasis on curriculum-based moral education, preservation of linguistic tradition, and enhancement of humanities literacy of students, further incorporating ideological and political education content aligned with the unit themes; the book guides students to develop correct values, fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. Drawing on *Contemporary College English (Coursebook 3, Unit 1)* as a case study, this paper delves into task design based on value shaping within foreign language education, aiming to enhance moral education in foreign language courses.

This unit revolves around the theme of “College Life and Growth”, delving into the transformations, challenges, personal growth, psychological development, and identity formation in early adulthood faced by university students, which contains rich educational value to achieve an organic unity between knowledge transmission and value guidance, thereby laying a foundation for students' personal growth and all-round development. In line with the value shaping-based teaching task design, the teaching task design should take fostering virtue and cultivating talent as its fundamental task, guided by the socialist core values at individual, social, and national dimensions (as illustrated in Figure 1).

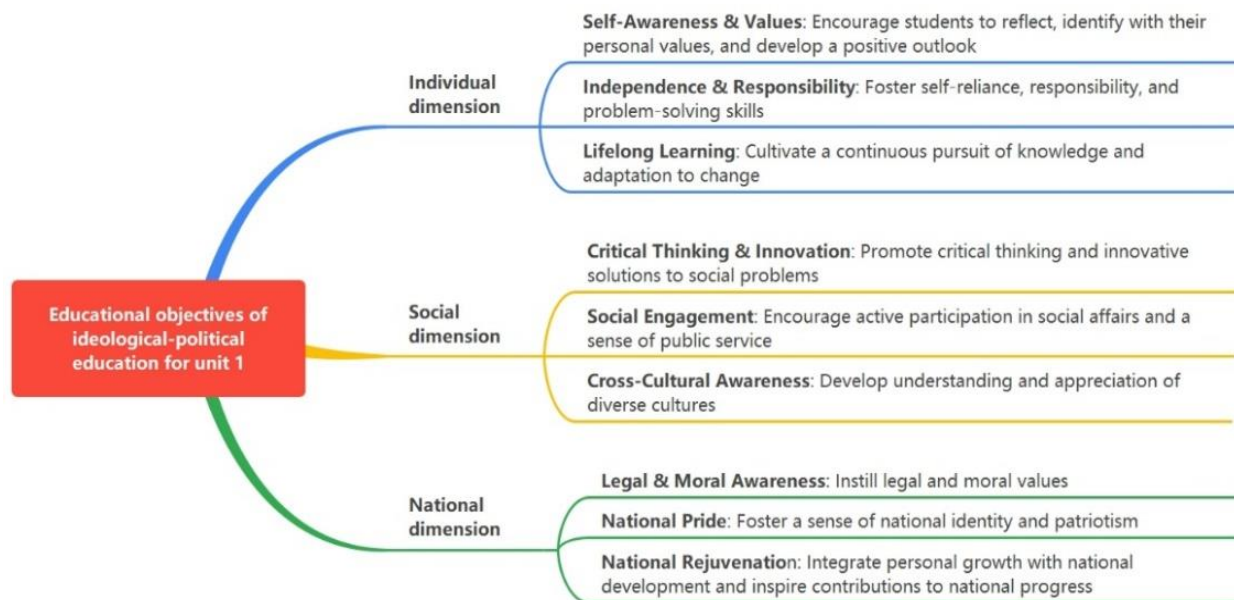


Figure 1. Educational objectives of ideological-political education for Unit 1.

The ideological-political construction of foreign language courses requires embedding value guidance in knowledge impartation and ability development. Taking Unit 1 of the book for example, the teaching plan consists of four sessions, totaling eight class hours, aiming to comprehensively enhance students' language proficiency, critical thinking skills, and cross-cultural competence through the deep integration of knowledge impartation and ideological and political elements. The teaching arrangement fully reflects a student-centered approach, ensuring coordinated development in knowledge acquisition, skill development, and value shaping

through systematic and goal-oriented curriculum design. Moreover, the task design should consistently align with the core value objectives and learning goals of the course, carefully selecting materials to ensure that task inputs integrate core values, ideological content, and language functions. Taking Unit 1 of the book for example, the design of this unit closely focuses on students' personal experiences of changes in university life and the exploration of identity. By employing a task-driven system with practical vehicles such as short video contests, writing assignments, oral presentations, and translation outputs, this unit aims to stimulate students' learning motivation. It encourages them to not only acquire solid language knowledge and skills while completing specific tasks but also enhance their critical thinking skills and deepen their understanding and identification with themselves, society, and the nation.

Conclusion

The fundamental task of education is to cultivate individuals with both moral integrity and competence. Constructing ideological and political education in curriculum is a crucial aspect of fulfilling this fundamental task, with the effectiveness of such construction hinging on teachers and their design and implementation of teaching tasks. Ideological and political education in foreign language courses requires teachers to consistently uphold a sense of value shaping in foreign language education and teaching, clarify educational objectives, and naturally integrate these objectives with teaching content, tasks, activities, and methods. This ensures a unity between knowledge impartation, ability cultivation, and value shaping, as well as between explicit and implicit education, thereby facilitating the coordinated development of students' knowledge, skills, and values. Enhancing the construction of ideological and political education in foreign language courses is a relentless pursuit of excellence and a never-ending endeavor. It is also a crucial responsibility entrusted to every foreign language teacher in the new era.

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