

# A Study on the Development of EFL Teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness in Higher Education Institutions

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**Abstract:** *With the in-depth advancement of the connotative development of higher education, the organic integration of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness with professional teaching has become an important pathway to fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue and cultivating talents. As a crucial vehicle for humanities education, college English teaching possesses the dual functions of value guidance and language proficiency cultivation, and the realization of this function depends on the systematic enhancement of teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching capabilities. Based on constructivism, humanism, and cross-cultural communication theories, this study demonstrates the theoretical basis and feasibility of integrating English teaching with Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness. It further elucidates the connotative characteristics of college English teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence and its core component system, which consists of value cognition, disciplinary transformation, and teaching implementation. Building on this foundation, a development pathway for college English teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence is constructed from three dimensions: the enhancement of teachers' professional qualities, teaching practice and reflection mechanisms, and institutional guarantees and resource support. This aims to promote the transformation of English education from an instrumental orientation towards the goal of holistic education, thereby providing a theoretical reference and practical framework for deepening the reform of foreign language education in higher education institutions.*

**Keywords:** *Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness; English teaching; teaching competence; teacher development; pathway exploration*

## Introduction

Amidst the backdrop of deepening globalization and increasingly frequent cross-cultural interactions, college English education bears the significant responsibility of disseminating the achievements of human civilization, cultivating students' cross-cultural communication skills, and shaping their value judgments. However, traditional English teaching has primarily focused on the training of linguistic skills, and its potential to guide values and foster humanistic qualities has not been fully explored. This has resulted in the discipline's educational function not being comprehensively realized. Consequently, promoting the deep integration of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness with English teaching and enhancing teachers' corresponding instructional capabilities have thus become an urgent necessity in the current reform of higher English education. This study systematically explores the developmental mechanisms of college English teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence from three aspects: theoretical construction, competence connotation, and development pathways. It aims to address the new requirements for English teachers' professional competence in the new era and to contribute theoretical support and practical guidance for constructing a talent cultivation system with Chinese characteristics.

## 1. Theoretical Basis and Feasibility Analysis of Integrating Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness into English Teaching

### 1.1 Theoretical Basis for the Integration

The integration of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness into English teaching is founded

upon a diverse and solid theoretical basis. Constructivist learning theory provides core support for this integration, which emphasizes that learning is a process where learners actively construct meaning, rather than passively receive knowledge. In English teaching, the cultural backgrounds, values, and modes of thinking embedded in language materials offer learners a rich context for meaning construction, enabling value guidance to be naturally integrated into the process of language cognition and use. Humanistic educational philosophy, on the other hand, argues for the necessity of this integration from another dimension, as it focuses on learners' holistic development and the realization of their potential, emphasizing that education should transcend the mere imparting of instrumental skills and touch upon students' emotional attitudes and personality growth.

As a humanities discipline, English inherently involves explorations of the shared destiny of humanity, individual existential conditions, and diverse cultural values, which closely aligns with the goal of promoting holistic human development. Furthermore, cross-cultural communication theory also constitutes a key theoretical foundation. Effective cross-cultural communication demands not only linguistic accuracy but also cultural sensitivity and a critical perspective. By guiding students to examine, compare, and critically assimilate intellectual resources from different cultures, English teaching can cultivate their cultural discernment and deep-seated cultural confidence. This process inherently involves the cultivation of value rationality<sup>[1]</sup>.

### ***1.2 Analysis of Feasibility Conditions for Integrated Implementation***

The integration of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness into English teaching possesses significant practical feasibility, with its conditions primarily manifested in three aspects: disciplinary attributes, teaching content, and teacher-student interaction. From the perspective of disciplinary attributes, English, as a linguistic discipline, is essentially a vehicle for thought and culture. The linguistic symbol system is inseparable from the socio-cultural connotations it expresses, which determines that English teaching cannot be detached from value-laden cultural transmission, thereby providing an embedded pathway for the integration of political and civic awareness elements.

At the level of teaching content, college English textbooks and supplementary materials cover a wide range of topics, encompassing literature, philosophy, society, technology, the environment, and many other fields. Numerous texts within these materials explore issues of universal significance, such as ethical choices, social norms, technological ethics, and ecological concerns. This content provides a rich repository of material for engaging in critical discussion and value exploration, enabling the achievement of integration goals through text interpretation and language practice without the need for external imposition. The aspect of teacher-student interaction also constitutes an important element of feasibility. Modern educational philosophy emphasizes the dialogic and generative nature of the classroom. By designing thought-provoking questions, organizing project-based learning, guiding in-depth discussions, and employing other teaching methods, teachers can subtly realize value guidance within equitable linguistic interaction and the collision of ideas. This process transforms the act of teaching into a journey of shared meaning-making for both teachers and students.

### ***1.3 The Inherent Logical Connection Between Theoretical Basis and Feasibility***

A profound inherent logical connection exists between the theoretical basis and the feasibility conditions, which together constitute a complete logical chain for integrated practice. The theoretical foundation addresses the question of "why integration is possible" from an academic perspective, revealing the essential relationships among language learning, holistic human development, and value formation, thereby providing directional and legitimacy arguments for integrated practice. The feasibility conditions, in turn, respond to the question of "how integration can be achieved" from a practical perspective, specifically elucidating the realistic pathways present within the inherent attributes of the discipline, existing teaching resources, and the dynamic teaching process.

The two mutually corroborate each other: practice guided by theory avoids blindness, while theory supported by practice gains practical vitality. For instance, the emphasis of constructivist theory on meaning construction directly corresponds to the rich meaning carriers within the teaching content and the process of meaning negotiation in teacher-student interaction; the humanistic goal of holistic education is concretized through the attention paid to emotions, attitudes, and values in language learning. This inherent logical unity demonstrates that the integration of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness into English teaching is not a mechanical grafting but an organic integration based on shared educational philosophies and disciplinary principles. Its successful implementation relies on a

profound grasp and creative application of the dual logic of theory and practice.

## **2. The Connotation and Core Elements of College English Teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness Teaching Competence**

### ***2.1 Conceptual Definition and Characteristics of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness Teaching Competence***

College English teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence is a type of composite professional competence. This competence specifically refers to the professional ability of teachers to organically integrate humanistic spirit, value rationality, and critical thinking dispositions into English subject teaching, thereby promoting the coordinated development of students' language ability and comprehensive competence. This concept transcends the narrow scope of mere linguistic skill instruction, emphasizing the guidance of students' value judgment and cultural cognition in the process of knowledge transmission<sup>[2]</sup>.

Its characteristics are manifested in a high degree of integration, requiring that political and civic awareness elements be seamlessly integrated with language teaching content rather than mechanically added; inherent transformability, requiring that teachers be able to translate abstract value concepts into specific teaching contexts and language activities; profound reflexivity, requiring that teachers continuously examine their own teaching behaviors and the embedded value orientations; and specific disciplinary grounding, requiring that its form of realization must align with the disciplinary attribute of English as an international lingua franca and the pedagogical principles of cross-cultural communication. This competence is built upon the multiple foundations of pedagogy, applied linguistics, and teacher development theory, constituting a new dimension of professional competence distinct from traditional teaching capabilities.

### ***2.2 The Systematic Composition of Core Competence Elements***

College English teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence constitutes an organic system composed of multi-level elements. The core layer of this system is value cognition and cultural understanding, which requires that teachers possess profound cross-cultural humanistic competence, enabling them to deeply understand and critically examine the value elements within both Chinese and Western cultural traditions and contemporary social trends, thereby forming a stable yet open value judgment system. The middle layer is the ability for disciplinary transformation and instructional design concerning political and civic awareness elements, specifically referring to the teacher's capability to identify, explore, and refine these elements from English teaching materials by integrating them with language points, as well as the ability to design teaching plans that seamlessly connect language objectives with competence cultivation goals.

The outermost layer is the ability for teaching implementation and guidance, encompassing the use of classroom discourse, the organization of critical discussions, skills for guiding discussions on value-laden topics, and the pedagogical wisdom to seize educational opportunities during teacher-student interaction, providing guidance that is timely, appropriate, and measured. These three levels, progressing from the inner core outward and from concept to action, together constitute a dynamically balanced and mutually supportive competence structure, which can be vividly illustrated by the "onion model".

### ***2.3 The Synergistic Relationship Between Competence Connotation and Educational Objectives***

A profound synergistic relationship exists between the connotation of college English teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence and the educational objectives it serves. The objective of modern higher education is to cultivate composite talents equipped with professional knowledge, international perspectives, sound character, and a sense of social responsibility. Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence serves as the specific pathway and professional guarantee for achieving this high-level objective within the field of English education. By exercising this competence, teachers enable English education to transition from a purely instrumental orientation to a holistic education that integrates humanistic and educational dimensions, ensuring that the enhancement of language skills and the holistic development of students proceed in tandem<sup>[3]</sup>.

This synergistic relationship is manifested in the consistency of their goals, meaning that the ultimate aim of competence development aligns perfectly with the objectives of cultivating students' comprehensive competence. It is also reflected in the unity of their process, where the very act of exercising this competence is itself the teaching process that realizes the educational objectives. An in-depth understanding of the competence's connotation and the systematic construction of its core elements provide a theoretical perspective and practical framework for examining and optimizing the educational effectiveness of English courses, ensuring that teaching activities consistently operate along the trajectory of holistic education.

### **3. Exploration of Development Pathways for College English Teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness Teaching Competence**

#### ***3.1 Pathway Design for Enhancing Teachers' Professional Competence***

##### ***3.1.1 Systematic Construction of Theoretical Foundations and Knowledge Structures***

The enhancement of teachers' professional competence must be built upon a systematic theoretical foundation and a diversified knowledge structure. This process requires that teachers transcend the traditional perspective of language teaching and develop a deep understanding of the specific connotations of constructivist learning theory, cross-cultural communication theory, and holistic education philosophy within the context of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness. Teachers need to construct an interdisciplinary knowledge network integrating applied linguistics, comparative literature, philosophical ethics, educational psychology, and other related fields, thereby forming a systematic understanding of the principles and methods of value education. This knowledge construction should not remain at the theoretical level but should emphasize its organic integration with the specific characteristics of the English discipline, enabling teachers to possess the theoretical insight to identify, analyze, and interpret value elements within language materials. Simultaneously, teachers should continuously update their cognitive schemas through sustained academic reading, thematic seminars, and interdisciplinary dialogue, establishing a conceptual framework capable of flexibly responding to complex teaching situations, thereby providing solid theoretical support for Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching practice<sup>[4]</sup>.

##### ***3.1.2 A Specialized Cultivation Mechanism for Teaching Transformation Competence***

Building upon a solid theoretical foundation, a specialized cultivation mechanism for teaching transformation competence needs to be established. The core of this mechanism lies in developing teachers' professional ability to translate abstract value concepts into concrete teaching practices. Through the design of a series of thematic workshops focused on in-depth textbook analysis, teaching case development, and classroom activity design, teachers can be guided to master the methodology for organically integrating political and civic awareness elements into all aspects of teaching, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This cultivation should emphasize contextuality and generativity. Through formats such as micro-teaching, peer observation, and expert feedback, teachers can continuously refine their instructional design skills in simulated and real teaching scenarios, thereby forming their own distinctive pedagogical wisdom and style. The cultivation process should pay particular attention to developing teachers' "teaching transformation thinking"-a habitual way of thinking that enables them to establish organic connections between linguistic knowledge points and value dimensions, and to design naturally flowing teaching sequences. This is key to bridging the gap between the concept of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching and its practical implementation.

##### ***3.1.3 The Sustained Nourishing Role of Professional Learning Communities***

The continuous enhancement of teachers' professional competence relies on the nurturing and support of professional learning communities. Constructing interdisciplinary and cross-departmental teacher development communities can provide sustainable academic support and an enabling environment for the growth of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence. Through regular teaching salons, collective lesson preparation, collaborative research projects, and experience sharing, such communities facilitate the flow of tacit knowledge and the diffusion of teaching innovations. Within the interactions of the community, teachers continuously reconstruct their teaching cognition through ongoing dialogue and reflection, developing a deeper understanding of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching. This enables a transformation in their professional growth trajectory from passive implementation to active innovation. The construction of

professional learning communities should emphasize the heterogeneity and complementarity of members. By involving teachers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds and with varied teaching experiences, a more dynamic space for dialogue can be created, stimulating more creative teaching ideas and solutions.

### ***3.2 Strategies for Advancing Teaching Practice and Reflection***

#### ***3.2.1 A Cycle of Teaching Improvement Based on Action Research***

The substantive development of teaching competence requires the construction of a continuous cycle of professional improvement through action research. The action research model encourages teachers to examine their own teaching practices from a researcher's perspective, systematically engaging in planning, action, observation, and reflection to address specific issues encountered in the process of integrating Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness<sup>[5]</sup>. This process enables teachers to continuously adjust and optimize their teaching strategies based on classroom evidence, thereby forming personalized teaching methods. Action research not only solves practical problems in teaching but also cultivates teachers' critical thinking and autonomous development ability, anchoring teaching improvement in systematic inquiry rather than experiential intuition.

#### ***3.2.2 The Establishment and Application of a Multi-dimensional Reflection Framework***

Deepening teaching reflection necessitates the establishment of a systematic, multi-dimensional reflection framework. This framework should encompass multiple dimensions, including the selection of teaching content, the design of teaching activities, the process of classroom interaction, and the outcomes of student learning. Through tools such as teaching journals, video case analysis, and analysis of student feedback, teachers can be guided to conduct a structured and in-depth examination of their teaching practices. This process should particularly promote teachers' deep thinking about the relationships among the methods of value guidance in teaching, student responses, and teaching effectiveness, thereby continuously enhancing the rationality and educational significance of their teaching decisions. This enables a professional ascent from technical practice to reflective practice.

#### ***3.2.3 The Construction of a Collaborative Professional Development Model***

Constructing a collaborative professional development model represents an important strategy for advancing teaching practice and reflection. By establishing collaborative mechanisms such as lesson study groups and teaching innovation teams, the limitations of individual teacher reflection can be overcome, thereby forming collective professional wisdom. Within these collaborative bodies, teachers observe classroom teaching together, analyze teaching cases, and discuss teaching issues, thereby gaining inspiration and support from multiple perspectives. This collaboration not only promotes the sharing and innovation of teaching knowledge but also constructs a professional discourse system concerning Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching through sustained professional dialogue, providing rich social support for the development of individual teachers' competence.

### ***3.3 Developmental Mechanisms for Institutional Guarantee and Resource Support***

#### ***3.3.1 The Construction of a Systematic Evaluation and Incentive System***

Establishing a systematic evaluation and incentive system constitutes a foundational condition for guaranteeing the development of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence. This system should integrate this teaching competence into the evaluation framework for teachers' professional development, assigning it clear weightage in processes such as professional title promotion, performance assessment, and honor recognition. The evaluation criteria should balance both the teaching process and its outcomes, focusing on the quality of teaching innovations and the depth of student development, while avoiding simplistic quantitative assessments. Through institutional recognition and incentives, teachers can be guided to internalize the development of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence as a conscious professional pursuit, thereby generating intrinsic motivation for continuous growth. This ensures, at an institutional level, the priority and sustainability of this professional competence development<sup>[6]</sup>.

#### ***3.3.2 The Establishment of a Specialized Resource Support Platform***

Constructing a multi-dimensional, specialized resource support platform provides the necessary material and technical support for the development of teachers' competence. This platform should encompass multiple modules, including a curriculum development support system, the construction of

a teaching resource repository, and teaching technology support services. Particular emphasis should be placed on developing high-quality case libraries, material repositories, and instructional design databases, providing teachers with exemplary resources that can be referenced and adapted. Simultaneously, an advisory and guidance team composed of subject matter experts and educational specialists should be established to offer personalized professional support to teachers. This comprehensive resource support can significantly reduce the difficulty of teacher exploration and enhance the quality and efficiency of teaching innovation.

### **3.3.3 The Shaping of Long-term Development Mechanisms and Organizational Culture**

The sustained development of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence requires the establishment of long-term development mechanisms and the cultivation of a corresponding organizational culture. Through diversified measures such as establishing special teaching reform projects, organizing teaching achievement exhibitions and exchanges, and creating teaching innovation incentive mechanisms, an organizational atmosphere that values the scholarship of teaching and encourages teaching innovation can be fostered. Simultaneously, strategic planning at the institutional level should be strengthened by integrating the development of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence into the overall framework of faculty development, thereby ensuring the stability of related investments and support. This synergistic construction of an institutional environment and organizational culture can provide teachers with broad development space and sustained professional motivation, ultimately forming a healthy ecosystem for the development of Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence.

## **Conclusion**

The development of college English teachers' Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness teaching competence constitutes a systematic project involving theoretical construction, competence reshaping, and institutional innovation. By elucidating the theoretical logic and practical pathways for integrating Curriculum-based Political and Civic Awareness into English teaching, this study has constructed a competence structure model with value cognition as its core, teaching transformation as its key element, and implementation guidance as its explicit manifestation. It further proposes the synergistic promotion of teacher competence enhancement through systematic professional development, reflective practice communities, and institutional support mechanisms. Future research could further explore the differentiated pathways of teacher competence development in diverse institutional contexts, examine new forms of integrating political and civic awareness elements with English teaching in the context of digital transformation in education, and conduct in-depth assessments of the actual impact of competence development on students' holistic competence formation. This would contribute to the continuous refinement of the theoretical framework and practical models for college English teacher development.

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