



# From Formal Training to Endogenous Awakening: A Study on the Construction Path of Ideological and Political Competence for Higher Vocational College English Teachers

Yusu Wang

Foreign Language Teaching Department, Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou 571126, Hainan, China.

**How to cite this paper:** Yusu Wang. (2026). From Formal Training to Endogenous Awakening: A Study on the Construction Path of Ideological and Political Competence for Higher Vocational College English Teachers. *The Educational Review, USA*, 10(3), 116-121. DOI: 10.26855/er.2026.03.001

**Received:** January 18, 2026

**Accepted:** February 14, 2026

**Published:** March 10, 2026

**Corresponding author:** Yusu Wang, Foreign Language Teaching Department, Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou 571126, Hainan, China.

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## Abstract

Against the backdrop of building a strong educational nation and promoting high-quality development of vocational education, ideological and political education integrated into courses has become a key measure to implement the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. However, English teaching in higher vocational colleges generally faces practical difficulties such as rigid integration and weak value-leading effects, which stem from the systematic lack of teachers' cognitive systems. Traditional research has mostly focused on teaching methods rather than the internal logic of teachers' cognitive awakening. Based on narrative research and the author's teaching experience, this study analyzes structural problems in current teacher training and constructs a four-stage endogenous growth model: autonomous learning, systematic cognition, classroom transformation, and value-leading. The study argues that the core of teachers' ideological and political competence lies in the collaborative construction of a civilization-based historical perspective, dialectical thinking, and cultural self-consciousness, realizing a paradigm shift from external skill training to internal cognitive awakening. This research not only provides a replicable practical path for higher vocational English teachers to solve the "two-layered skin" problem but also offers a theoretical reference and practical model for the reform of university teacher training systems.

## Keywords

Ideological and political education integrated into courses; higher vocational English teachers; endogenous construction; civilization-based historical perspective; teacher professional development; interdisciplinary general education

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

Vocational education needs English teachers to teach language and shape values as well as spread Chinese culture (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2020). However, teachers lack systematic cultural literacy,

leading to superficial ideological-political integration. Teacher training is mismatched and fragmented. This study explores the endogenous development path of teachers' ideological-political competence to reshape their cultural cognition and mission.

## 1.2 Research Significance

**Theoretical Significance:** This study breaks through the limitations of traditional course ideological-political research that overemphasizes methods while ignoring the origin (Liu, 2022). By adopting a civilization-based historical perspective and dialectical thinking (Zhang, 2021), it defines “endogenous awakening” and builds a cognition-practice-value three-dimensional model, enriching the theoretical system of vocational English teachers' professional development (Ye, 2021).

**Practical Significance:** The interdisciplinary curriculum and evaluation mechanism offer a blueprint for optimizing teacher training. The classroom transformation paradigm helps frontline teachers integrate ideological-political elements naturally, solving the “two-layered skin” problem and improving teaching effectiveness (Li, 2024).

## 1.3 Research Ideas and Methods

Following the logic of “problem-posing – status critique – path construction”, this study uses narrative research, literature research, and case analysis comprehensively.

## 2. Practical Dilemmas of Ideological-Political Training

1. **Training Content:** Quality is uneven, and the supply of deep cognition is insufficient. Most training is superficial, lacking dialectical analysis of civilization and institutions (Gao, 2019). Although a few high-quality training sessions can enhance teachers' institutional confidence, they account for a low proportion.
2. **Training Methods:** Dominated by one-way indoctrination, with weak interaction and formalistic assessment, failing to realize deep internalization (Ye, 2021).
3. **Teaching Practice:** Language teaching and value guidance are separated. Ideological-political integration is rigid “labeling”, failing to integrate knowledge and value shaping effectively (Liu, 2022).

## 3. Self-Awakening: The Cognitive Process from Passive Acceptance to Active Construction

### 3.1 Initial Exploration: Classroom Reform Attempts and Cognitive Limitations

Relying on more than ten years of experience in the education industry, the author began to attempt to restructure English classrooms. With the help of digital tools such as AI and Rain Classroom, basic language knowledge learning was arranged after class, freeing up classroom time for students' viewpoint sharing and communication. However, due to the lack of systematic cognition of the essence of ideological and political education in courses at this stage, the reform only stayed at the shallow optimization of teaching forms. The understanding of ideological and political education was limited to abstract moral slogans such as “diligence and unity,” failing to produce profound educational influence.

### 3.2 Theoretical Enlightenment: Reshaping Dialectical Thinking and Historical Perspective

To break the cognitive dilemma, the author began to deeply study academic literature related to Marxist theory and ideological and political education in courses (Zhang, 2021). In theoretical learning, the author established the dialectical cognitive logic of “what is emphasized is what is lacking.” Taking the rule of law as an example, only a few upright officials, such as Bao Zheng, Hai Rui, and Di Renjie, are remembered in the 5,000-year Chinese civilization. This historical phenomenon precisely confirms the long-term lack of an institutionalized legal system in traditional society. This cognitive breakthrough helped the author establish a dialectical thinking framework for objectively analyzing cultural phenomena.

### 3.3 Civilizational Foundation: Distinguishing Cultural Symbols and Historical Reality

Through systematic learning of the documentary *Journey of Civilization*, the author constructed a civilization-based

historical perspective that distinguishes “historical reality” from “cultural imagination” (Gao, 2019). The deconstruction of the image of “Lord Bao” in the program reveals that the perfect judge image in people’s hearts stems from the collective imagination of fairness and justice rather than historical facts; cultural symbols such as the dragon totem are also products of cultural construction. This interpretation made the author deeply realize that civilizational cognition needs to jump out of appearances and understand the true connotation of cultural symbols from the underlying logic of historical evolution.

### **3.4 Pattern Elevation: Establishment of Cultural Communication Mission**

Combined with the study of the series Great Ideological and Political Education in China and in-depth research on “Centennial Changes,” the author clarified the era mission of English teachers in the new era. Teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also messengers of cross-cultural communication. They must tell Chinese stories and spread Chinese voices in a language understandable to the world (Wang, 2020). This cognitive elevation further strengthened the author’s internal motivation for constructing ideological and political education in courses.

### **3.5 Spiritual Inspiration: Deep Awakening of Educational Mission**

After participating in the series of special lectures on “Great Educators,” the author deeply realized the responsibility of teachers as “soul engineers” (Ye, 2021). This spiritual inspiration prompted the author to closely link career development with national destiny, transforming from a passive “task executor” to an active “educational explorer,” completing a fundamental shift from cognitive awakening to action consciousness.

### **3.6 Cognitive Translation: Logical Connection from Theoretical Construction to Practical Path**

The above process of cognitive awakening laid a solid foundation for classroom practice transformation. The author believes that the improvement of ideological and political competence is not achieved overnight but is a systematic project from the inside out. Autonomous learning is the premise of cognitive awakening, systematic cognition is the core of internalization, classroom transformation is the carrier of externalization, and value-leading is the ultimate goal. This logical relationship constitutes the core theoretical model of this study.

## **4. Practical Transformation: In-Depth Exploration of Reshaping English Classrooms with Systematic Cognition**

### **4.1 Classroom Model Reconstruction: Constructing a New Collaborative Education Ecosystem of “Pre-Class – In-Class – After-Class”**

After forming systematic cognition, the author structurally reshaped English classrooms. Before class, digital platforms were used to complete mechanical training of language knowledge; during class, focus was placed on in-depth discussions and viewpoint collisions among students, with teachers acting as guides of values and dialogists of thinking rather than indoctrinators of knowledge; after class, it extended to cross-cultural comparisons and discussions on realistic issues. This model realized the organic integration of language training and value-led, constructing a new ecosystem of collaborative education (Liu, 2022).

### **4.2 Paths of Ideological and Political Integration: In-Depth Case Interpretation Based on Civilizational Perspective**

The author abandoned the rigid labeling integration method and turned to in-depth case teaching based on civilization-based historical perspective and dialectical thinking (Zhang, 2021).

In the teaching unit of “Work Hard, Work Smart,” instead of being limited to vocabulary and grammar explanations, students were guided to dialectically discuss the relationship between “personal struggle and era opportunities,” combining the “diligence and wisdom” in Chinese culture with the development achievements of contemporary China to cultivate students’ patriotism.

In the thematic discussion of “Justice & Fairness,” combined with the differences between Chinese and Western

legal civilizations, the institutional advantages of the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics were analyzed to guide students to establish institutional confidence.

In the teaching of life attitudes, the five-complete personality spirit of Su Shi (talent, learning, insight, virtue, and tolerance) was introduced to help students understand the life wisdom and responsibility in traditional Chinese culture (Gao, 2019).

Through the above cases, the natural integration of ideological and political elements and language knowledge was realized, enhancing the ideological depth of the classroom.

### **4.3 Classroom Effect Feedback: Dual Improvement of Students' Cognition and Value Identity**

After one semester of teaching practice, the classroom effect was significant. Analysis of students' classroom discussion records and questionnaire survey results showed that students not only improved their language application ability but also showed significant growth in historical vision, cultural identity, and global awareness. Students could analyze problems from a cross-cultural perspective, objectively understand China's development path, and truly achieve the educational goal of shaping students' correct world outlook, outlook on life, and values with language as the carrier (Wang, 2020).

## **5. Path Construction: An Endogenous Growth Model of Ideological and Political Competence for Higher Vocational English Teachers**

Based on the laws of cognitive development and practical transformation experience, this study constructs a "four-stage progressive" endogenous growth model of ideological and political competence for higher vocational English teachers. Each stage is interlocked, forming a complete closed loop of ability construction.

### **5.1 Stage 1: Autonomous Learning – Consolidating the Cognitive Foundation**

Autonomous learning is the starting point of ability construction. Teachers need to take the initiative to break through the constraints of formal training and extensively study high-quality resources such as Marxist theory, civilization history, and cross-cultural communication (Zhang, 2021; Gao, 2019). The key evaluation indicator is whether teachers can construct a systematic knowledge framework and form a basic cognition of the logic of civilization evolution.

### **5.2 Stage 2: Systematic Cognition – Realizing Ideological Awakening**

On the basis of autonomous learning, through in-depth reflection, teachers form a civilization-based historical perspective, dialectical thinking, and cultural self-consciousness (Wang, 2020). This stage is a cognitive qualitative change from "teaching" to "educating people." The key evaluation indicator is whether teachers can use dialectical thinking to analyze cultural phenomena and form firm confidence and profound understanding of Chinese culture and institutions.

### **5.3 Stage 3: Classroom Transformation – Promoting the Implementation of Ideas**

Systematic cognition must eventually be transformed into teaching practice. Teachers need to convert abstract theories into specific teaching designs to realize the organic unity of language teaching and ideological and political education (Liu, 2022). The key evaluation indicator is whether ideological and political integration in the classroom is natural, logical, and whether students' participation and identity are improved.

### **5.4 Stage 4: Value-Leading – Achieving Educational Goals**

This is the ultimate goal of ability construction. Through continuous classroom practice, students' desire for exploration is finally ignited, their patriotism and global vision are cultivated, and the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education is completed (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2020). The key evaluation indicator is whether students have formed correct values and a positive attitude toward life.

## **6. Reform Suggestions: Reconstructing the Teacher Training System and General Education Ecosystem**

### **6.1 Transforming Training Philosophy: From External Indoctrination to Endogenous Awakening**

Universities should abandon the formalistic training model that emphasizes form over effectiveness, reduce fragmented lectures, and establish a training mechanism centered on teachers' autonomous learning. High-quality resource platforms should be provided, and academic communities for exchange and discussion should be built to stimulate teachers' internal demand for in-depth learning, realizing the transformation from "being asked to learn" to "wanting to learn" (Ye, 2021).

### **6.2 Constructing an Interdisciplinary General Education Curriculum System: Integrating Politics, History, Geography, and Economics to Shape a Complete Worldview**

Based on the underlying logic that "politics, history, geography, and economics are inseparable," it is suggested to construct an integrated interdisciplinary general education curriculum system (Chen, 2020).

For teachers: offer elective courses such as Civilization History, Cross-Cultural Literacy, and China's Path and World Pattern to systematically improve teachers' comprehensive cognitive level.

For students: offer courses such as Chinese Civilization and World Vision, Global Political Economy and Historical Geography, and Financial Literacy and Modern Life.

Specific implementation: It is suggested to divide the curriculum into three modules: "Civilization Origin and Geographical Environment," "Institutional Evolution and Economic Logic," and "Cultural Symbols and Identity." In English teaching, the content of the "civilization comparison" module can be integrated into the "cross-cultural communication" unit to help students establish a complete worldview and values through case analysis and role-playing (Wang, 2020).

### **6.3 Improving the Evaluation Mechanism: Establishing a Process-Oriented and Developmental Evaluation System**

Reform the traditional assessment method and construct an evaluation mechanism centered on "growth" (Li, 2024).

Introduce tools: formulate a Classroom Ideological and Political Quality Assessment Scale to evaluate from dimensions such as the naturalness of ideological and political integration, the profundity of logic, and students' emotional resonance.

Establish files: establish a "value cognition growth file" for each teacher to record their cognitive development trajectory, teaching case reflections, and student feedback, realizing the transformation of evaluation from result-oriented to process-oriented.

### **6.4 Returning to the Essence of Education: Making English Education Return to Humanistic Value**

We will eliminate the utilitarian tendency of "instrumentalism-only and examination-oriented" in English education. Taking cultural confidence, patriotism and global vision as the core objectives of English teaching, language learning is transformed into a process of understanding the world, inheriting civilizations and shaping individual character.

## **7. Conclusion**

This study conducts an in-depth discussion on the construction path of ideological and political competence for higher vocational English teachers. The study finds that the improvement of teachers' ideological and political competence does not depend on external indoctrination but stems from the endogenous growth process of autonomous learning, systematic cognition, practical transformation, and value-leading. The "four-stage progressive" growth model constructed in this study provides a systematic solution to the current training dilemma.

In terms of theoretical contribution, this study introduces a civilization-based historical perspective and dialectical thinking, enriches the theoretical connotation of ideological and political competence, and realizes a paradigm shift

from “skill training” to “cognitive awakening” (Zhang, 2021; Gao, 2019). In terms of practical value, the interdisciplinary general education curriculum system and evaluation mechanism proposed in this study provide an operational, practical path for the reform of university teacher training (Chen, 2020; Li, 2024). In the future, higher vocational English teachers should continue to deepen their own cognitive construction and truly become “great educators” who foster virtue through education, contributing to the cultivation of new-era technical talents with an international vision and patriotism (Ye, 2021).

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