

# A Study on the Improvement of Curriculum-Based IPE Teaching Competence of Key Primary School English Teachers from the Perspective of Core Competencies

Yan Li

Department of International Business, Xinjiang Teacher's College, Urumqi, Xinjiang, China

**Abstract:** This study examines the improvement of curriculum-based ideological and political education (IPE) teaching competence among key primary school English teachers from the perspective of core competencies. Through semi-structured interviews with ten experienced English teachers from ten primary schools in Urumqi city, the study identifies key patterns in teachers' conceptual understanding, classroom strategies, implementation challenges, and professional development needs regarding IPE. Findings reveal that while teachers support the integration of moral values into English instruction, their understanding of IPE remains inconsistent, and classroom practices are constrained by limited resources, time pressure, and lack of assessment mechanisms. Nevertheless, teachers demonstrate strong motivation and creativity in embedding values through storytelling, intercultural comparisons, role-play, and project-based learning. The study concludes by advocating for practice-oriented teacher training, subject-specific IPE frameworks, collaborative learning communities, and the integration of digital tools to support the sustainable development of teachers' IPE competence. These insights contribute to both policy and practice by highlighting the need for grounded, context-sensitive strategies to promote IPE in English language classrooms.

**Keywords:** Ideological and political education (IPE); Primary English instruction; Core competencies; Key primary school English teachers; Teacher professional development

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, the integration of ideological and political education (IPE) into all disciplines has become a strategic priority in China's national education reform. As the Ministry of Education of PRC promotes the policy of curriculum-based IPE, every subject is expected to contribute to the holistic development of students by means of embedding moral values and civic consciousness [1]. English, often viewed as a neutral, skill-oriented subject, has gradually emerged as an important carrier of value education, especially in the context of the national core competency framework. The framework focuses on four areas: language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning autonomy. These areas make it easier to include values in English lessons.

At the primary level, English education serves to shape young learners' philosophies and intercultural sensitivity in addition to developing fundamental communication skills. Key English teachers are expected to take the lead in effective IPE implementation, including those with large

professional credentials and influence in the classroom. Nevertheless, many teachers have trouble figuring out what IPE is all about, creating effective teaching strategies, and changing the curriculum material to fit their own language and social objectives [2]. There is still a lack of empirical research on how primary English teachers perceive, exercise, and strengthen their IPE-related teaching competence, despite plan directives and occasional training efforts [3].

This study addresses this gap by concentrating on a group of key primary school English teachers in Urumqi city. It looks at how they perceive the concept of curriculum-based IPE, what instructional strategies they use, what challenges do their implementations face, and what kind of support do they need for professional development. The findings intend to inform both theory and practice, and provide insight into how social and political values are successfully incorporated into English teaching at the foundational education stage.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 *The Concept and Development of Curriculum-Based IPE*

As part of China's wider effort to cultivate well-rounded socialist citizens, the curriculum-based ideological and political education (IPE) refers to systematic embedding moral, political, and civic values in all subjects and learning processes [4]. The idea, which promotes "Three-Wide Education", was officially institutionalized by the Ministry of Education in 2017 and has its roots in the adage "all subjects have philosophical and political features" [5]. Since then, the need to implement IPE from primary through higher education has been underlined by national policies like the "Guidelines for Curriculum-Based IPE in Higher Education" and the "Basic Education Curriculum Reform Outline (2019)" [6].

According to scholars like Zhang Hongli (2025), the effectiveness of IPE depends on subject relevance and disciplinary integration [7]. This includes converting intellectual objectives into age-appropriate, subject-specific pedagogies in the framework of basic training. Wang Qiang & Wang Qi (2024) discuss the difficulty of "discourse translation" for subject teachers because IPE frequently remains abstract and disassociated from their instructional realities [8]. Therefore, recontextualizing intellectual content into language and cultural tasks that are consistent with curriculum objectives is necessary for the success of IPE in English training.

### 2.2 *IPE in the English Language Classroom*

English offers opportunities and difficulties for transforming IPE in the English language classroom because it has strong cross-cultural characteristics. On the one hand, English instruction can introduce students to global issues, develop national pride through divisive viewpoints, and develop values like compassion, duty, and economic awareness. On the other hand, value education may be neglected due to the Western cultural contents of English books, the communicative emphasis of language training, and the exam pressures placed on students to practice it.

In addition to focusing on task-based learning, thematic products, and dialogic interaction, Cheng Xiaotang (2022) and Lu Ziwen (2023) have developed systems for integrating IPE into conversational language instruction [9, 10, 11]. They contend that true contexts, such as role-playing about social dilemmas, discussions of climate protection, or social comparisons between Chinese and foreign holidays, can convey values effectively. However, major empirical research is still insufficient. With little consideration given to the development needs and mental traits of younger learners, the majority of studies are focused on high schools or universities.

Additionally, some instructor teaching materials frequently lack the appropriateness and information, in spite of providing examples of IPE integration. Teachers are expected to impart values through language, but many are unsure of how to do this effectively, especially when there is little help in books. Hence, it is crucial to understand how primary teachers interpret and use IPE in English classrooms in order to close this theoretical-practice space.

### ***2.3 Core Competencies in Primary English Education***

The “English Subject Core Competencies” framework, which was introduced in 2017 as part of China’s reform of the national curriculum, lists four interrelated competencies: language ability, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability [12]. This framework shifts the focus from language knowledge to the systematic development of communicative competence, intercultural literacy, and autonomous learning skills.

These core competencies must be taken into account when incorporating IPE into English education. For instance, strengthening students’ cultural awareness involves not only understanding international norms but also appreciating Chinese values, and voicing them confidently in English. In the same way, encouraging students to examine, compare, and reflect-processes that can naturally help moral reasoning and value creation.

Scholars (e.g. Wang Qiang, 2022; Zhang Weihang, 2024; Zhang Rujun, 2024) have underlined that core competencies offer an entry point for contextualizing IPE in subject teaching [13, 14, 15]. However, empirical studies have shown that many primary English teachers struggle to operationalize these competencies, often defaulting to textbook exercises and test preparation. Thus, a key challenge is to design pedagogical models that integrate IPE into core competency-based instruction in a feasible and engaging manner.

### ***2.4 Professional Development of Key English Teachers***

Key teachers, also referred to as backbone or lead teachers, play a central role in curriculum reform and pedagogical innovation. They are expected not only to maintain high-quality classroom instruction but also to guide peers, participate in research, and model best practices. In the context of IPE, key teachers are strategic actors in demonstrating how values can be embedded into subject teaching effectively.

However, literature on the professional development of key teachers in relation to IPE is still emerging. Studies by Hou Xiaoqian (2022) and Zhang Jinfeng (2023) pointed out that “existing training programs are often policy-driven and lack practical relevance. Teachers frequently report that IPE workshops are too theoretical and do not offer concrete strategies or classroom materials” [16, 17]. Furthermore, many professional learning communities (PLCs) are still in the early stages of development and have not yet focused on IPE-specific themes [18].

Effective professional development in this area should be practice-oriented, collaborative, and sustained over time. Cheng Xiaotang & Cong Lin (2022) advocates for “lesson study” approaches, in which teachers collaboratively plan, observe, and reflect on lessons with embedded IPE components [19]. Digital platforms and AI tools also offer new opportunities for sharing resources, providing feedback, and building communities of practice. Investigating the actual needs and experiences of key primary English teachers is essential for improving the quality and relevance of future professional development programs.

In summary, the literature indicates a growing consensus on the importance of integrating IPE into English education and enhancing the IPE competence of primary school teachers. However,

significant gaps remain in terms of empirical research, especially at the primary level. There is a need for more context-specific studies that explore how teachers understand, implement, and develop IPE-related practices within the core competencies framework. This study seeks to address that gap by focusing on key primary English teachers' experiences, challenges, and professional needs.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study makes full use of a qualitative exploratory design to investigate the integration of curriculum-based IPE within primary school English teaching from the perspective of core competencies. Given the complexity and contextual nature of this research topic-how teachers understand, interpret, and apply ideological values in English instruction-a qualitative approach is particularly suitable. It allows for the collection of in-depth, context-sensitive, and richly detailed data that reflect the lived experiences of frontline teachers. The study utilizes semi-structured interviews to conduct data collection. This method provides both structure and flexibility. It covers key research questions while letting participants share their views in detail. The interviews included 18 open-ended questions. These questions matched the study's goals, which are related to teachers' conceptual understanding of core competencies and IPE, their teaching strategies, challenges faced, and suggestions for improvement. The research follows an interpretivist approach. It focuses on how teachers interpret their own actions and teaching environments.

#### 3.2 Participants

The study took place in Urumqi city, China. This culturally diverse region offers a meaningful setting to study ideological education in language teaching. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to pick ten primary school English teachers. These teachers were chosen because their schools or districts labeled them as "key" or "backbone" instructors (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of Ten Primary School English Teachers.

Participants	Gender	School	Professional Title	Years of Teaching	Grade Level Taught	Curriculum-based IPE Training Received
T1	F	A	Level 1	12	3–6	Yes
T2	M	B	Level 1	20	5–6	No
T3	F	C	Level 2	5	3	No
T4	M	D	Level 1	15	4–6	Yes
T5	M	E	Level 2	3	3	No
T6	F	F	Level 1	11	4	Yes
T7	F	G	Senior Teacher	18	5–6	Yes
T8	M	H	Senior Teacher	22	6	No
T9	F	I	Level 2	4	3–4	Yes
T10	F	J	Level 1	9	4–5	Yes

All participants had at least three years of experience and taught grades 3 to 6. Teachers were also selected based on their openness to interviews and their familiarity with ideological and political

education. The group included six women and four men, with teaching experience ranging from 3 to 22 years. Having teachers with different backgrounds helps provide a richer, more detailed view of how curriculum-based IPE works in primary English classes.

### **3.3 Data Collection Instrument**

The instrument of data collection for this study was a semi-structured interview guide. This guide consisted of 18 open-ended questions designed to elicit comprehensive and reflective responses across six thematic areas: teacher background, understanding of curriculum-based ideological and political education, interpretation of core competencies, classroom integration practices, implementation challenges, and professional development needs. The questions were developed through a synthesis of relevant literature and policy guidelines, and they were validated by two field experts in English pedagogy and moral education to ensure content validity. The open-ended format could allow participants to articulate their ideas and thoughts in their words, offering insights that may not have been captured through closed-ended survey methods. This instrument was critical in generating qualitative data that reflect not only what teachers do in practice, but also how they rationalize, adapt, and reflect on their professional decisions.

### **3.4 Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection procedure was carried out over a two-month period from April to May 2025. Prior to the interviews, participants were provided with an overview of the research purpose, processes, and ethical protocols, and each signed a written informed consent form. Depending on individual preferences and availability, interviews were conducted either face-to-face at the participants' schools or via secure video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and Tencent Meeting. Each session lasted approximately 25 to 35 minutes. All interviews were implemented in Mandarin Chinese and recorded with the participants' permission. The recordings were transcribed verbatim and anonymized to ensure confidentiality. Each teacher was assigned a unique identifier (T1 to T10). Participants were later sent their interview transcripts for member checking to confirm accuracy and provide any necessary clarifications. This participatory validation step enhanced the credibility of the data and fostered a collaborative research environment.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Data analysis in this study complied with Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis model [20]. First, the researcher immersed themselves in the data by reading each transcript multiple times to gain a holistic understanding. Second, initial coding was conducted using NVivo 12 software to identify recurring phrases and concepts relevant to the research questions. Third, these codes were then grouped into broader thematic categories such as diverse understandings of IPE, classroom strategies, challenges in implementation, and professional support needs. Fourth, themes were reviewed and refined by cross-checking with the raw data to ensure coherence and sufficient representation. Fifth, defining and naming themes are handled. That is, clear definitions were assigned to each theme and aligned with the research questions. Finally, selected quotations were used to illustrate key findings, which were interpreted in relation to existing literature and educational policy contexts. The analytical process was inductive and data-driven, allowing the voices of the participants to guide the formation of categories and insights, rather than imposing pre-existing theoretical frameworks.

### 3.6 Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, multiple strategies were employed. Credibility was enhanced through triangulation of data from teachers of different schools, genders, and experience levels, as well as through member checking and peer debriefing. Transferability was supported by providing rich, thick descriptions of participants' teaching contexts and demographic profiles. Dependability was achieved by maintaining a transparent audit trail of the research process, including documentation of data collection, coding decisions, and thematic development. Confirmability was strengthened by keeping reflexive memos to monitor researcher bias and by incorporating external reviews of the coding framework. All participants' data were stored securely, and anonymity was strictly protected throughout the research and reporting processes. The study was conducted in full accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving human participants.

## 4. Findings

Drawing upon the thematic analysis of the ten in-depth interviews with key English teachers from ten primary schools in Urumqi, four overarching themes emerged: 1) Diverse Understandings of Curriculum-Based IPE; 2) Practical Integration Strategies and Classroom Pathways; 3) Challenges and Constraints in Implementation; and 4) Professional Development Needs and Teacher Expectations. These findings illuminate both the potential and complexity of implementing IPE in primary English classrooms guided by core competencies.

### 4.1 Diverse Understandings of Curriculum-Based IPE

Ten participants (100%) unanimously acknowledged the necessity of IPE, but their conceptual depth and interpretive frameworks varied. More experienced teachers tended to articulate a nuanced and contextualized understanding of IPE. For example, T7 (female, 18 years of experience, School G) stated:

*"For me, curriculum-based IPE means embedding values like empathy, integrity, and responsibility into every teaching act, even if we are just learning a sentence like 'Can I help you?'."*

Similarly, T4 (male, 15 years, School D) emphasized that IPE is about guiding "how to be a decent human being, using language as the medium." He added:

*"English class doesn't just teach a language-it teaches a way of thinking and relating to others. That's where I see space for ideological education."*

However, some younger teachers displayed a more cautious or limited understanding. T5 (male, 3 years, School E) admitted:

*"Honestly, I wasn't sure what curriculum-based IPE meant at first-I thought it was only related to history or Chinese. It took some video examples and staff meetings for me to realize it applies to English too."*

T3 (female, 5 years, School C) echoed this by saying:

*"I used to think that if I just finished teaching the grammar or vocabulary, that was enough. Now I try to think about what kind of 'message' the language carries."*

Overall, while support for IPE was high, the clarity and confidence in enacting it varied, highlighting the need for conceptual consensus and shared understanding across schools and teaching generations.

### 4.2 Practical Integration Strategies and Classroom Pathways



Teachers reported using a range of strategies to integrate IPE into their English instruction, with noticeable patterns emerging around value-themed contextualization, cultural contrast and national identity, and task-based learning scenarios. These strategies were closely tied to the age and cognitive level of their students.

For instance, T1 (female, 12 years, School A) shared:

*"I use stories like 'The Lion and the Mouse' to talk about mutual help and gratitude. After the reading, I ask students to tell about someone who helped them recently."*

T6 (female, 11 years, School F) provided an example of cultural comparison:

*"In our class on Christmas, I always introduce Spring Festival too. We compare food, colors, greetings-it naturally brings up themes like family love and tradition."*

Meanwhile, T9 (female, 4 years, School I) preferred using project-based learning, especially with her mid-grade students:

*"I had students design posters on 'How to Be a Good Classmate'. They had to use English and draw something. Some wrote 'share with others', 'help when sad'-simple but meaningful."*

Role-play was also a popular tool. T2 (male, 20 years, School B) noted:

*"When we practiced shopping dialogues, I added a twist. One student forgot their money, and the other chose to lend it. Then we talked about kindness and honesty."*

Across responses, it was clear that effective IPE integration relies on creative contextualization and student-centered tasks, rather than explicit ideological instruction.

### 4.3 Challenges and Constraints in Implementation

Despite positive attitudes, all participants (100%) cited systemic, practical, and pedagogical barriers to fully realizing curriculum-based IPE in English classes.

One recurrent issue was the limited availability of resources. T8 (male, 22 years, School H) commented:

*"We don't have ready-made lesson plans or sample activities aligned with IPE goals. Most of us are improvising and not sure if we're doing it correctly."*

Another key constraint was students' cognitive and language limitations, especially in lower grades. T3 explained:

*"Even if I want to talk about respect or teamwork, my third graders don't have the words. Sometimes it feels forced or superficial."*

Time pressure and curriculum pacing also appeared as major concerns. T10 (female, 9 years, School J) shared:

*"We have exam prep, speaking tests, reading units... It's hard to add a meaningful IPE task when you're trying to finish everything on time."*

Furthermore, many teachers pointed out a lack of formal assessment frameworks for evaluating IPE outcomes. T7 expressed:

*"We don't have criteria to assess values education. How do you grade a student's 'sense of responsibility'? Right now, it's invisible labor."*

This theme indicates that although the willingness exists, the supporting conditions and clarity of expectations are often missing.

### 4.4 Professional Development Needs and Teacher Expectations

All ten teachers (100%) expressed a strong need for targeted, practical, and continuous

professional development in curriculum-based IPE. Their expectations extended beyond theory and into actionable, classroom-based guidance.

T6 emphasized the value of peer modeling:

*"If I could observe another teacher doing a model lesson-how they embed IPE in a grammar topic-that would help me so much more than a PowerPoint presentation."*

T1 and T9 suggested developing shared resource banks:

*"We could co-develop PPTs, short dialogues, even mini videos that fit textbook themes and promote values." (T1)*

*"Let's build something like a regional database. One unit = one value theme = one set of activities." (T9)*

T10 advocated for technology-enhanced training:

*"I think AI tools can help design dialogues or scenarios. If we combine tech with pedagogy, it'll be easier to customize and localize IPE content."*

Meanwhile, T4 highlighted the need for collaborative planning across subjects:

*"English, Chinese, and Moral Education teachers should sit together sometimes. If we align our themes, students will get a more consistent value experience."*

In other words, teachers called for bottom-up, collaborative, and school-supported development mechanisms, rather than isolated, top-down lectures.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Conceptual Inconsistencies and the Lack of Operational Alignment

One of the most salient findings from this study is the wide variation in how teachers understand and define curriculum-based IPE. While most participants acknowledged the importance of value education in English teaching, their interpretations differed significantly in terms of clarity and practical relevance. These findings echo what Wang Qiang (2022) described as a "cognitive gap" in the implementation of national curriculum reforms. According to his research, many front-line teachers struggle to internalize policy discourse due to its abstractness and limited classroom applicability.

Similarly, Cheng Xiaotang & Cong Lin (2022) emphasizes that the absence of subject-specific operational frameworks often leads to superficial or inconsistent enactments of IPE in language classrooms. Without concrete examples or model lessons, teachers are left to interpret general ideological objectives in ways that may not be pedagogically sound. This was evident in the present study, as some participants conflated IPE with political indoctrination, while others viewed it as generic moral instruction rather than an organic part of communicative language teaching.

Furthermore, the disconnect between core competencies and IPE goals remains a persistent issue. As Zhang Hongli (2021) argues, effective IPE in English must be embedded within the development of linguistic, cultural, and cognitive competencies, rather than treated as an add-on moral module [21]. The findings here support her conclusion: unless teachers can see how moral values are expressed and reinforced through language learning tasks, IPE remains fragmented and externally imposed.

### 5.2 Creative Pedagogy Versus Structural Constraints

Teachers in this study demonstrated a strong willingness to integrate values into their lessons through innovative strategies such as project-based learning, role play, intercultural comparison, and storytelling. These findings are consistent with Lu Ziwen's (2023) advocacy for embedding moral development within task-based language teaching. He suggests that values are best cultivated when



students are engaged in authentic, decision-making situations that require reflection, empathy, and collaboration.

However, the study also highlights several systemic barriers that limit the sustainability of these innovations. These include the pressure of exam-oriented teaching, a lack of suitable classroom materials, and time constraints. Chen Huadong (2020) notes that the dominance of instrumentalist objectives-such as test scores and grammar drills-often marginalizes broader educational aims. This tension was echoed by many participants, particularly those teaching upper grades, who expressed concern over having to "sacrifice" value-based activities to meet curriculum pacing demands.

Another issue is the absence of robust evaluation mechanisms. Teachers frequently reported uncertainty about how to assess students' ideological and moral development. Zhang Hongli (2024) has called for the development of multi-dimensional assessment models that account for both behavioral changes and task-based learning artifacts (e.g., reflective journals, performance tasks). Without such tools, teachers may find it difficult to justify or measure the impact of their IPE efforts, which in turn affects their long-term motivation.

Overall, while teachers show pedagogical creativity and moral commitment, their efforts are often constrained by institutional structures that prioritize standardization over innovation.

### ***5.3 Practice-Oriented Professional Development and Cross-School Collaboration***

The third key issue concerns teacher development. Nearly all participants (100%) emphasized the need for ongoing, hands-on, and subject-specific training in IPE integration. While national education authorities have advocated for IPE training programs, these are often generic and not tailored to the unique challenges of English teaching. As Cheng Xiaotang (2022) suggests, meaningful training should include model lessons, video analysis, peer feedback, and collaborative lesson design-all of which were explicitly requested by participants in this study.

In addition, several teachers proposed cross-disciplinary collaboration as a viable strategy. English teachers could, for instance, co-plan thematic units with colleagues from Chinese language or civic education, thereby creating a more coherent learning experience. This approach aligns with Lu Ziwen's (2023) concept of "school-based IPE communities," in which teachers across departments share responsibility for the moral dimensions of education.

Emerging technologies also present new possibilities. Some participants-particularly younger teachers-expressed interest in using digital tools and artificial intelligence to co-design moral scenarios, simulate role-play dialogues, or assess student responses. This aligns with recent research on AI-supported curriculum design in the context of value education, and it represents a promising direction for future innovation.

Ultimately, the findings affirm that professional growth in IPE must move beyond workshops and lectures. It requires sustained institutional support, collaborative infrastructure, and an evaluation culture that recognizes the ethical dimensions of all learning processes.

## **6. Conclusion and Implications**

### ***6.1 Summary of Key Findings***

This study investigated the current status, difficulties, and development needs regarding IPE teaching competence of key primary school English teachers, focusing on integrating IPE into language instruction under the framework of core competencies. Through in-depth interviews with ten experienced English teachers from ten Urumqi primary schools, four important findings were

made.

First, it became clear that, despite the fact that the majority of teachers recognized value education, their conceptual understanding of curriculum-based IPE remained inconsistent. Some teachers equated it with basic moral education, while others struggled to effectively connect ideological content to English language objectives. This variation underscores the need for a more coherent and subject-specific conceptual framework that defines IPE evidently in the context of primary English instruction.

Second, despite these conceptual contradictions, many teachers were now participating in creative pedagogical practices to include IPE into their lessons. They used a variety of methods, like intercultural comparison, role-playing, project-based learning, and storytelling. These methods allowed them to understand social norms within communicative tasks, following the goals of language competence and personality development.

Third, the study discovered that the effectiveness and viability of IPE integration were hampered by a number of structural and practical difficulties. Teachers reported constraints for as limited class time, exam-driven curricula, lack of academic resources tailored to IPE, and the absence of proper assessment tools to assess students' moral and ideological growth. Teachers frequently felt unsupported and uncertain about the results of their work as a result of these difficulties.

Fourth, and perhaps most importantly, teachers expressed a strong need for professional development that was focused on training. They advocated for school-based assistance mechanisms, model lessons, collaborative lesson planning, and practical training. Their actions demonstrate a need for professional learning opportunities that are both directly related to the demands of English teaching as a whole and grounded in real-world classrooms.

## 6.2 Practical Implications

The findings of this research point to some practical implications for policymakers, curriculum developers, school administrators, and English teachers.

Firstly, developing a subject-specific framework for implementing IPE in primary English education is important. This framework should align ideological themes with communicative functions, cultural issues, and language tasks. It should be grade-sensitive and adjustable to various proficiency levels, which allows teachers clearly see how moral education can be easily integrated into textbook contents and class activities.

Secondly, resource banks and teaching cases that demonstrate successful practices are urgently needed. These may include mini lesson videos, annotated lesson plans, thematic project ideas, and customized teaching materials that combine values and language effectively. Teachers will benefit from converting philosophical IPE objectives into actionable class strategies by providing these sources.

Thirdly, educational institutions should establish multi-dimensional evaluation systems to assess students' ethical awareness, cooperative behaviour, and value reflection beyond language accuracy. Meanwhile, educational professionals can use tools to track students' cognitive and affective growth, such as learning journals, peer assessment rubrics, oral tasks, and behavior tracking.

Fourthly, building school-based PLCs focused on curriculum-based IPE will empower teachers to share expertise and collaboratively solve pedagogical problems. These PLCs should encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration (such as between English and Moral Education teachers) and promote peer observation, reflective dialogue, and co-teaching experiments.

Finally, the integration of technology can significantly enhance IPE delivery. AI-based dialogue tools, interactive storytelling apps, and learning analytics platforms can simulate real-world scenarios, personalize learning experiences, and increase student engagement. Schools and teacher training institutions should explore how to integrate digital tools to scaffold and extend value-oriented English instruction.

### 6.3 Limitations and Future Directions

Despite its valuable contributions, there are also certain limitations for this study.

In the first place, the sample size was relatively small and geographically limited to one city in western China. The findings, while insightful, may not fully reflect the broader variations in policy implementation, teacher preparedness, or school contexts found in other regions. Future studies should expand the participant pool to include teachers from multiple provinces and different school types (e.g., rural, urban, ethnic minority schools).

In the second place, the research relied exclusively on qualitative interviews, which, while rich in depth, do not capture the full complexity of classroom practices or student outcomes. Subsequent research could adopt a mixed-methods approach that includes classroom observation, student interviews, and analysis of teaching artifacts (e.g., lesson plans, student work) to provide a more comprehensive view of IPE integration.

In the third place, this study centered primarily on key primary school English teachers' perspectives. Though this lens is important, future research should also integrate student voices to understand how learners perceive and respond to value-laden English instruction. Examining student engagement and attitudinal shifts will provide more robust evidence of IPE's educational impact.

In the last place, future research could also examine the longitudinal effects of professional development programs or policy reforms aimed at strengthening IPE competence. Action research involving teachers in curriculum co-design and iterative teaching trials could reveal how sustainable and scalable innovations can be achieved at the school or district level.

### Acknowledgments

This study is a phased research outcome of the "National Training Program 2024" (Periodic)--Teaching Innovation Capacity Enhancement Program for Prefectural-Level Key Teachers (Primary School English).

### References

- [1] Ministry of Education of China. (2022, August 10). Notice of the Ministry of Education and Nine Other Departments on Issuing the "Implementation Plan for Comprehensively Promoting the Construction of the Great Ideological and Political Course". [http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A13/moe\\_772/202208/t20220818\\_653672.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A13/moe_772/202208/t20220818_653672.html)
- [2] Nie, H. (2023). A survey study on the integration of curriculum ideology and politics into English classroom teaching in primary school [Unpublished master's thesis]. Yangtze University.
- [3] Guo, J. Y. (2022). A study on the current situation of ideological and political education in primary school English curriculum [Unpublished master's thesis]. Shanxi University.
- [4] Li, T. Z. (2025). Three transformations in the high-quality development of ideological and political education in courses. *Journal of Educational Science of Hunan Normal University*, 24(3), 79-84.
- [5] Xinhua News Agency. (2017, February 27). The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the

State Council Have Issued the “Guidelines on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in Higher Education Institutions Under the New Circumstances”.

[https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2017-02/27/content\\_5182502.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2017-02/27/content_5182502.htm)

- [6] Chen, H. D. (2020). Ideological and political education. Shanghai Jiaotong University Press.
- [7] Zhang, H. L. (2025). A new approach to compiling elementary school English textbooks and suggestions for their use oriented to core competencies: An analysis of the four editions of Grade 3 Volume 1 textbooks. *Journal of Tianjin Normal University (Elementary Education Edition)*, 26(3), 69-74.
- [8] Wang, Q., & Wang, Q. (2024). Implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education: Developing English textbooks to cultivate values - Design principles and usage suggestions for the new Beijing Normal University edition junior high English textbooks. *Basic Education Curriculum*, 12, 10-16.
- [9] Cheng, X. T. (2022). Accurately understanding the objectives and content of compulsory education English curriculum. *Basic Foreign Language Education*, 24(4), 3-12+108.
- [10] Lu, Z. W. (2023). Practical exploration of integrating excellent traditional culture into primary school English education. *Foreign Language Teaching in Schools*, 46(12), 1-6.
- [11] Lu, Z. W. (2023). Competency-oriented teaching-learning-evaluation aligned instructional design for primary school English. *Fujian Education*, 49, 23-25+37.
- [12] Cheng, X. T., & Zhao, S. Q. (2016). On students' key competency in English as a foreign language. *Curriculum, Teaching Material and Method*, 36(5), 79-86.
- [13] Wang, Q. (2022). Curriculum implementation is the key link and important guarantee for cultivating core competencies. *Teaching Monthly (Middle School Edition)*, 5, 3-11+19.
- [14] Zhang, W. H. (2024). From textbooks to disciplines: The transformation of teaching research perspectives under the core competencies framework. *Theory and Practice of Education*, 44(11), 53-56.
- [15] Zhang, R. J. (2024). Exploring approaches to cultivating core competencies in primary school English. *Shanghai Education*, 21, 71-72.
- [16] Hou, X. Q. (2022). Research on the current situation and countermeasures of primary school English teachers' professional development [Unpublished master's thesis]. Qufu Normal University.
- [17] Zhang, J. F. (2023). Research on problems and strategies of primary school English teachers' professional development from the perspective of disciplinary core competencies [Unpublished master's thesis]. Jiangxi Normal University.
- [18] Xiao, L. P. (2020). Research on the development of primary school English teachers' questioning ability based on professional learning communities [Unpublished master's thesis]. Hubei Normal University.
- [19] Cheng, X. T., & Cong, L. (2022). The educational goals and implementation strategies of English curriculum in compulsory education. *Foreign Language Teaching in Schools*, 45(6), 1-7.
- [20] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- [21] Zhang, H. L. (2024). Implementing core competencies: Student-centered approaches to compiling and using primary school English textbooks. *Basic Foreign Language Education*, 26(6), 9-17+108.