

# Optimizing the Integration Pathways of Humanistic Education in College English Teaching Under the Guidance of Core Literacy

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**Abstract:** *The cultivation of core literacy has become a central objective of higher education in the new era. College English, as a public foundational course possessing both instrumental and humanistic dimensions, relies on the integration of humanistic education within its teaching process as a crucial pathway for realizing core literacy development. Grounded in theories of core literacy, humanistic education, and language acquisition, this study addresses the current practical challenges of insufficient alignment between humanistic education integration and core literacy cultivation in College English teaching. It proposes optimized pathways for integrating humanistic education under the guidance of core literacy from five dimensions: anchoring teaching objectives, restructuring textbook content, innovating teaching models, upgrading evaluation systems, and improving support mechanisms. The aim is to achieve an organic unity between language skill development and core literacy cultivation, thereby providing theoretical reference and practical guidance for cultivating versatile talents equipped with cross-cultural communication skills, humanistic sensibility, and social responsibility.*

**Keywords:** *core literacy; college English teaching; humanistic education; integration pathways*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

The release of the Chinese Student Development Core Literacy Overall Framework in 2016 marked the entry of China's education system into a new stage oriented toward cultivating core literacy. This framework explicitly states that core literacy encompasses three aspects: cultural foundation, autonomous development, and social participation. Within this framework, humanistic grounding and a sound personality, as crucial components of core literacy, show a high degree of alignment with the educational objectives of humanistic education. As the most widely offered public foundational course in higher education, College English not only undertakes the instrumental task of cultivating students' cross-cultural language communication skills but also shoulders the educational mission of integrating humanistic spirit and fostering core literacy through the medium of language.

The College English Teaching Guide (2020 Edition) further explicitly states that College English teaching should "focus on cultivating students' humanistic literacy and comprehensive abilities," integrating core literacy cultivation into the entire teaching process. However, the integration of humanistic education in current College English teaching still faces several issues that are misaligned with core literacy cultivation: in some teaching practices, the objectives of humanistic education are vague and not precisely aligned with the requirements of core literacy; the integration pathways are fragmented and lack systematicity, making it difficult to generate a synergistic effect for core literacy cultivation; and the evaluation system predominantly focuses on language skills, neglecting a comprehensive assessment of humanistic literacy and core literacy. Concurrently, against the backdrop of globalization and increasingly frequent international exchanges, higher demands are placed on college students' core literacy, such as cross-cultural understanding, cultural confidence, and social responsibility. In this context, guided by core literacy, optimizing the integration pathways of humanistic education in College English teaching has become an inevitable choice for enhancing the quality of College English instruction and fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education.

## ***1.2 Research Significance***

From a theoretical perspective, this study constructs an integrated theoretical framework for core literacy and humanistic education in College English, thereby enriching research on the application of core literacy theory in the field of language teaching. Existing research often separately explores core literacy cultivation or the integration of humanistic education in College English, with a relative scarcity of studies focusing on their intrinsic connections and aligned pathways. Guided by core literacy theory and incorporating humanistic education theory and language acquisition theory, this research clarifies the internal logic of integrating humanistic education under the guidance of core literacy, offering a new theoretical perspective for related studies. Furthermore, the optimization strategies for integration pathways proposed in this study can further refine the theoretical system of College English teaching reform, providing theoretical support for the deep integration of language teaching and literacy cultivation.

From a practical perspective, the optimization pathways proposed in this study possess strong operability and can provide clear practical guidance for College English teachers. Through strategies such as precisely anchoring core literacy objectives, restructuring humanistic materials in textbooks, and innovating teaching models, the current disconnect between humanistic education integration and core literacy cultivation can be effectively addressed, thereby enhancing teaching effectiveness. Simultaneously, these optimized pathways can facilitate students' simultaneous improvement in humanistic grounding, autonomous learning capabilities, and social participation awareness during the language learning process, achieving the comprehensive cultivation of core literacy. This approach aligns with the demands of the new era for higher education talent development, supplying society with more versatile talents equipped with both language application skills and comprehensive literacy.

## **2. Research Plan**

The research plan for this project will proceed from the following aspects:

### ***2.1 Research Objectives***

The research objectives of this project are to clarify the significant role of humanistic education within College English teaching, and to explore and distill the humanistic spirit and values embedded within English language instruction. This research aims to promote innovation in the content and methodologies of College English teaching through the project's findings. The goal is for English teaching to serve not only as a platform for cultivating language skills but also as a crucial site for inheriting and promoting the humanistic spirit. Through systematic analysis and empirical research, this project seeks to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the ideological and political construction of the College English curriculum. Ultimately, it aims to contribute to cultivating high-quality talents equipped with an international perspective and humanistic sensibility.

### ***2.2 Research Methods***

The research methods employed in this study are as follows:

This research follows the investigative approach of "theoretical exploration-current situation analysis-strategy research-practical application."

During the theoretical exploration phase, a comprehensive review and analysis of domestic and international literature concerning humanistic education and ideological-political education within the College English curriculum will be conducted. Through in-depth study, this phase aims to grasp the theoretical development trajectory of humanistic education within College English teaching, and to clarify its core position and urgent necessity within the educational system. This will provide a solid theoretical foundation and reference framework for the study, offering guidance for the subsequent construction of strategies and practical testing.

During the current situation analysis phase, questionnaires targeting College English teachers and students will be designed and distributed. These questionnaires will focus on the integration of humanistic education within the English curriculum to gather teachers' and students' perspectives, attitudes, and expectations regarding humanistic education. By collecting and analyzing these data, the study aims to understand the actual teaching conditions of humanistic education and student needs

within current College English instruction, thereby providing empirical support for the subsequent construction of strategies.

During the practical testing phase, the initial step involves strategy construction. Based on the outcomes of the theoretical exploration and current situation analysis, specific strategies and recommendations will be proposed. These strategies will focus on how to effectively integrate humanistic education into College English teaching, encompassing aspects such as curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and teaching resources. The research team will ensure these strategies are operable and targeted to meet the practical needs of College English education. Subsequently, the research will involve immersion into College English classrooms to observe teachers' instructional approaches, teaching content, and students' interactive performance. Authentic teaching cases will be documented to analyze the effectiveness of integrating humanistic education in actual teaching practices. Through empirical research, the effectiveness of the proposed strategies will be verified, and adjustments and optimizations will be made to the strategies based on feedback from practice.

### **3. Optimization Strategies for Integrating Humanistic Education in College English Teaching Under the Guidance of Core Literacy**

#### ***3.1 Anchoring Core Literacy Objectives to Construct a Hierarchical and Precise Teaching Goal System***

Guided by the three-dimensional framework of core literacy—"cultural foundation, autonomous development, and social participation"—and in conjunction with the instrumental and humanistic attributes of College English teaching, a hierarchical and precise teaching goal system for humanistic education should be constructed.

##### ***3.1.1 Precise Alignment of Dimensional Objectives***

In the cultural foundation dimension, goals such as the "acquisition of humanistic knowledge" and the "cultivation of cultural confidence" should be set to guide students in mastering core humanistic knowledge of both Chinese and Western traditions, understanding cultural differences, and enhancing their sense of national cultural identity. In the autonomous development dimension, goals including the "enhancement of autonomous learning capabilities" and the "cultivation of critical thinking" should be established; through activities such as independent inquiry and deep reflection, students' learning initiative and thinking abilities can be improved. In the social participation dimension, goals such as the "cultivation of social responsibility" and the "enhancement of cross-cultural communication skills" should be defined to guide students in practicing social responsibility within cross-cultural contexts and in presenting China's image.

##### ***3.1.2 Differentiated Setting of Hierarchical Objectives***

Differentiated hierarchical objectives should be established based on variations in students' academic years and majors. For lower-year students, the focus is on cultivating cultural foundation and autonomous learning capabilities, with the aim of mastering fundamental humanistic knowledge and developing independent learning habits. For upper-year students, the emphasis shifts to fostering social participation and practical innovation abilities, with the goals of enhancing cross-cultural communication skills and engaging in cross-cultural practical activities. For students in science and engineering majors, the cultivation of scientific-technological humanistic literacy is emphasized, while students in humanities and social sciences majors focus on deepening classical humanistic literacy, ensuring the targeted relevance of the objectives.

#### ***3.2 Restructuring the Teaching Content System to Explore Humanistic Materials Aligned with Core Literacy***

Guided by the cultivation of core literacy, the existing teaching content should be restructured and optimized to enhance the alignment between humanistic materials and core literacy.

##### ***3.2.1 Systematic Organization and In-depth Exploration***

The humanistic materials in existing textbooks should be systematically organized, classified, and integrated according to the three-dimensional framework of core literacy to form thematic modules such as "Cultural Inheritance," "Independent Inquiry," and "Social Responsibility." For example, within the "Cultural Inheritance" module, classical cultural materials from both Chinese and Western

traditions found in textbooks should be integrated to explore their value for cultivating humanistic grounding. In the "Social Responsibility" module, materials related to environmental protection and public welfare initiatives should be consolidated to strengthen the cultivation of social responsibility. Furthermore, the core literacy implications within these materials should be deeply explored, and targeted inquiry questions should be designed to guide students in profound reflection.

### ***3.2.2 Supplementing with Aligned Materials***

In line with the requirements of core literacy cultivation, diversified humanistic materials should be supplemented. On the one hand, materials from excellent traditional Chinese culture should be increased, such as selected readings from the Analects, traditional Chinese festival culture, and intangible cultural heritage, to enhance students' cultural confidence and patriotic sentiment. On the other hand, contemporary materials should be added, such as cross-cultural exchange cases from the "Belt and Road" Initiative and cases of international cooperation during global public health events, to cultivate students' global perspective and sense of social responsibility. Furthermore, institution-specific materials should be developed by leveraging the cultural characteristics and disciplinary strengths of the region where the university is located, thereby increasing the relevance and practicality of the materials.

### ***3.3 Innovating Teaching Models to Construct Multidimensional Interactive Teaching Implementation Pathways***

Breaking away from the constraints of traditional teaching models, a student-centered, multidimensional interactive teaching model aimed at cultivating core literacy should be constructed to enhance the effectiveness of humanistic education integration.

#### ***3.3.1 Thematic Inquiry-Based Teaching***

Inquiry tasks should be designed around core literacy thematic modules to guide students in autonomous learning and collaborative inquiry. For example, within the theme of "cultural confidence," an inquiry task on the "cross-cultural dissemination of excellent traditional Chinese culture" could be assigned. This would guide students to conduct group research, collect materials, write reports, and present their findings, thereby enhancing their humanistic grounding and autonomous learning capabilities during the inquiry process. Teachers, through guided questioning, feedback, and summarization, can deepen students' understanding of the theme and reinforce core literacy cultivation.

#### ***3.3.2 Situational Immersive Teaching***

Authentic cross-cultural language scenarios and humanistic experience settings should be created to allow students to enhance their language proficiency and core literacy through immersive engagement. For example, Virtual Reality (VR) technology can be utilized to simulate situations such as cross-cultural business negotiations or international cultural exchange salons. By assuming different roles and participating in these interactive scenarios, students can improve their cross-cultural communication skills and adaptability. Furthermore, activities such as "Classic Recitation" and "Cultural Scenario Play Performances" can be organized, enabling students to appreciate the allure of humanistic culture through experiential learning and to cultivate their humanistic sensibility.

#### ***3.3.3 Project-Driven Teaching***

Project tasks that integrate both practicality and a humanistic dimension should be designed to guide students in achieving comprehensive improvement of their core literacy through the process of project completion. For example, a "Cross-Cultural Public Service Awareness Project" could be organized. Students would work in groups to research public service concepts across different cultures, devise awareness campaigns, produce multilingual promotional videos, and conduct online outreach. Throughout the implementation of the project, students would enhance their practical innovation capabilities, sense of social responsibility, and cross-cultural communication skills.

#### ***3.3.4 Online-Offline Integrated Teaching***

By leveraging digital teaching platforms, an integrated online-offline teaching pathway should be constructed. Online efforts should involve developing a humanistic material resource library oriented toward core literacy, including resources such as micro-lectures, humanistic documentaries, and electronic versions of classic readings, to guide students in autonomous learning. Online interactive tasks, such as thematic discussions and online debates, should be designed to enhance student engagement. Offline activities should include practical experiential events, such as cultural lectures and

cross-cultural exchange practices, to deepen students' humanistic experiences. This approach achieves an organic integration of online autonomous learning and offline practical engagement.

### ***3.4 Upgrading the Evaluation System to Construct a Core Literacy-Oriented Multiple Evaluation Mechanism***

The limitations of the traditional evaluation system should be overcome by constructing a multiple evaluation mechanism oriented toward core literacy cultivation. This mechanism should integrate process-oriented evaluation with summative evaluation, and combine quantitative assessment with qualitative assessment.

#### ***3.4.1 Clarifying Evaluation Content and Indicators***

All dimensions of core literacy should be incorporated into the evaluation scope, with scientific evaluation indicators established. For the cultural foundation dimension, indicators should be set regarding the level of mastery of humanistic knowledge, cultural understanding ability, and manifestations of cultural confidence. For the autonomous development dimension, indicators should be established concerning the formulation of autonomous learning plans, utilization of learning resources, and demonstrations of critical thinking. For the social participation dimension, indicators should be defined based on cross-cultural communication skills, participation in social welfare activities, and demonstrations of a sense of responsibility. Simultaneously, the evaluation criteria for each indicator should be detailed to ensure the objectivity and operability of the evaluation.

#### ***3.4.2 Innovating Evaluation Methods***

Diversified evaluation methods should be adopted to comprehensively reflect students' development level of core literacy. Process-oriented evaluation should account for no less than 60% of the overall assessment. Through methods such as classroom observation, learning portfolios, project outcomes, and performance in group discussions, students' learning processes and the trajectory of their humanistic literacy improvement should be documented. Summative evaluation should focus on assessing comprehensive abilities, employing methods like scenario-based tests, essay writing, and oral defenses to evaluate students' language application skills and overall level of core literacy. Simultaneously, diversified evaluation subjects should be introduced, including teacher evaluation, student self-assessment, peer assessment, and evaluation from enterprises/society (such as feedback from partners in cross-cultural practice activities), to enhance the comprehensiveness of the evaluation.

#### ***3.4.3 Improving the Evaluation Feedback Mechanism***

A regular evaluation feedback mechanism should be established to promptly convey evaluation results to students. Based on issues identified in the evaluations, teachers should provide students with personalized suggestions for improvement. Furthermore, activities for students to reflect on the evaluations should be organized to guide them in clarifying their own strengths and weaknesses, and in developing personalized learning plans. Simultaneously, the evaluation results should serve as an important basis for teaching improvement, optimizing teaching content and methods to enhance teaching quality.

### ***3.5 Improving Support Mechanisms to Fortify the Support System for Core Literacy Cultivation***

A comprehensive support mechanism should be constructed to provide a foundation for the effective integration of humanistic education under the guidance of core literacy.

#### ***3.5.1 Strengthening Faculty Development***

Universities should regularly organize thematic training sessions, teaching seminars, and master teacher observation classes focused on core literacy and humanistic education to enhance teachers' capabilities in cultivating core literacy and integrating humanistic education. Teachers should be encouraged to engage in related teaching research, and their applications for teaching reform projects oriented toward core literacy should be supported, thereby elevating their teaching practice through research. An incentive mechanism to promote the enhancement of teachers' humanistic literacy should be established, guiding them to actively acquire humanistic knowledge and deepen their own humanistic grounding.

#### ***3.5.2 Enriching the Development of Teaching Resources***

Teaching resources from both within and outside the university should be integrated to establish a

core literacy-oriented humanistic education resource library for College English. This library should include institution-based teaching materials, digital resources, and practical bases. Partnerships should be established with foreign universities and enterprises to introduce high-quality cross-cultural teaching resources, providing students with authentic platforms for cross-cultural practice. Information technology should be utilized to develop virtual simulation teaching resources, creating immersive humanistic experience scenarios to enhance the relevance and practicality of the teaching resources.

### ***3.5.3 Optimizing the Teaching Management Mechanism***

Universities should incorporate the cultivation of core literacy into the College English teaching quality evaluation system, establishing a scientific mechanism for monitoring teaching quality and regularly assessing the effectiveness of humanistic education integration. Furthermore, the teaching incentive mechanism should be improved to recognize and reward teachers who demonstrate outstanding performance in core literacy-oriented teaching practices. Additionally, the allocation of teaching hours and credit settings should be reasonably adjusted to provide adequate time for humanistic education practice activities.

## **4. Analysis of Practical Effects**

### ***4.1 Significant Enhancement of Core Literacy and Humanistic Literacy***

Upon completion of the practical phase, questionnaire surveys and tests revealed that the average comprehensive core literacy score for students in the experimental class was 87.3 points, significantly higher than the 74.6 points for the control class. Improvements were most notable in dimensions such as cultural grounding, autonomous learning ability, and sense of social responsibility. Furthermore, 86.7% of the students reported that their humanistic sensibility and cultural confidence had been strengthened.

### ***4.2 Simultaneous Improvement in Language Application Ability***

The average comprehensive score for English listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation among students in the experimental class was 86.2 points, which is higher than the 77.5 points for the control class. Furthermore, the students' cross-cultural communication skills showed significant improvement. In scenario-based tests, the accuracy rate of students in the experimental class in handling cross-cultural interactions reached 89.3%, far higher than the 68.2% achieved by the control class.

### ***4.3 Enhanced Learning Interest and Initiative***

The survey indicated that 90.2% of students in the experimental class showed a significant increase in their interest in College English learning. Additionally, 87.5% of these students expressed a willingness to actively participate in humanistic inquiry and practical activities. These figures are notably higher than the 63.8% and 59.4% reported for the control class, respectively.

## **5. Research Innovativeness and Limitations**

### ***5.1 Adaptability and Innovativeness of the Development Program***

The talent development program constructed in this study closely aligns with the integration of humanistic education under the guidance of core literacy, demonstrating strong feasibility and effectiveness. Specifically, teaching objectives precisely aligned with core literacy can enhance the targeted nature of integration; restructured teaching content can improve the alignment between humanistic materials and core literacy; multi-dimensional interactive teaching models can stimulate students' learning initiative and deepen their humanistic experiences; and a diversified evaluation mechanism can comprehensively reflect students' literacy development.

### ***5.2 Research Limitations and Future Directions***

The pilot scope of this study was limited to one university in Jilin Province, resulting in a finite sample size. The long-term effectiveness of the development program still requires further tracking and verification. Future research could expand the pilot scope and conduct collaborative studies involving

multiple universities and enterprises. Furthermore, the integration of AI technology with teaching could be deepened to develop more targeted intelligent teaching systems. Practice has also demonstrated that a sound support mechanism is crucial for the effective implementation of these pathways. Achieving the organic unity of language teaching and core literacy cultivation requires the collaborative efforts of multiple stakeholders, including universities, teachers, and students.

## Conclusion

Although this study has achieved certain outcomes, it still has limitations. Future research could be further deepened in the following areas. First, expand the scope of practice by selecting students from universities of different tiers and types, as well as from various majors, to conduct long-term follow-up studies. This will verify the general applicability of the optimized pathways and explore differentiated integration strategies for different groups. Second, deepen research on the integration of information technology by utilizing technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data to construct an intelligent platform for integrating humanistic education under the guidance of core literacy. This aims to achieve personalized teaching and precise evaluation. Third, strengthen international comparative research by drawing on successful international experiences in integrating language teaching and humanistic education under the guidance of core literacy. Combining these with China's educational realities will help further improve the integration pathway system. Fourth, conduct research on long-term mechanisms for integrating humanistic education under the guidance of core literacy, exploring collaborative education models involving universities, families, and society to provide sustained support for core literacy cultivation.

Optimizing the integration pathways of humanistic education in College English teaching under the guidance of core literacy is a systematic project that requires continuous exploration and refinement. It is believed that with the deepening of research and the advancement of practice, College English teaching will achieve a deep integration of its instrumental and humanistic dimensions, thereby contributing to cultivating more versatile talents who can meet the developmental demands of the new era.

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