

Research on the Integration Path of KWL Model and Character and Civic Education in College English

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Abstract: This article investigates the integration path of the KWL model and character and civic education (CCE) within the context of College English instruction. It emphasizes that College English teachers should not solely concentrate on language proficiency but also on the cultivation of students' moral character and social responsibility. The KWL model, which encompasses three cognitive stages—What I Know, What I Want to Know, and What I Learned—encourages active student participation in the English learning process while enhancing critical thinking and innovative abilities. This study posits that teachers should extract elements of CCE, intertwine them with socially relevant topics, and design engaging activities to enhance students' character and civic literacy. Innovative methodologies such as case analysis, role-playing, and flipped classrooms are proposed to facilitate a deeper understanding of CCE contents. Furthermore, the design of practical activities and a diversified evaluation system are crucial to ensure the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of CCE in College English. Ultimately, the integration of the KWL model and CCE will significantly contribute to the cultivation of well-rounded foreign language talents.

Keywords: KWL Model; College English; Character and Civic Education; Integration Path

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization, College English must fulfill not only the role of language instruction but also serve as a pivotal platform for fostering students' moral character and social responsibility [1]. Teachers of College English should thoroughly explore the CCE elements embedded within the curriculum,

closely integrating them with contemporary social issues. Engaging and inspiring pedagogical methods are essential to guide students in reflecting on values and social responsibilities while mastering the English language [2]. Furthermore, to implement CCE effectively, College English instructors must continuously innovate their teaching methods to stimulate students' interest and initiative in the learning process [3,4]. This article focuses on CCE within College English, exploring the integration path through the lens of the KWL model, with the aim of innovating the educational approach to CCE and ultimately enhancing its effectiveness.

2. Convergence of KWL Model and CCE

The KWL model, a widely recognized teaching strategy, aims to stimulate student engagement through three cognitive stages: What I Know, What I Want to Know, and What I Learned [5]. This model encourages active participation in the English learning process and facilitates the effective construction of language knowledge [6,7]. Concurrently, CCE represents a significant reform in higher education, aiming to integrate those elements into teaching practices, thereby cultivating students' sense of social responsibility, innovative spirit, and practical abilities [8].

The KWL model emphasizes the subjectivity of students, positioning learners at the center of the educational process while viewing teachers as facilitators [9]. In practice, the KWL model encourages students to explore actively, which might lead to a profound understanding and mastery of knowledge [10]. This emphasis on the subjectivity of students aligns closely with the self-directed learning principles advocated by CCE. CCE promotes the enhancement of students' comprehensive capabilities through self-driven, self-monitoring, and self-reflective processes,

establishing a shared pursuit with the KWL model.

Moreover, the KWL model focuses on the cultivation of critical thinking and innovative abilities [11]. Students are encouraged to pose questions related to the topic and develop creative solutions [11]. For instance, in the stage of L, students engage in autonomous and collaborative learning processes to explore answers and validate their hypotheses. Such processes also require thinking skills including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Similarly, CCE emphasizes the development of students' critical thinking and innovative capacities. By directing students' focus toward socially relevant topics and practical activities, CCE aims to foster independent and innovative thinking [12].

Hence, KWL model provides the strong support for the integration of CCE through clear learning objectives and problem-oriented methods. To be specific, when discussing prospects of a particular academic field, teachers can direct students to consider the relationship between that specific field and national security, social development, etc., thereby cultivating students' sense of national pride and social responsibility. Additionally, KWL model emphasizes autonomous and collaborative learning processes, which also can provide opportunities for the in-depth exploration and widespread dissemination of CCE. In the process of exploring problems, students not only encounter the extensive knowledge but also perceive CCE elements, achieving a unity of knowledge transmission and value guidance.

3. Applications of KWL Model in CCE of College English

Integrating CCE into College English is a critical task in contemporary higher education. The KWL model serves as an effective teaching strategy that aids teachers in cultivating students' critical thinking and social responsibility while imparting language knowledge. For example, when addressing the theme "Living Green" the application of the KWL model in CCE can be elaborated as follows.

In the stage of K, teachers activate students' existing knowledge regarding environmental protection and stimulate interest in the topic. This can be achieved through a series of

introductory activities, such as assigning tasks for students to collect quotes related to "harmony", "green development", and "ecological civilization" from various sources, including philosophical wisdom and contemporary leaders' speeches. For instance, lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets. In class, teachers can invite students to share and explain the quotes they have collected, thereby stimulating interest and prompting consideration of environmental issues. Additionally, teachers can present video clips to visually illustrate the achievements and challenges of green development, followed by group discussions to facilitate the exchange of reflections and insights.

In the stage of W, teachers assist students in clarifying their learning objectives and encourage them to formulate questions they wish to explore. This stage serves as a bridge connecting known and unknown knowledge, which is crucial for fostering students' exploratory spirit and critical thinking. Teachers can clearly outline learning objectives, such as mastering key vocabulary and expressions related to green living, understanding the significance of green development, and cultivating environmental awareness. Following this, students can be guided to raise pertinent questions, such as "Why is it important to conserve energy at home?" and "What are practical ways to live a green life?". These inquiries not only relate to students' daily lives but also involve the application of environmental knowledge, allowing for exploration through group discussions or class exchanges.

In the stage of L, teachers are required to guide students to summarize their learning outcomes and encourage them to share their understanding of the topic. This step is vital for consolidating learning and elevating character and civic awareness. Teachers can invite students to review key vocabulary and expressions related to green living, such as "self-sufficient", "sustainable", "overconsumption", "recycle", "reuse", and "repurpose", followed by translation exercises involving relevant quotes. To further reinforce learning outcomes and enhance character and civic awareness, teachers can assign a writing task on "What can we do to live a sustainable and green life?". This exercise not only improves students' language application

abilities but also deepens their understanding of sustainable development and green living.

4. Integration Path of KWL Model and CCE in College English

4.1 Extracting Elements of CCE and Integrating Them into KWL Model

With the ongoing advancement of globalization, the significance of College English in higher education has become increasingly pronounced [13]. However, College English transcends the mere impartation of language skills and it also bears the responsibility of cultivating talents imbued with national pride and international perspectives [14,15]. In this context, integrating elements of CCE into College English, particularly through the KWL model, represents an innovative and effective pedagogical exploration.

In College English, teachers can incorporate CCE elements into various stages of the KWL model. Specifically, they should create scenarios related to the theme, guiding students to activate their prior knowledge. For instance, when discussing an English article about the "Chinese Dream", teachers may prompt students to review and share their understanding of the concept. Such introductory activities not only stimulate interest in the topic but also seamlessly introduce CCE, laying a foundation for deeper comprehension.

Additionally, teachers can leverage multimedia resources including images and videos to reinforce students' existing knowledge and stimulate preliminary thoughts on CCE. Thoughtfully designed inquiry questions with character and civic significance can guide students toward profound reflection. These questions should be closely aligned with language learning while addressing the core tenets of CCE. For example, when discussing the "Belt and Road Initiative", teachers can pose questions such as "What is the significance of the Belt and Road Initiative for promoting global economic development?" and "How should we manage relationships with countries along the route to achieve win-win development?". These inquiries not only facilitate a deeper understanding of the topic but also encourage students to consider international cooperation from a broader

perspective.

To further stimulate students' inquiry, teachers should encourage them to formulate their own questions and seek answers through collaborative group discussions. Throughout this process, timely guidance and feedback from teachers are essential to ensure that students' inquiry aligns with the objectives of CCE. Subsequently, teachers can guide students in summarizing their learning, helping them to cultivate correct values and moral concepts. For instance, following a discussion on "environmental protection", teachers can facilitate group discussions where students share their perspectives on environmental issues and practical measures for environmental stewardship. Such activities enable students to consolidate their knowledge while reflecting the outcomes of CCE in their practical actions.

4.2 Innovating Teaching Methods and Enhancing the Effectiveness of CCE

In College English, the innovation of teaching methods is paramount for enhancing the effectiveness of CCE. Traditional rote learning approaches are increasingly inadequate in meeting the demands of contemporary education, particularly concerning CCE. To better integrate the KWL model with CCE, teachers must continuously explore and implement advanced teaching methodologies to enhance their character and civic literacy.

Case-based teaching is a dynamic and practical approach that aids students in comprehending character and civic elements and applying them to real-world situations. To be specific, when discussing cross-cultural communication, teachers can present cases of Chinese companies' successes or failures in foreign markets, allowing students to explore cultural differences, international cooperation, and competitive dynamics. This approach cultivates students' global awareness and cross-cultural communication skills.

Role-playing and simulation activities provide students with firsthand experiences of character and civic contents. Simulated scenarios not only teach students effective communication and negotiation skills in English but also deepen their understanding of international contexts and responsibilities. Such activities enhance students' language application abilities while fostering their

international perspectives.

As a student-centered teaching model, the flipped classroom requires students to acquire knowledge through online resources prior to class, with class time primarily dedicated to problem exploration and practical application. Implementing flipped classrooms in College English encourages students to engage more actively in CCE. Teachers can provide English learning materials related to CCE in advance, allowing students to engage in autonomous learning before class, followed by discussions, debates, and other activities to deepen their understanding of character and civic contents. Project-based learning, centered on addressing practical problems, allows teachers to design projects with character and civic significance, enabling students to enhance their character and civic literacy while completing these projects. For example, students can collaborate to research the cultures of countries along the Belt and Road Initiative and produce English reports. This not only improves students' English skills but also deepens their understanding and support for the initiative.

Critical discussions serve as a vital means of cultivating students' critical thinking and innovative abilities. In College English, teachers can design controversial or open-ended questions related to CCE, guiding students to engage in in-depth critical discussions. These discussions not only enhance students' English expression abilities but also assist them in forming independent viewpoints and critical thinking skills.

To effectively assess students' outcomes in CCE, teachers should establish a diversified evaluation system. In addition to traditional written or oral examinations, various assessment methods such as classroom performance, group discussions, and project presentations should be incorporated. Furthermore, teachers can encourage students to conduct self-assessments and peer evaluations to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their CCE outcomes.

4.3 Emphasizing Practical Activities and Strengthening Experience of CCE

Practical activities are an indispensable component of higher education, particularly in the realm of CCE. In College English, teachers can create a more authentic and engaging

character and civic learning environment by integrating practical activities through the KWL model. This approach enables students to internalize the values of CCE through personal experience, thereby deepening their understanding of character and civic content and transforming these insights into personal values and behavioral norms. Given the extensive content of College English, there exists a wealth of materials for teachers to design practical activities. For instance, when discussing environmental issues, teachers can organize students to participate in campus environmental initiatives, such as waste sorting and tree planting, thereby helping students recognize the importance of environmental protection through hands-on experience.

Social practice serves as a significant avenue for students to extend their learning beyond the classroom. Teachers can utilize extracurricular time to facilitate students' participation in social practice activities, which not only enhance their understanding of national and social conditions but also cultivate their sense of social responsibility and mission. During these social practices, teachers should guide students in applying their English knowledge for practical communication and problem-solving.

In addition to traditional forms of practice, teachers should explore innovative practical approaches to enrich students' character and civic experiences. For example, they can employ virtual reality technology to create simulated practice environments, allowing students to experience the essence of CCE in immersive scenarios. Teachers can also encourage students to independently plan and organize practical activities, such as English speech competitions or short plays related to character and civic themes. Following these practical activities, teachers should facilitate reflection and summarization of experiences, enabling students to gain a deeper understanding of CCE.

5. Promoting Role of KWL Model in CCE of College English

5.1 Enhancing Students' Initiative in CCE of College English

In higher education, effectively enhancing students' enthusiasm for learning has become a

shared concern among teachers. The KWL model, as a student-centered teaching strategy, provides a robust theoretical foundation and practical guidance for addressing this challenge. This model begins with students' existing knowledge, stimulating their interest in learning and desire for exploration. By guiding students to recall and share their prior knowledge and experiences, teachers can help them establish connections with new information, thereby igniting curiosity and a thirst for knowledge. This knowledge-based approach not only alleviates learning anxiety but also allows students to experience a sense of achievement through active exploration.

The KWL model encourages students to clarify their learning objectives, fostering goal awareness and self-planning abilities. Students are prompted to actively contemplate and articulate what they wish to learn and the goals they aspire to achieve. This goal-oriented approach enables students to recognize their learning needs and directions more clearly, facilitating purposeful engagement in the learning process. Clear learning objectives provide sustained motivation, encouraging students to persistently pursue their goals.

The KWL model emphasizes the importance of summarization and reflection, enhancing students' critical thinking and self-assessment capabilities. In College English, students must not only master relevant language skills but also learn to summarize their learning processes. By reviewing their learning trajectories and analyzing their gains and losses, students can objectively evaluate their outcomes and identify areas for improvement. This process of self-reflection and summarization aids in consolidating knowledge and cultivating critical thinking and independent learning abilities.

The integration of the KWL model with CCE also plays a crucial role in shaping students' values. During the implementation of the KWL model, teachers not only focus on language acquisition but also emphasize the development of correct values. By incorporating character and civic elements into teaching practices and facilitating relevant discussions and activities, teachers can assist students in better nurturing their sense of social responsibility and civic awareness. This guidance in value formation significantly contributes to students' holistic development.

5.2 Promoting In-Depth Understanding in CCE of College English

Traditional methods of CCE often prioritize knowledge transmission while neglecting students' active participation and depth of understanding. The KWL model, as a student-centered teaching method, offers a new pathway for enhancing students' in-depth comprehension of character and civic contents. Through the KWL model, students can progressively delve into the core of character and civic knowledge based on their personal experiences, achieving a transformation from superficial cognition to profound understanding. In this process, students transition from passive recipients of knowledge to active explorers, thinkers, and constructors of knowledge.

The KWL model underscores the significance of students' existing knowledge and experiences, establishing a solid foundation for comprehending character and civic contents. Each student possesses unique life experiences and values, which serve as valuable resources for understanding CCE. The KWL model encourages students to share and discuss their experiences and perspectives, enabling them to recognize the connections between their lives and character and civic contents through comparison and reflection. Additionally, the KWL model fosters students' problem awareness and inquiry spirit. In CCE of College English, students must not only master language points but also develop critical thinking and analytical skills. The KWL model stimulates students' curiosity and desire to explore questions or problems. In the pursuit of answers or solutions, students engage in group discussions and practical activities, deepening their understanding of CCE.

The KWL model also emphasizes the importance of summarization and reflection, which aids students in consolidating and deepening their understanding of CCE. Throughout the learning process, students are encouraged to continuously review and summarize their learning. By articulating core viewpoints, they can systematically master character and civic contents. Reflecting on their learning processes and outcomes is an essential component, as it enables students to identify shortcomings and adjust their learning strategies and methods to enhance their

understanding of CCE.

Furthermore, the KWL model focuses on cultivating students' critical thinking and innovative abilities. In CCE, students must not only accept and inherit traditional culture and values but also learn to critically and innovatively develop them. The KWL model encourages students to examine issues from diverse perspectives and propose insights and viewpoints. This open-minded approach fosters a comprehensive understanding of character and civic contents while nurturing innovative awareness and practical abilities. In this process, the KWL model facilitates the integration of knowledge transmission and value guidance.

5.3 Cultivating Critical Thinking and Innovative Abilities

Currently, critical thinking and innovative abilities are recognized as core competencies essential for individual development. Higher education, as a pivotal stage for talent cultivation, bears the responsibility of fostering these key abilities. The KWL model, as a student-centered teaching strategy, provides a novel pathway for cultivating students' critical thinking and innovative capacities within the framework of CCE. The KWL model emphasizes student initiative, inquiry, and reflection throughout the English learning process, closely aligning with the cultivation of critical thinking and innovative abilities. Through the implementation of the KWL model, students can not only attain a deeper understanding of character and civic contents but also enhance their innovative consciousness through inquiry and reflection.

In traditional teaching models, students often accept pre-packaged answers without questioning or analyzing them. However, under the KWL model, students are encouraged to draw from their own experiences, pose questions related to character and civic contents, and seek answers. This questioning process stimulates students' curiosity and desire for knowledge while teaching them to analyze and evaluate the correctness of information. Consequently, the KWL model emphasizes independent inquiry, which is instrumental in cultivating students' innovative abilities.

The KWL model also highlights the importance of summarization and reflection,

which contribute to the consolidation and enhancement of students' critical thinking and innovative capacities. By organizing knowledge frameworks and summarizing core viewpoints, students can more clearly grasp the character and civic knowledge system. Reflecting on their learning processes and outcomes is a crucial aspect of this, as it enables students to identify shortcomings and limitations, adjust their learning strategies and methods, and engage more effectively in critical thinking and innovative practice. This process of summarization and reflection not only aids students in forming a systematic knowledge structure but also cultivates their self-regulation abilities.

Moreover, the KWL model advocates for an inclusive learning atmosphere that stimulates students' innovative thinking. By employing the KWL model, teachers can encourage students to express diverse viewpoints and insights while respecting their individuality and differences. This open learning environment fosters a sense of freedom and security, empowering students to articulate their ideas confidently. Consequently, such an atmosphere not only cultivates students' self-assurance but also stimulates their innovative awareness.

5.4 Reinforcing Students' Moral Character and Social Responsibility

The cultivation of moral character and social responsibility has become an essential component of higher education. The KWL model, as an innovative and effective pedagogical strategy, plays a significant role in enhancing students' moral character and sense of social responsibility. This model effectively facilitates the elevation of students' moral values and the enhancement of their social responsibility by guiding them to engage in deep exploration, active thinking, and proactive practice.

Under the guidance of the KWL model, students transition from passively receiving knowledge to actively posing questions and seeking answers. This exploratory process not only deepens students' understanding of the connotations of character and civic contents but also allows them to experience the joy of intellectual pursuit. Such positive emotional experiences provide a fertile ground for the cultivation of students' moral character,

helping them gradually develop a commitment to the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty.

In the context of CCE, mindsets serve as a bridge connecting knowledge and action. The KWL model encourages students to reflect profoundly on their learning, examine issues from multiple perspectives, and articulate their insights and viewpoints. This reflective process sharpens students' critical thinking abilities and enhances their awareness of social responsibilities and moral obligations. Through systematic reflection and summarization, students become more cognizant of their values and principles, thereby reinforcing their commitment to actively fulfilling their social responsibilities.

The KWL model puts the stress on the importance of practical application, necessitating that students integrate their learning with real-life experiences. Participation in social activities, volunteer services, and other forms of engagement allows students to translate moral concepts into concrete actions. This practical engagement not only enables students to personally experience the impact of moral behavior and the significance of social responsibility but also aligns their actions more closely with societal expectations and requirements. Through such practice, students' moral character and sense of social responsibility are genuinely strengthened and enhanced.

6. Conclusion

The synergy among teaching objectives, content, and evaluation methods is crucial for the effective integration of the KWL model with CCE in College English.

The alignment between CCE in College English and the KWL model in educational objectives is evident in the shared commitment to fostering students' comprehensive development. CCE emphasizes the significance of moral education alongside English language instruction, aiming to guide students in establishing correct worldviews, outlooks, and values. The KWL model, as an effective educational strategy, focuses on igniting students' enthusiasm for independent learning and problem-solving. When these two elements are combined, they collaboratively promote students' holistic development, leading to significant improvements in their knowledge, skills, and personal qualities.

The integration of CCE in College English and the KWL model in teaching content primarily involves the careful selection and integration of knowledge points. CCE emphasizes the incorporation of character and civic elements while imparting English knowledge, guiding students to develop accurate worldviews, outlooks, and values. The KWL model prioritizes students' needs and interests, encouraging them to actively explore and address problems. Therefore, teachers must consider students' actual circumstances and needs when integrating character and civic elements with language instruction.

The synergy between CCE in College English and the KWL model in evaluation methods is characterized by the diversification of evaluation subjects. Traditional evaluation practices often position teachers as the sole evaluators, neglecting students' subjectivity. Both CCE in College English and the KWL model emphasize the importance of student agency and participation, necessitating that teachers respect students' perspectives during evaluations. Teachers can employ evaluation methods that incorporate self-assessment and peer assessment, thereby providing a more comprehensive reflection of students' learning outcomes in CCE.

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