Student Activism Perspective on Participatory Reform Practice of College English Sustainable Education-Integration of Curriculum Ideological and Political Education and SDGs Themes

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of global sustainable development and the deepening reform of higher education in China, college English education is facing the dual task of improving language proficiency and cultivating sustainable literacy. This paper focuses on the participatory reform practice of college English sustainable education from the perspective of student activism, exploring the integration path of curriculum ideological and political education (CIPE) and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) themes. By combing through relevant theories such as student activism, English learning activity theory, and content and language integrated learning (CLIL), the paper constructs a three-dimensional reform framework including "student-led curriculum design, scenario-based practical participation, and multi-dimensional value shaping". It elaborates on specific implementation strategies from aspects of curriculum content reconstruction, teaching method innovation, and evaluation system optimization, aiming to realize the organic integration of language teaching, sustainable education, and value guidance. The research shows that student activism can effectively promote the deep participation of college English sustainable education reform, and the integration of CIPE and SDGs themes can enhance the educational depth and practical significance of the reform. Finally, the paper analyzes the potential challenges in the reform process and puts forward corresponding solutions, providing theoretical support and practical reference for the high-quality development of college English sustainable education.

Keywords

Student Activism, College English, Sustainable Education, Participatory Reform, Curriculum Ideological and Political Education, SDGs

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

In the context of global efforts to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed by the United Nations, education, as a core driver of sustainable development, has been entrusted with the important mission of cultivating global citizens with sustainable literacy. UNESCO clearly points out in its global framework for education for sustainable development that all levels of education should integrate sustainable development concepts and cultivate learners' sense of responsibility for the planet and society. As a basic general education course in colleges and universities, college English not only undertakes the task of improving students' cross-cultural communication ability but also has unique advantages in spreading sustainable development concepts and shaping correct values [1].

However, the current college English education still faces many practical dilemmas in the field of sustainable education: the curriculum content is overly focused on language knowledge transmission, lacking in-depth integration with SDGs themes and sustainable development practices; the teaching method is dominated by teacher-centered indoctrination, resulting in students' passive participation and insufficient cultivation of independent thinking and practical ability ; the integration of curriculum ideological and political education and sustainable education is superficial, and there is a phenomenon of "two skins" between language teaching, value shaping, and sustainable literacy cultivation. In this context, exploring effective reform paths has become an urgent task for college English education [2].

Student activism, as a form of student participation in social change and educational reform, emphasizes students' active participation, critical thinking, and practical action. It advocates that students should no longer be passive recipients of knowledge but active promoters and constructors of educational reform. In recent years, student activism has gradually emerged in the field of higher education reform, showing strong vitality in promoting curriculum innovation, optimizing teaching management, and shaping campus culture. Introducing the perspective of student activism into the reform of college English sustainable education can effectively stimulate students' subjective initiative, realize the transformation from "teacher-led reform" to "student-participated reform", and provide a new driving force for the in-depth development of the reform.

1.2 Research Significance

1.2.1 Theoretical Significance

This paper constructs a theoretical framework for the integration of student activism, college English teaching, sustainable education, curriculum ideological and political education, and SDGs themes, which enriches the theoretical system of college English education reform and sustainable education. By exploring the action mechanism of student activism in educational reform, it expands the application scope of student activism theory in the field of foreign language education. At the same time, the research on the integration path of CIPE and SDGs themes provides a new theoretical perspective for solving the problem of "superficial integration" in current curriculum ideological and political education.

1.2.2 Practical Significance

The participatory reform strategies proposed in this paper have strong operability, which can provide specific implementation plans for college English teachers to carry out sustainable education. By guiding students to participate in curriculum design, practical activities, and evaluation reform, it helps to improve students' English application ability, sustainable literacy, and sense of social responsibility. In addition, the research results can provide reference for the reform of other general education courses in colleges and universities, promoting the all-round development of sustainable education in higher education institutions.

1.3 Research Framework

This paper is divided into five parts. The first part is the introduction, which expounds the research background, significance, and framework. The second part is the theoretical foundation, which combs the core connotations of student activism, sustainable education, CIPE, and SDGs, and clarifies the logical connection between them. The third part constructs the participatory reform practice path of college English sustainable education from the perspective of student activism, including curriculum content reconstruction, teaching method innovation, and evaluation system optimization. The fourth part analyzes the challenges faced in the reform process and puts forward corresponding solutions. The fifth part is the conclusion, which summarizes the research results and looks forward to the future development direction.

2. Theoretical Foundation

2.1 Student Activism

Student activism refers to the behavioral activities of college students who, based on their own perceptions and demands, actively participate in social affairs and educational reform, and strive to promote social change and institutional improvement. Its core characteristics include subjectivity, practicality, criticality, and cooperativity [3]. Subjectivity emphasizes that students are the main body of action, and they independently initiate and participate in various activities according to their own cognitive and value judgments; practicality requires that student activism should be closely combined with specific practices, and promote change through practical actions rather than empty words; criticality means that students should have the ability to question and reflect on the existing educational system and teaching methods, and put forward constructive suggestions for improvement; cooperativity highlights that student activism often requires students to form alliances, carry out collective actions, and exert group influence to promote the realization of reform goals.

In the field of higher education, student activism has a significant impact on educational reform. Studies have shown that students' perceptions of campus culture will affect their choice of reform strategies: students who perceive campus culture as political tend to form alliances to promote change; students who perceive it as bureaucratic are more likely to seek formal positions to participate in reform; students who perceive it as collegial tend to promote reform through dialogue and communication. This shows that student activism is not a single form of action, but needs to adopt different strategies according to the specific environment, which provides a theoretical basis for the design of participatory reform paths in this paper.

2.2 Sustainable Education and SDGs

Sustainable education is an educational model that aims to cultivate learners' sustainable literacy, including environmental awareness, social responsibility, and global citizenship. It emphasizes the integration of sustainable development concepts into the entire process of education and teaching, guiding learners to establish the concept of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, and cultivating their ability to solve sustainable development-related problems. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include 17 core goals such as eradicating poverty, protecting the environment, and promoting equity, which provide a specific framework and direction for the practice of sustainable education [4].

The integration of SDGs into college English education has important practical significance. The CLIL 4Cs framework (Content, Communication, Culture, Cognition) has a high degree of consistency with the core literacy advocated by SDGs. Through content-based language teaching, students can not only improve their English language proficiency but also systematically learn knowledge related to SDGs, cultivate cross-cultural communication skills and critical thinking

ability, and enhance their sense of global responsibility. This provides a feasible path for the integration of sustainable education and college English teaching.

2.3 Curriculum Ideological and Political Education (CIPE)

Curriculum ideological and political education refers to the educational activity that integrates ideological and political education into professional courses and general education courses, and realizes value shaping while imparting knowledge and training abilities. The core connotation of CIPE in college English teaching includes three aspects: value, practicality, and integration. Value requires that English teaching should take "cultivating people for the Party and the country" as the fundamental direction, integrate socialist core values, Chinese excellent traditional culture, and revolutionary culture into the teaching process, and guide students to establish correct values; practicality emphasizes that CIPE should be rooted in real language practice activities, and avoid "slogan-style propaganda" and "labeled implantation"; integration requires realizing the deep integration of language ability, cultural awareness, and ideological and political literacy, and building a logical chain of "language knowledge - cultural understanding - value identification" [5].

The integration of CIPE and SDGs themes is mutually complementary. CIPE provides value guidance for sustainable education, ensuring that sustainable education adheres to the correct political direction and cultivates students' sense of national identity and social responsibility while cultivating global citizenship; SDGs themes provide rich content and practical carriers for CIPE, making the ideological and political education more specific, vivid, and international. The organic combination of the two can realize the synergistic effect of "language teaching + value shaping + sustainable literacy cultivation".

2.4 English Learning Activity Theory

English learning activity theory is a teaching concept and implementation path proposed to implement the goal of core literacy in English discipline in China. It takes cultivating core literacy as the goal, and organizes teaching through a series of interrelated and progressive activities, including three levels: learning and understanding, application and practice, and transfer and innovation. The theory emphasizes the integration of language, culture, and thinking, and advocates that students should learn language knowledge, develop language skills, and shape values through active participation in activities [6].

English learning activity theory provides a specific operational framework for the participatory reform of college English sustainable education. Under the guidance of this theory, teachers can design hierarchical activities around SDGs themes and CIPE elements, guide students to obtain and sort out knowledge related to sustainable development through learning and understanding activities, internalize and apply the learned knowledge through application and practice activities, and finally realize the transfer and innovation of knowledge and values through transfer and innovation activities, so as to effectively improve students' language ability and sustainable literacy.

3. Participatory Reform Practice Path of College English Sustainable Education from the Perspective of Student Activism

3.1 Student-Led Curriculum Content Reconstruction

Curriculum content is the core carrier of education and teaching, and its rationality and pertinence directly affect the effect of sustainable education. From the perspective of student activism, curriculum content reconstruction should give full play to students' subjectivity, realize the transformation from "teacher-centered curriculum design" to "student-participated curriculum construction", and ensure that the curriculum content is more in line with students' cognitive characteristics and learning needs [7].

3.1.1 Establishment of Student Curriculum Design Working Group

Colleges and universities can organize students to form a curriculum design working group, which is composed of students with different English proficiency levels, interests, and professional backgrounds to ensure the comprehensiveness and representativeness of the working group. The working group is responsible for investigating students' learning needs, collecting relevant resources, and participating in the design and revision of curriculum content under the guidance of teachers [8]. Specifically, the working group can first carry out a questionnaire survey among all students to understand their cognitive level of SDGs themes, interest points in sustainable education, and expectations for English curriculum content, and form a detailed demand analysis report; then, based on the demand analysis report, collect and sort out English learning resources related to SDGs themes and CIPE elements, including English reports, documentaries, case studies, etc.; finally, jointly with teachers, determine the curriculum modules and teaching content, and revise and improve the curriculum content according to the feedback in the teaching process.

3.1.2 Construction of "SDGs + CIPE" Integrated Curriculum Module System

Under the leadership of the student curriculum design working group, the curriculum content can be reconstructed into four modules around the core connotation of sustainable education:

1. Sustainable Development Foundation Module: This module mainly introduces the basic concepts, core goals, and global significance of SDGs, and integrates CIPE elements such as "Chinese wisdom in sustainable development" and

"national responsibility". For example, students can learn English expressions related to SDGs through reading UNESCO's official documents on sustainable development, and discuss China's practices and contributions in poverty alleviation, environmental protection, and other fields, so as to enhance their sense of national pride and social responsibility.

2. Cross-Cultural Communication and Sustainable Development Module: This module focuses on the cross-cultural communication issues in the process of global sustainable development, integrating CIPE elements such as "cultural confidence" and "international understanding". For example, students can carry out cross-cultural comparative research on the theme of "sustainable cities and communities" (SDG 11), compare the practices and experiences of China and foreign countries in building sustainable cities, and use English to express their own views and suggestions, so as to improve their cross-cultural communication ability and dialectical thinking ability.

3. Practical Application of Sustainable Development Module: This module focuses on the practical application of sustainable development concepts, integrating CIPE elements such as "practical spirit" and "innovative awareness". For example, students can design English community publicity programs around the theme of "carbon neutrality", use English to produce publicity posters, short videos, etc., and carry out publicity activities in the campus and surrounding communities, so as to realize the combination of language learning and social practice.

4. Sustainable Development and Future Career Module: This module links sustainable development with students' future careers, integrating CIPE elements such as "professional ethics" and "social responsibility". For example, students can learn English professional terms and communication skills related to green industries, discuss the requirements of the circular economy for future talents, and cultivate their "green skills" and employability.

3.2 Innovation of Student-Participated Teaching Methods

Teaching method is an important means to realize the teaching goal. From the perspective of student activism, it is necessary to break the traditional teacher-centered teaching mode, innovate student-participated teaching methods, and guide students to actively participate in the entire process of teaching, so as to improve the effectiveness of sustainable education.

3.2.1 Project-Based Learning (PBL) Driven by Student Activism

Project-based learning is a teaching method that takes projects as the carrier, guides students to carry out independent and cooperative inquiry learning, and is in line with the core concepts of student activism and sustainable education. In college English teaching, teachers can guide students to carry out SDGs-themed project-based learning, with students as the main body of the project, responsible for project design, implementation, and summary.

Specifically, the implementation process of the project can be divided into three stages:

Project Initiation Stage: Students independently form project teams, select project themes related to SDGs and CIPE, such as "English Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development", "College Campus Carbon Footprint Investigation and English Proposal Design", etc., and formulate detailed project implementation plans under the guidance of teachers.

Project Implementation Stage: Each project team carries out project research and practice according to the implementation plan. For example, the team with the theme of "English Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development" can investigate local intangible cultural heritage resources, interview inheritors, collect relevant materials, and then use English to produce promotional videos, design cultural experience activities, etc.; the team with the theme of "College Campus Carbon Footprint Investigation and English Proposal Design" can investigate the energy consumption, garbage generation, and other situations on campus, analyze the existing problems, and put forward targeted improvement proposals in English.

Project Summary and Exchange Stage: Each project team displays the project results in English, including project reports, achievement exhibitions, on-site demonstrations, etc., and carries out mutual evaluation and communication with other teams. Teachers make comments and guidance on the project results, focusing on evaluating students' language application ability, sustainable literacy, and cooperative inquiry ability.

3.2.2 Scenario-Simulated Teaching with Student Participation

Scenario-simulated teaching is a teaching method that creates real or simulated scenarios to guide students to carry out language practice activities, which can effectively improve students' language application ability and practical ability. From the perspective of student activism, students can be guided to participate in the design and implementation of scenarios, so as to enhance their sense of participation and initiative.

For example, around the theme of "international cooperation in sustainable development", students can design a simulated international conference scenario. Students play the roles of representatives of different countries, international organization staff, journalists, etc., and carry out English discussions, negotiations, and press releases on issues such as climate change, environmental protection, and poverty alleviation. In the process of scenario design, students need to collect and sort out information related to the positions and practices of various countries on sustainable development issues, integrate CIPE elements such as China's propositions and solutions on global

sustainable development, and use English to formulate meeting agendas, speeches, and other materials. In the process of scenario simulation, students can not only improve their English oral expression and cross-cultural communication ability but also deeply understand the importance of international cooperation in sustainable development, and enhance their sense of global citizenship and national responsibility.

3.2.3 Online-Offline Mixed Teaching Supported by Digital Technology

With the development of digital technology, online-offline mixed teaching has become an important trend in the reform of higher education teaching. From the perspective of student activism, it is possible to give full play to the advantages of digital technology, build an online leaning platform, and guide students to carry out independent and cooperative learning, so as to expand the space and time of teaching.

Specifically, on the one hand, an online learning community can be built on the smart teaching platform, where students can share SDGs-themed English learning resources, carry out online discussions and exchanges, and complete collaborative learning tasks. For example, students can form online discussion groups to discuss hot issues related to sustainable development in English, such as "the impact of artificial intelligence on sustainable development" and "the relationship between economic growth and environmental protection", and express their own views and opinions. On the other hand, offline practical activities can be carried out in combination with online learning content, such as organizing students to watch SDGs-themed English documentaries online, then carrying out offline seminars and speech contests; guiding students to learn English writing skills related to sustainable development online, then completing English proposal writing and exchange activities offline. Through the organic combination of online and offline teaching, it can not only meet the individual learning needs of students but also realize the deep integration of independent learning and cooperative learning.

3.3 Optimization of Student-Involved Evaluation System

Evaluation is an important part of the teaching process, which plays a guiding, supervising, and incentive role in teaching reform. From the perspective of student activism, it is necessary to break the traditional single evaluation mode dominated by teachers and test scores, establish a student-involved multi-dimensional evaluation system, so as to comprehensively and objectively evaluate the effect of sustainable education [9].

3.3.1 Establishment of a Multi-Subject Evaluation Mechanism

A multi-subject evaluation mechanism including students, teachers, and peers should be established to give full play to the subjective initiative of students in the evaluation process. Specifically, students can carry out self-evaluation, objectively evaluate their own performance in curriculum learning, project practice, and other links, analyze their own advantages and deficiencies, and put forward improvement measures; peers can carry out mutual evaluation, evaluate the performance of other students in cooperative learning, project implementation, and other links, focusing on evaluating their cooperative ability, communication ability, and practical ability; teachers can carry out comprehensive evaluation, combining students' self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and their own observation and understanding, to give a comprehensive and objective evaluation of students' language ability, sustainable literacy, and ideological and political quality.

3.3.2 Construction of a Multi-Dimensional Evaluation Content System

The evaluation content should be expanded from a single language knowledge evaluation to a multi-dimensional evaluation including language ability, sustainable literacy, and ideological and political quality. Language ability evaluation focuses on students' English listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating abilities in the context of sustainable development; sustainable literacy evaluation focuses on students' mastery of SDGs knowledge, environmental awareness, social responsibility, and problem-solving ability related to sustainable development; ideological and political quality evaluation focuses on students' recognition of socialist core values, cultural confidence, national identity, and sense of global citizenship.

3.3.3 Adoption of a Process-Oriented Evaluation Method

Adopt a process-oriented evaluation method, pay attention to the whole process of students' learning and practice, and avoid excessive emphasis on the results of a single test. Specifically, a student learning file can be established to record students' learning progress, project implementation process, achievement display, and other materials in detail, so as to track and evaluate students' growth and development process; carry out phased evaluation, conduct regular evaluations in different teaching stages, summarize the experience and deficiencies in the teaching process in a timely manner, and adjust the teaching plan and strategies; carry out incentive evaluation, give positive affirmation and encouragement to students' efforts and progress in the learning and practice process, so as to stimulate their learning motivation and enthusiasm.

4. Challenges and Solutions in the Reform Process

4.1 Challenges

4.1.1 Insufficient Awareness and Participation of Students

At present, some college students have insufficient understanding of sustainable development and student activism, lack enthusiasm and initiative in participating in the reform of sustainable education, and even hold a perfunctory attitude towards curriculum learning and practical activities, which affects the effect of the reform.

4.1.2 Inadequate Guidance Ability of Teachers

The reform of college English sustainable education involves knowledge in multiple fields such as sustainable development, ideological and political education, and cross-cultural communication, which puts forward higher requirements for teachers' comprehensive quality and guidance ability. However, at present, some college English teachers have insufficient knowledge reserve in sustainable development and ideological and political education, and lack experience in guiding student activism, which affects the smooth progress of the reform [10].

4.1.3 Imperfect Guarantee Mechanism

The reform of college English sustainable education requires the support of corresponding guarantee mechanisms, including curriculum setting, teaching resources, and incentive policies. At present, some colleges and universities have not established a sound guarantee mechanism, resulting in problems such as insufficient curriculum time, lack of teaching resources, and imperfect incentive policies in the reform process, which restrict the in-depth development of the reform.

4.2 Solutions

4.2.1 Strengthening Propaganda and Guidance to Improve Students' Awareness and Participation

Colleges and universities can strengthen the publicity and popularization of sustainable development and student activism through various channels such as campus radio, posters, and lectures, so as to improve students' understanding and recognition of them. At the same time, in the teaching process, teachers should pay attention to stimulating students' learning interest and enthusiasm, combine curriculum content with students' daily life and future development, and let students realize the practical significance and value of sustainable education, so as to improve their initiative and enthusiasm in participating in the reform [11].

4.2.2 Strengthening Teacher Training to Improve Their Guidance Ability

Colleges and universities should carry out special training for college English teachers, including knowledge training on sustainable development and SDGs, training on curriculum ideological and political education methods, and training on guiding student activism, so as to improve teachers' comprehensive quality and guidance ability. At the same time, teachers should be encouraged to carry out teaching and research activities, strengthen exchanges and cooperation with teachers in related fields, learn advanced experience and methods, and continuously improve their own teaching and research level [12].

4.2.3 Improving the Guarantee Mechanism to Provide Support for the Reform

Colleges and universities should establish and improve the guarantee mechanism for the reform of college English sustainable education. In terms of curriculum setting, reasonably arrange the class hours of sustainable education-related courses and incorporate them into the talent training program; in terms of teaching resources, increase investment in teaching resources, build a special resource library of college English sustainable education, and provide sufficient resource support for the reform; in terms of incentive policies, establish a sound incentive mechanism, give rewards to teachers and students who have made outstanding contributions in the reform process, and stimulate their enthusiasm and initiative in participating in the reform.

5. Conclusion

This paper explores the participatory reform practice of college English sustainable education from the perspective of student activism, focusing on the integration of curriculum ideological and political education and SDGs themes. Through the analysis of relevant theories such as student activism, sustainable education, curriculum ideological and political education, and English learning activity theory, the paper constructs a three-dimensional reform framework including curriculum content reconstruction, teaching method innovation, and evaluation system optimization, and elaborates on the specific implementation strategies of each part.

The research shows that student activism can effectively promote the deep participation of college English sustainable education reform. By giving full play to students' subjectivity in curriculum design, teaching implementation, and evaluation, it can make the reform more in line with students' learning needs and cognitive characteristics, and improve the effectiveness of the reform. The integration of curriculum ideological and political education and SDGs themes can realize the synergistic effect of "language teaching + value shaping + sustainable literacy cultivation", which is of great significance for improving students' comprehensive quality.

At the same time, this paper also points out the challenges faced in the reform process, such as insufficient awareness and participation of students, inadequate guidance ability of teachers, and imperfect guarantee mechanism, and puts forward corresponding solutions. In the future, we need to further deepen the research and practice of the reform, continuously optimize the reform path, improve the reform effect, and make greater contributions to the cultivation of high-quality talents with sustainable literacy and global citizenship.

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