

Research on the Enhancement of Ideological and Political Education in Courses at Universities and Colleges Under a New Situation

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Abstract

Amid the changes in economic situations, higher requirements have been set up for the cultivation of economic talent. Professional education should be organically integrated with ideological and political education, and only firm political directions, and correct directions of education can help achieve the goal of comprehensive talent cultivation. In particular, in the context of the normalization of the epidemic, strengthening the psychological guidance for students by enhancing the ideological and political education in courses is an important path of moral education for online and offline teaching and students under lockdown. This study takes economics as an example and discusses the objective need for universities and colleges to enhance ideological and political education, the objectives of the enhancement, and the ways to realize it.

Keywords: ideological and political education in courses, blended teaching, economics, comprehensive talent cultivation

1. Introduction

The new situation includes new changes in the economy, politics, society, and aspects at home and abroad. Against the backdrop of the new normal of the domestic economy, China is simultaneously dealing with the slowdown in economic growth, making difficult structural adjustments, and absorbing the effects of previous economic stimulus policies, while issues such as the Russo-Ukrainian war and disrupted global supply chains are impacting the multilateral trading system and the stability of the world economy. Meanwhile, the

COVID-19 pandemic has posed a more serious challenge to economic stability and employment since 2020. In this new situation, the significance of ideological and political education has been highlighted. A subtle integration of professional education and moral education can enhance students' sense of responsibility, mission, and faith when facing challenges, and an innovative teaching model and the emphasis on ideological and political education can jointly ensure high-quality talent cultivation to realize comprehensive talent cultivation (whole-process, all-round cultivation involving

various stakeholders).

2. The Objective Need for Universities and Colleges to Strengthen Ideological and Political Education

Universities and colleges need to improve their ideological and political curricula, which is the requirement of macroeconomic evolution for lifting the quality of talent cultivation (macro-level demand), the urgent need of various regions and sectors for new economic talents (medium-level demand), and an inevitable way for teachers and students to make themselves more competitive and adaptable (micro-level demand).

2.1 Macro-Level Demand

China is now in a critical period of economic transition and is facing a slowdown in economic growth and difficult structural adjustments at the same time. In such a context, factors such as the internal and external environments for economic development and growth drivers are undergoing significant changes. There are so many uncertainties affecting China's macroeconomic trends. Under the impact of the pandemic, in particular, the real economy is suffering, some small and medium-sized enterprises have difficulties in survival, and demand exceeds supply in the job market as many people are facing the risk of unemployment. Amid a large number of risks and challenges, the cultivation of top economic talents is crucial for future economic development. In addition, talents in the new era are expected to have not only professional skills but also comprehensive quality. In general, there is a large shortage of well-educated talents in terms of both abilities and moral qualities in the job market.

Universities and colleges, as cradles for talents, should make their talent-cultivating programs closely in line with the current economic situation, with training successors to the socialist cause, fostering integrity, and promoting rounded development of people as the fundamental goals. The aim of ideological and political education is an important way to train high-end talents who develop morally, intellectually, physically, and aesthetically with a hard-working spirit. As a strategy for improving the quality of talent cultivation in higher educational institutions, it demonstrates the return to the essence of education and even affects the security, stability, rejuvenation, and

rise of a country (Peng Jun, 2021). Therefore, ideological and political education is of vital importance, which is the urgent need for excellent talents in the construction of socialist economic power and the basic driving force to promote the development of related curricula in universities and colleges.

2.2 Medium-Level Demand

Economic development varies in different regions in China, and eastern China has a more advanced economy than western China. As a result, eastern China is the main destination for excellent economic graduates, while middle and western China faces a shortage of economic talents and has greater demands for high-level talents. Because of the Sino-US trade war that started in 2018, China's foreign trade sectors suffered from crises, and many enterprises in this industry closed due to operational difficulties. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic at the end of 2019 crushed investors' expectations and stymied investment in the Chinese market. In other words, the investment industry was severely battered. Under the influence of complicated international situations and the pandemic, economic enterprises have encountered problems in their operations to some extent or another. Against such a backdrop, China's finance, securities, investment, and foreign trade industries failed to employ large numbers of economic graduates. However, there is a severe lack of top economic talents for the industry. Enterprises not only pay attention to professional skills but also value moral virtues during the recruitment process. This is why it is difficult to hire economic employees who are excellent both professionally and morally despite the high salaries offered by enterprises, which results in the imbalance between the demand and supply of talents in the economic industry. The gradual emergence of this contradiction suggests that the way universities and colleges cultivate economic talents can no longer meet the needs of society and that graduates churned out through homogeneous approaches are no longer in an advantageous position in employment. Therefore, universities and colleges should strengthen moral education for students while training their professional skills in order to improve the cultivation of economic talents.

2.3 Micro-Level Demand

In the enhancement of ideological and political

education in curricula, teachers and students are expected to go hand in hand, develop in a coordinated way, and improve together.

Teachers are educated before educating others. As students' instructors, teachers should have the awareness that curricula should be imbued with ideological and political education and have the ability to learn, comprehend, and grasp the new dynamics in the field of ideology and politics. Only teachers with good teaching morality can nurture students' moral virtue and cultivate talents while teaching them. In addition, these teachers can lay a solid ideological foundation for students' healthy development. At the same time, the improvement of teaching skills is a crucial requirement for the enhancement of ideological and political education. The prerequisites for the complete integration of ideological and political content and professional courses are teachers with good ideological consciousness, professional knowledge theories, and skills and the ability to improve their competitiveness and to optimize the curriculum system and course content, with an aim to effectively impart knowledge and resolve doubts.

Students are the core of the enhancement. Students have different characteristics, strengths, and needs, and knowledge acquisition is only the first step for them to adapt to the courses. The key to the improvement of ideological and political education in universities and colleges is that students abandon traditional mechanical learning, foster their ability to study independently and motivation for learning, and actively participate in the reform of teaching models. Furthermore, an equal and harmonious relationship should be established between students and teachers, coupled with a favorable teaching and learning atmosphere in which students interact with their teachers and peers, both online and offline. The goal is to consolidate students' learning achievements and satisfy the requirement of improving students' competitiveness and adaptability to the greatest extent possible in the improvement of ideological and political education.

3. Principles and Objectives of Strengthening Ideological and Political Education in Universities and Colleges

3.1 The Principles

The principle of comprehensiveness means that

the enhancement of ideological and political education should cover all the courses of each discipline and the whole teaching and learning process. All-round education that involves various parties should be implemented during the whole process, and a long-term mechanism of educating students by teaching, research, practice, management, service, culture, and organization (*People's Daily*, 2017).

The principle of dynamism requires that the content of ideological and political education should be in line with the events, times, and situations and adapted according to the laws of education, ideological and political work, and the growth of students. Attention should be paid to the characteristics of teachers' thinking and requirements for their work, and the combination of ideological teaching and practical activities and that of general requirements and teaching of different aspects should be underscored. In addition, reform and innovation should be promoted. The innovation of theoretical ideas, content and forms of teaching, as well as teaching methods, should be spurred to improve the modernity and effectiveness of the work.

The principle of effectiveness means that only by establishing a sound assessment and incentive mechanism can schools that are led by the goal of strengthening moral education and cultivating people can they make teachers and students more active and motivate their creativity to refine ideological and political education in schools. Through the diversification of the participants and dimensions of assessments, a range of different assessment methods, and reasonable assessment criteria, an effective incentive mechanism can be established to improve the qualities of innovative talents. In such a context, university and college students are motivated to integrate their ideals and pursuits into the cause of the country and the nation.

3.2 The Objectives

3.2.1 Knowledge

With continuous social progress, the diverse demands of society for college teachers are increasing. The requirements of contemporary college students for teachers are not only confined to imparting knowledge. In addition, teachers are expected to help students solve problems and resolve confusion and are thus required to underscore strengthening moral

education and cultivating people, enhance the consciousness of the role of teachers, and upgrade their responsibilities. At the same time, teachers should have the awareness that curricula should be imbued with ideological and political education and integrate ideological and political education into various disciplines to build a system with diversified ideological and political patterns. Only by doing so can ideological and political education be better implemented and can students be ideologically developed while acquiring professional knowledge.

3.2.2 Ability

The overall enhancement of ideological and political education in universities and colleges is of vital practical significance for improving the working mechanism for comprehensive talent cultivation, shaping students' sound personalities, and implementing the fundamental tasks of "strengthening moral education and cultivating people". Various aspects of ideological and political education should go in line with each other and be perfectly integrated. To reach this goal, students should be provided with more opportunities to explore ideological and political education, and practice should be used to test the effect of students' ideological and political education. Ideological and political ideas should be integrated into practices and training, case analysis, and group discussion to improve students' comprehensive qualities such as hands-on practice, organization and coordination, and communication.

3.2.3 Quality

Universities and colleges are a pivotal part of national education, and students will play a key role in socialist construction in the future. The correct guidance on college students' thinking determines whether they can become qualified successors of the socialist cause. We should aim to cultivate new generations working for the socialist cause, stick to the correct direction of education, and ensure the harmonious coexistence of professional courses and ideological and political education. We should continue to see "educating people" as the life of education and "establishing morality" as the soul of education. Courses delivered at universities and colleges should be always guided by correct values, in which traditional Chinese virtues should be greatly promoted,

and efforts should be made to produce a good synergistic effect. A high-quality education personnel team should be built; educators should teach students by personal example as well as verbal instruction to cultivate new generations of well-rounded socialist successors with good moral, physical, social, and aesthetic qualities.

4. Practical Ways to Enhance Ideological and Political Education in Universities and Colleges

4.1 Party Building Leading the Enhancement

In universities and colleges, the party-building work is internally consistent with business integration and development. On the one hand, party building can drive, guide, and guarantee teaching and research. The Communist Party (the Party) of China exercises overall leadership over all endeavors across the country. Ideological and political education helps disseminate the Party's values and excellent ideas, which are constantly blended into practical teaching activities, thoroughly stimulates the learning enthusiasm of teachers and students, and then promotes the teaching and research work of universities and colleges (Fu Yao, 2021). Party building, while guiding ideological and political education, leads the direction of fundamental questions in education, namely who to cultivate, what to cultivate, and how to cultivate, and guarantees the achievement of "the fundamental task of strengthening moral education and cultivating people" (Liu Dingxin, 2021). Other the other hand, teaching and research underpin party building in universities and colleges and facilitate its implementation. General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed in his visit to the Renmin University of China that "first-class masters are needed to build a socialist university with Chinese characteristics and to cultivate people who are devoted to the socialist cause". In universities and colleges, teaching and research should be closely integrated with the development of various majors, talent cultivation, and ideological guidance. Only by integrating the development of various majors, party building, and ideological and political education can the vitality of party building be highlighted and red genes be imbued in young students' mindsets and rooted in Chinese land (Liang Shuping, 2021).

4.2 Goal-Oriented Construction of a Differentiated

Teaching Team

Teachers play a pivotal role in implementing ideological and political education and the reform of ideological and political education in courses, and they are directly related to the quality of ideological and political education. Based on the changing demands for talent under the new situation, the strengths of different teachers, and students' diverse demands for careers, teaching teams can be built from the following perspectives to enhance ideological and political education.

The first is to build academic teaching teams. Teachers use their professional strengths to strive for interdisciplinary integration of knowledge of economics, management, finance, and accounting, expand their academic vision and scientific thinking, and enhance the ability of the teaching team to cultivate versatile talents. Scientific research projects are applied to teaching to cultivate students' academic competence. For students seeking a master's degree, for example, teachers deliver courses to help them pass the entrance examination to increase the rate of taking the entrance examination. For the writing requirements of a graduation thesis, lectures are delivered to introduce the writing methods and specific requirements for writing a thesis, in a bid to increase the number of excellent graduation theses. The second is to build competition-oriented teams, focusing on professional practice and research, giving full play to honors as incentives that are realized in competition, promoting the unity of knowledge and action of college students, converting the knowledge learned into productivity, and sufficiently using the educating function of ideological and political education to "foster abilities". This approach is mainly for those who enter the workforce just after graduation, which increases the employment rate by combining theory and practice and improving the comprehensive strength. The third is to build innovative teaching teams. Attention should be paid to the improvement of teaching quality and the innovation and reform of teaching to motivate students to actively participate in the teaching of courses. For example, ideological and political elements can be extracted from various perspectives such as major events and typical figures, integrated into classic cases, and thus incorporated into professional courses. In such a context, ideological and political elements

and professional knowledge are blended in various dimensions, and teaching reform and innovation can be realized.

4.3 Blended Teaching Empowering Ideological and Political Education

The development of the Internet provides abundant network resources for society and a digital platform for the integration of ideological and political education. The "online + offline" blended teaching enriches students' ways of learning and enables them to find more quality teaching resources for ideological and political education through different channels.

On the one hand, information technologies such as big data, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things dynamically track the behavior and state of mind of teachers and students in ideological and political education implemented in various courses, addressing the drawbacks of the previous simple "two-line alternation". A range of tools such as mind maps that includes ideological and political elements, Yuketang, and Zhihuishu (Yuketang and Zhihuishu are online teaching and learning platforms) are used to enable the whole process of teaching and learning. Online learning and mind-map plotting precede the class; during the class, mind maps are improved through tests on Yuketang and discussions; after class, mind maps are consolidated and deepened through assignments and Q&A sessions on online discussion boards of online platforms to promote the online/offline synchronicity and "two-line integration". On the other hand, the advantages of digital technology should be sufficiently used to actively build digital platforms. The second classroom can be greatly promoted, based on the characteristics of professional courses, to assist teaching, as a way to educate people through professional teaching and moral education. Blended teaching subtly integrates ideological and political elements into courses by means of its strong digital literacy, thus achieving the goal of universities and colleges to cultivate professionals for the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Statements and Declarations

All of the authors declared that no potential conflicts of interest with respect is relevant to the research and the publication of this article.

Data Availability

We do not analyse or generate any datasets, because our work proceeds within a theoretical approach.

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