

Research on the Realistic Dilemmas and Pathways of Integrated Construction of Ideological and Political Course in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education in the New Era

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Keywords: Integrated Ideological and Political Course, dilemmas, pathways

Abstract: Ideological and Political Course (IPC) are key courses for implementing the fundamental task of “moral education and talent cultivation.” Promoting the integrated construction of IPC across primary, secondary, and higher education is an inevitable requirement for the reform and innovation of IPC. It contributes to improving the quality of IPC. This effort should adhere to the principles of orderliness, effectiveness, and coordination, optimizing teaching content following a step-by-step and spiral development approach, innovating teaching methods based on the characteristics of different educational stages, and constructing an evaluation system that integrates outcome- and process-oriented approaches. The goal is to create a new pattern of integrated IPC education across educational stages. This paper elaborates on the necessity of the integrated construction of IPC across primary, secondary, and higher education, analyzes the realistic dilemmas in this construction, and proposes optimization pathways based on typical cases.

1. The Necessity of the Integrated Construction of IPC in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education

The IPCs in different educational stages vary in teaching objectives, content, and methods, yet they also share commonalities. The integrated construction of IPC across primary, secondary, and higher education aims to align the differences and commonalities of IPC in various stages. Based on the teaching objectives of each stage, differences in teaching objectives, content, and methods are emphasized, with attention to the continuity of teaching content and the integrated selection of teaching methods. Following the basic principles of gradual progress and spiral development, the integration balances differences and unifies the overall and specific aspects. The course objectives are designed holistically, with clear requirements in political recognition, patriotism, moral cultivation, legal awareness, and cultural literacy, guiding students to solidify the “Four Confidences” and become well-rounded socialist builders and successors who develop in morality, intellect, physique, aesthetics, and labor^[1].

- In the primary school stage, the focus is on cultivating students’ moral emotions.

- In the middle school stage, the emphasis is on laying a solid ideological foundation.
- In the high school stage, the priority is to enhance students' political literacy.
- In the university stage, the focus is on strengthening students' sense of mission and responsibility.

In 2005, the Ministry of Education issued the “Opinions on the Overall Planning of the Moral Education System in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education,” proposing the construction of a moral education system across these stages. The 2017 “Opinions on Deepening the Reform of the Education System and Mechanisms” emphasized constructing an integrated moral education system for kindergarten, primary, secondary, and higher education. The 2019 “Opinions on Deepening the Reform and Innovation of School Ideological and Political Theory Courses in the New Era” proposed integrated IPC construction, and the 2020 “Implementation Plan for the Reform and Innovation of School Ideological and Political Theory Courses in the New Era” outlined the implementation of integrated IPC construction. The core task of integrated IPC construction is to promote the integrated development of teaching content across stages, ensuring seamless and coherent teaching content in IPC.

2. Realistic Dilemmas in the Integrated Construction of IPC in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education

2.1. Repetition in Teaching Materials Requires Better Coordination and Layering

Although repetitive content in teaching materials can help students remember key concepts and theories better, it neglects the necessity for personalized education tailored to the actual needs of students at different grades. There is a “reversed difficulty” phenomenon in the understanding of content in IPC teaching materials^[2]. The material should be planned and categorized with greater precision and scientific consideration based on the characteristics of each age group. This not only clarifies the educational goals and talent cultivation direction for each stage but also helps construct a more effective integrated curriculum model.

2.2. Challenges in the Continuity of Teaching across Stages Need Urgent Attention

The main entities in IPC construction across primary, secondary, and higher education should fulfill their respective responsibilities, collaborate, and pool their strengths. Although educational goals are consistent and aim to cultivate “socialist builders and successors” in the long term, bottlenecks in collaboration exist between stages. Issues of coordination, coherence, and integration remain. Compared with moral education integration, IPC integration presents higher demands and complexity in content design, method innovation, and teacher training. Disjointed connections in IPC education still persist.

2.3. Insufficient Teacher Resources for IPC

Currently, although the number of teachers for IPC at various educational stages has improved significantly compared to previous years, some regions still face a shortage of IPC teachers, and the distribution of teaching resources remains unbalanced. According to the Ministry of Education's requirement of a 1:350 teacher-student ratio, universities still need to make further efforts to meet this standard. In primary and secondary schools, the number of teachers dedicated to IPC teaching is insufficient, and their level of professionalism is often weak. In some schools, IPC teaching is often handled by teachers of secondary subjects or replaced by class advisors, which is detrimental to the integrated development of IPC education. Moreover, the career development pathways for

IPC teachers across stages are not smooth, limiting communication and exchange among teachers. The missions and responsibilities of IPC teachers differ at each teaching stage, which further complicates the goal of integrated IPC teacher development across educational stages^[3].

2.4. Lack of a Robust Evaluation System

The educational incentive function is a crucial characteristic of a scientific evaluation system, which is essential for fully promoting the implementation of ideological and political education. However, with the gradual deepening of integrated IPC across various educational levels, we have encountered some restrictive challenges in the evaluation and feedback process of these courses at different stages. These challenges are primarily reflected in the fact that traditional evaluation feedback methods fail to fully reflect students' learning outcomes, leading to a decline in the overall efficiency of IPC.

3. Case Analysis of the Integrated Construction of IPC in Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Education

The Education Working Committee and the Department of Education of the Autonomous Region jointly issued a notice titled *"Notice on Organizing and Carrying out the Pairing and Co-construction of Integrated IPC in Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Schools in the Region"*^[4]. In accordance with the requirements of the region, the Marxism College of Agricultural Vocational and Technical University has taken the lead in establishing a platform for co-construction, sharing, and collaborative innovation of "Big IPC" to promote the integrated construction of ideological and political education in Changji's primary, secondary, and tertiary schools, using the in-depth implementation of the "One Ten Hundred Thousand" project as a starting point.

3.1. Top-level Design: Establishing the "One Ten Hundred Thousand" Integrated Work Mechanism

The Changji Education Working Committee and the school party committee, in combination with the local conditions of Changji, developed the "One Ten Hundred Thousand" work plan for the integrated construction of ideological and political education at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. The plan is as follows:

- **"One"** as the leading force: Relying on the national universities' ideological and political course master teacher workstations, establish the "Wang Xueli Ideological and Political Course Master Teacher Incubation Base" in Changji.
- **"Ten"** as the core: Establish 10 ideological and political course master teacher workstations at the state level.
- **"Hundred"** as the demonstration: Train 100 core ideological and political course teachers.
- **"Thousand"** as the foundation: Train and enhance the capabilities of 1,000 ideological and political course teachers in the entire prefecture.

The Changji Education Working Committee led the convening of the launch conference, and based on a 3-year project cycle, it clarified four stages of tasks: mobilization and deployment, promotion and implementation, consolidation and improvement, and summarization and enhancement. The goal is to build an integrated community for ideological and political education in primary, secondary, and tertiary schools throughout Changji, thereby forming a gradual and spiral integrated system for ideological and political education.

3.2. Deepening Demonstration and Leading by Example: Selecting, Nurturing, and Building a Master Teacher Team for IPC

Since 2022, various schools in Changji have carried out the selection of master teacher workstations for IPC, building a master teacher team centered on these workstations. The process included: Selecting 10 municipal-level "Master Teacher Workstations for IPC", covering the six stages of primary, secondary, and tertiary education, as well as courses like ideological and political theory, Chinese language, and history. This initiative has influenced all seven counties and cities in Changji and 10 municipal-directly managed schools, leading to the cultivation of more than 150 key ideological and political course teachers. The master teacher workstations led by these experts guide the development of 20 "Party Building and IPC Practice Teaching Bases", creating specialized teaching topics and practical courses tailored to each education stage. This ensures that practical teaching in IPC aligns closely with classroom teaching, and both work in sync, resonating together^[5].

3.3. Fostering Hearts and Minds, and Nurturing Intelligence: Building "Five Integrations" to Promote Collaborative Education

Following the "integration of collective lesson preparation, education and teaching, scientific research, training and development, and practical research" approach, a series of systems were established to improve the collaborative lesson preparation, study training, and cultivation of backbone teachers in the IPC. The experts' discussion mechanism was further refined.

National and regional master teachers' workstations and key ideological and political teachers were invited to engage in in-depth discussions on promoting the foundational conditions and measures for the integrated construction of IPC. Forums such as the "Youth Pepper Forum" for university IPC, and seminars on the high-quality development of vocational education IPC were held. These efforts helped create successful examples of teaching the same course in different ways, thereby building key forces to promote the integration of IPC in primary, secondary, and tertiary schools.

Furthermore, the Wang Xueli IPC Master Teacher Incubation Base in Changji played a significant role in driving teacher development. Work plans were formulated, on-site meetings and seminars on integrated IPC construction were organized, and specialized training classes and workshops were held. The base supported both online and offline training sessions, and research projects related to the "Big IPC" were launched. The base also provided guidance for the selection, evaluation, and development of research topics.

Encouraging master teacher workstations and backbone teachers to engage in research projects focusing on the construction of the "Big IPC" and the integration of IPC across primary, secondary, and tertiary education has helped break down barriers between schools, educational stages, and subjects.

4. Optimization Path for the Integrated Construction of IPC in Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Education

4.1. Optimize the Course Structure and Content Based on Top-Level Design

In order to achieve the integrated development of ideological and political education courses across primary, secondary, and tertiary education, it is necessary to follow the principle of "gradual promotion and spiral advancement." This means not only highlighting the basic characteristics of each grade level but also considering the effective connections between the grades. Thus, the focus

should not only be on the unique characteristics of each grade's teaching but also on a more precise design of the learning content for each grade.

By optimizing the structure of textbooks, the focus should be on maintaining the integrity of the system, the logical coherence, and the continuous progression of the content, preventing unnecessary repetition between grades. Moreover, a teaching plan that is interconnected and organically integrated should be developed to ensure that the content flows logically and seamlessly from one stage to the next.

In the teaching process, it is crucial to move from simple to complex, from basic to in-depth, respecting the teaching characteristics of each grade level. Based on this, a standard and operational model for the integrated ideological and political education curriculum in primary, secondary, and tertiary education can be built. This model ensures that the courses at each grade level maintain a certain degree of independence while achieving effective connections.

To ensure that ideological and political education courses across all educational stages meet the expected teaching outcomes, an effective system for integrating teaching resources should be established. This allows the sharing and utilization of educational resources across all stages. A teaching resource repository for IPC should be created, so that teachers can simultaneously consider the teaching content and goals of other stages when preparing their courses, creating a synergistic effect on a shared basis. This will further stabilize and sustain the integrated results of ideological and political education^[6].

4.2. Optimize Methods and Approaches to Enhance Depth and Innovation

Educational strategies should be tailored to the characteristics of students at different age levels, gradually adjusting the complexity of life experiences, practical exercises, cognitive training, and theoretical knowledge. For example, at the primary school stage, moral education is the foundational level of political education. Students at this stage primarily rely on direct experiences, so teachers should use simple and easily understandable language.

However, at the secondary school stage, particularly in high school, some schools, facing pressures related to entrance exams, tend to overemphasize exam results, which weakens the political education objectives. Therefore, at this stage, the teaching methods need to focus more on the political nature and effectiveness of education.

When students reach the university stage, their values gradually take shape, requiring teaching methods that are both theoretically deep and logically sound. If the teaching methods lack depth and innovation, it will negatively affect the integration process of ideological and political education across primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Therefore, it is important to emphasize resource sharing and utilize information technology and intelligent platforms to improve the practical effectiveness of the integrated ideological and political curriculum. Additionally, a feedback mechanism between adjacent stages should be established, allowing teachers of ideological and political courses to appropriately adjust the goals and teaching progress of the next stage based on the actual situation of the previous stage.

4.3. Build an Integrated Teaching Faculty for Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Ideological and Political Education

“To run good ideological and political theory courses, the key lies in the teachers—specifically in fully utilizing their enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity.” To optimize the structure of the ideological and political teacher workforce and improve the quality of educational personnel, it is essential to build an integrated teacher team for ideological and political education. This will lay a

solid foundation for the integrated construction of IPC across primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

Efforts should be made to enhance the ability of teachers at various stages to guide students' moral development. This includes increasing the recruitment and training of full-time ideological and political teachers at the primary school stage, expanding the number of ideological and political teachers in universities, addressing the shortage of such teachers, and improving the effectiveness of ideological and political theory courses.

To foster collaboration and exchange among teachers at different educational stages, it is essential to establish a regular lesson preparation mechanism for the integration of ideological and political courses across stages. A digital lesson preparation platform should be developed to facilitate this process. Teachers should actively participate in the integrated construction of IPC, embrace a learning and practical approach, recognize their responsibility and role, and commit to maintaining the integrity of the subject while innovating in teaching methods. This will provide a guiding foundation for the integration of ideological and political education across all stages.

4.4. Establish a Scientific Evaluation and Quality Monitoring System

One of the core challenges in building a scientific and reasonable evaluation system for ideological and political education is creating an effective set of evaluation indicators. Currently, the ideological and political education evaluation system is undergoing a positive transformation from a single-dimensional to a multi-dimensional approach, from scattered to integrated evaluation processes, and from a rough to a more precise measurement of outcomes. The integrated high-quality development of IPC across primary, secondary, and tertiary education also requires a scientific and rational evaluation system for effective guidance.

Currently, the evaluation system is fragmented, with assessment methods like exams, assessments, and daily conduct ratings presenting a fragmented state, and the evaluation index system is incomplete. Therefore, the quality evaluation of the integrated IPC system should be based on a unified evaluation system that combines result-oriented and process-oriented approaches. A flat structure should be built to meet the comprehensive requirements of integration, designing targeted quality monitoring indicators for the teaching content at different stages.

The quality monitoring system should emphasize the political nature, continuity, and progression of the teaching process. Strengthening supervision and evaluation of course teaching, creating high-quality specialized online courses, and facilitating resource sharing in the integrated ideological and political education system will support better quality monitoring and optimization.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, to break down the boundaries and barriers between the ideological and political education courses in primary, secondary, and tertiary education, a set of effective construction goals and strong synergies must be formed. The overall layout and feasible implementation plan for the integrated ideological and political education courses must be well-defined. This requires clarifying the commonality, differences, and interconnectivity of the various stages involved in IPC construction. A comprehensive plan should be developed for the content, operational model, and objectives of the IPC at each level, and the roles of the various educational stages should be well-coordinated. This will help create a new pattern for IPC construction that aligns with the developmental characteristics of students at different stages and the rules of ideological and political education.

Acknowledgement

This research is supported by the 2018 “Outstanding Young and Middle-aged Teachers in Ideological and Political Theory Courses” project under the “Construction of Model Marxist Colleges and Outstanding Teaching and Research Teams” program. The project title is “Innovative Research on the Collaborative Education Pathway for Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Vocational and Technical Colleges under the Context of Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education” (Project No.: 18JDSZK142).

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