

Exploration of the construction of ideological and political education connotations and the improvement path of sociology experimental courses in the context of the new humanities

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Abstract: The paper explores the development and enhancement pathways of ideological and political education content within sociology experimental courses in the context of the New Liberal Arts. Firstly, the article points out the existing issues regarding the stimulation of students' learning interests and enthusiasm in experimental courses, as well as the relative neglect of ideological and political education within experimental courses in the humanities and social sciences field. Secondly, the article reviews relevant literature, including viewpoints and methodologies regarding ideological and political education development under the New Liberal Arts framework, and presents some common consensus regarding the role of classroom education as the primary channel for nurturing students. Subsequently, the article discusses the status of ideological and political education within sociology experimental courses, identifies the deficiencies in existing research, and proposes a specific exploration plan using the "Social Statistics Software" course as an example. Finally, the article summarizes the innovativeness of this exploration plan, emphasizing its significance for the ideological and political education development within experimental courses in humanities and social science disciplines, as well as its value and significance in educational reform practices. Overall, the article systematically discusses the pathways and methodologies for ideological and political education development within sociology experimental courses under the New Liberal Arts framework, providing valuable references for practical exploration.

Keywords: Ideological and political education, Sociology experimental courses, the Era of new humanities

1. Introduction

In the era of profound social changes, it is undoubtedly an era of great development for philosophical and social sciences^[1]. Against the backdrop of the global new technological revolution, new economic development, and the entry of socialism with Chinese characteristics into a new era, the construction of new humanities and social sciences is a necessary response of higher education to the new era and new situations. Curriculum reform guided by the principle of "enhancing curriculum quality, strengthening teachers, engaging students, improving management, and achieving tangible results" is one of the key tasks in this construction^[2]. Currently, many undergraduate courses fail to fully stimulate students' interest and enthusiasm for learning, and the ideological content of the courses is often rigidly applied, which restricts teaching effectiveness, particularly evident in experimental courses^[3]. Experimental courses aim to cultivate students' practical abilities and enhance their hands-on skills in solving specific problems. They are crucial teaching components for integrating professional knowledge with ideological and political education. In the field of humanities and social sciences, the importance of experimental courses has long been relatively neglected, leading to a disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical application within the discipline. Furthermore, the significance of practical courses in breaking through the self-imposed limitations of traditional disciplines, strengthening interdisciplinary integration and innovation based on demand, has also been overlooked^[4]. Therefore, exploring the connotation and enhancement path of experimental course construction is an urgent and important direction in the construction of new humanities and social sciences.

As an integral component of the social science system, sociology plays a crucial role in the curriculum reform within the framework of the new humanities. Currently, academia has made certain achievements in areas such as the reform of the sociology curriculum system and ideological and political education reform, providing reference points for understanding the direction and approach of reforms^{[5][6][7]}. However, existing achievements are mainly focused on traditional lecture-style courses, with relatively little attention given to important experimental courses within the social science majors. Sociology, as a discipline centered on understanding the realities of society and its transformations, inherently possesses strong practical demand orientation and interdisciplinary inclusivity. Experimental courses in sociology not only provide rich entry points for ideological and political education but also have intrinsic connections with disciplines such as statistics, computer science, and management. Therefore, clarifying the ideological and political education connotations of sociology experimental courses in the context of the new humanities holds critical value in integrating ideological and political education throughout the entire process of sociology education and teaching. Simultaneously, exploring the path to enhance the level of sociology experimental courses also contributes to the discipline's response to the new requirements of the new humanities construction, such as strategization, interdisciplinary collaboration, technological advancement, and internationalization^[8].

2. Literature Review

New Humanities was formally proposed in the “Six Excellence, One Top” plan launched by the Ministry of Education in April 2019. In view of the fundamental task of cultivating morality and nurturing talents, many scholars have put forward valuable viewpoints on how to promote ideological and political education within the context of the New Humanities:

2.1 Construction of Ideological and Political Education in the Context of the New Humanities

The construction of ideological and political education under the New Humanities brings new ideas and methods. In terms of ideology, Yang and Ma^[9] believe that the New Humanities and ideological and political education have homogeneity and mutual benefit in value construction. They should guide the reconstruction of disciplinary value systems through knowledge integration, promote knowledge narrative updates through discourse construction, and construct values and coordinate facts through materialism. Wang and Chen^[10] pointed out that the value guidance of the New Humanities in ideological and political education should be realized from the perspectives of angle, depth, and warmth, namely, establishing a Chinese perspective, creating a Chinese school of thought, and grasping emotional identity. In terms of methodology, many professional course teachers have summarized specific teaching methods for ideological and political education construction in their respective courses based on the background of the New Humanities construction. For example, Lin and Wang^[11] implemented the “search, lecture, demonstration, discussion, evaluation” five-step approach in English major teaching, integrating ideological and political education into every aspect of classroom teaching to promote students' ideological maturity and values enhancement. Chen^[12] integrated elements of ideological and political education into landscape design course teaching through methods such as emphasizing in-depth investigation and research, paying attention to details, and focusing on implementation, thereby achieving precise ideological and political education goals.

2.2 Construction of Ideological and Political Education Connotations and Enhancement Pathways

It has become a consensus in academia to fully leverage the role of classrooms as the main channel for nurturing students. Specifically, explicit and implicit ideological and political education in classrooms should be combined, giving full play to the core position of ideological and political theory courses in value guidance, while aligning various courses with ideological and political theory courses^[13]. In terms of the connotations of ideological and political education in courses, Wen^[14] discussed the connotations of ideological and political education from the perspective of foreign language disciplines, proposing to understand the connotations of ideological and political education from four dimensions: the executor, coverage, methods, and functions of ideological and political education. Regarding the enhancement pathways of ideological and political education in courses, He^[15] believes that we should understand, research, and implement ideological and political education in courses from the perspective of curriculum theory. It is necessary to establish a curriculum system that integrates explicit and implicit courses, initiate a comprehensive system for implementing ideological and political education to ensure broad participation, and advocate a “four-in-one” ideological and political education model of teaching,

dialogue, communication, and service.

2.3 Construction of Ideological and Political Education in Sociology Experimental Courses

As of March 27, 2024, there were no research results on the construction of ideological and political education in sociology experimental courses included in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database. The construction of ideological and political education in experimental courses mainly focuses on STEM disciplines (organic chemistry, physics, microbiology, etc.)^{[16][17][18]}. Overall, although some discussions on individual courses^{[19][20]} provide useful references, further research is urgently needed to clarify the specific connotations of ideological and political education in experimental courses in the field of humanities and social sciences, as well as the pathways to embody these connotations in specific teaching activities.

3. Teaching Innovations in the course of Social Statistics Software

Focusing on the reform of experimental courses in sociology under the backdrop of the New Humanities, this article takes the "Social Statistics Software" course as an example to explore the construction of ideological and political education connotations and the enhancement path of social science experimental courses. It fully explores the ideological and political elements inherent in the course content and integrates them into the teaching process of sociology courses. The overall approach is to comprehensively upgrade and improve the case-based course through a "frontline, dual-mode, three-stage" full-chain upgrade (Figure 1). Specifically:

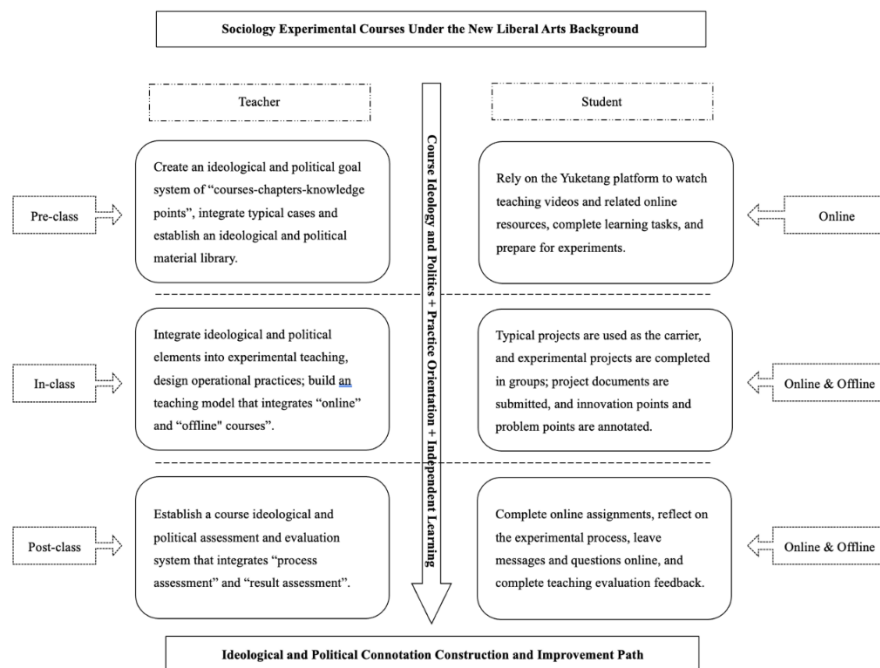


Figure 1: Implementation Methods for Course Ideological and Political Education

First, based on the close connection between the knowledge content of the case-based course and national policies, the ideological and political elements of the course are concretized and made interesting, fully integrated into the teaching process. By combining national policies, major social issues in China, and students' personal life experiences, and integrating sociology with management, statistics, computer science, and other disciplines, students can see the inherent connections between their personal lives and broader issues, thus stimulating their practical interests and self-learning motivation.

Second, fully utilize new technological means and adopt a blended teaching mode of "online + offline" to make the classroom lively and keep students engaged. Online teaching accounts for 20% of the teaching time, including the comprehensive use of three types of online resources: (1) Partial content of relevant national high-quality online open courses; (2) Self-built exclusive online courses (SPOC) based on the Rain Classroom platform; (3) Important news reports related to the course, speeches by party and state leaders, and related audiovisual resources. Offline teaching accounts for 80% of the teaching time, besides teacher lectures, various teaching methods such as academic seminar-style flipped

classrooms combining "lecture-listening-evaluation", student peer assessment and discussion based on the Rain Classroom platform will be utilized to enhance interaction between teachers and students as well as among students, constructing a teaching model that integrates ideological and political education both online and offline.

Third, each lecture is divided into three specific stages: "pre-class online self-study - in-class listening, lecturing, evaluation - post-class independent exploration". Before class, teachers use the Yuketang platform to publish various types of self-study resources to stimulate students' interest in learning and prepare for experiments. In class, through using typical projects as carriers and employing various methods such as case teaching and group cooperation, experimental projects are completed and experiential learning environments are created, achieving the integration of ideological and political education into students' minds. After class, students are guided to further read literature on specific issues, reflect on the experimental process, complete teaching evaluations and feedback, and establish a course assessment system that synergizes "process assessment" and "outcome assessment" in ideological and political education.

4. Discussion

From a theoretical perspective, the current academic attention to the ideological and political education construction of experimental courses in humanities and social sciences majors is relatively weak, especially lacking empirical research on the connotations and enhancement pathways of ideological and political education construction for experimental courses based on the characteristics of the disciplines themselves. Sociology, as one of the foundational and core disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, includes a large amount of ideological and patriotic education content in its experimental course teaching. On one hand, this content aligns strongly with the goals of ideological and political education construction. On the other hand, it involves a series of interdisciplinary and cross-domain knowledge acquisition and application, such as statistics, computer science, and management, which are logically consistent with the inherent requirements of the New Humanities construction. However, the exploration of the ideological and political connotations of such courses is still in its infancy in academia, and there is a relative lack of exploration on how to enhance the level of courses based on ideological and political education under the context of the New Humanities, greatly limiting the development of humanities and social sciences, including sociology. The primary breakthrough of this research lies in the systematic clarification of the ideological and political education connotations of sociology experimental courses, and then elucidating the feasibility and necessity of ideological and political education for such courses.

From the perspective of teaching reform practice, the important innovation of this project lies in exploring a path to operationalize the ideological and political education connotations of sociology experimental courses into specific teaching activities, thereby improving the level of course teaching. Currently, scholars in this field mainly focus on theoretical discussions or reforms of traditional lecture-style teaching methods, lacking systematic reform design and practice for experimental courses that meet the needs of the New Humanities construction. This project will conduct targeted empirical research on the reform of sociology experimental courses, based on digital teaching methods and interdisciplinary knowledge acquisition. Through course teaching practice, ideological and political education connotations and concepts will be integrated into various aspects of experimental courses, establishing a comprehensive, systematic, and valuable practice path model.

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