

Exploration of Optimization Pathways for Ideological and Political Education in the New Era

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the current state, challenges, and optimization pathways of the construction of Ideological and Political Theory Courses (IPTC) in universities. The study reveals that significant progress has been made in areas such as policy support, teacher development, and increasing student engagement. However, issues remain, including insufficient personalized teaching and a limited evaluation mechanism. This paper proposes optimization strategies, including strengthening the development of model courses, building an integrated teaching system, establishing a scientific evaluation system, and promoting the innovative application of educational technologies. These strategies aim to improve the teaching quality and effectiveness of IPTC and to cultivate students with critical thinking and a sense of social responsibility in the new era.

Keywords: *New era, Ideological and political education, Optimization pathways.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Ideological and Political Theory Courses (IPTC) are a core component of the higher education system in China, responsible for guiding students in establishing correct values, enhancing social responsibility, and fostering political identity. Against the backdrop of building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era, the importance of IPTC has become increasingly prominent. President Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized the crucial role of IPTC in cultivating souls and educating people, stressing that these courses must not only be taught “with confidence and conviction” but also “thoroughly and comprehensively” to guide students on the path to personal growth and success [1].

In recent years, the state's heightened emphasis on ideological and political education in universities has led to significant advancements in the construction of IPTC. The continued strengthening of policy support has provided a solid foundation for the systematic and standardized development of these courses; the overall quality and professional capabilities of the teaching faculty have been notably improved, laying the groundwork for the high-quality development of IPTC; and student engagement and sense of

achievement have steadily increased, leading to a marked improvement in classroom teaching effectiveness. However, as society rapidly evolves and student needs diversify, the traditional IPTC model faces numerous challenges in terms of teaching methods, evaluation mechanisms, and personalized instruction. In this context, the effective integration of emerging educational technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), into IPTC teaching has become a critical issue requiring urgent resolution.

Thus, this study aims to comprehensively explore the current state and challenges of IPTC construction in universities and propose optimization pathways based on AI technology. By integrating theoretical analysis with practical applications, this research examines the potential of AI in IPTC and offers actionable strategic recommendations to provide theoretical foundations and practical guidance for the high-quality development of IPTC in higher education institutions.

2. CURRENT STATE OF DEVELOPMENT OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL THEORY COURSES IN UNIVERSITY

In recent years, driven by strong national policy support, the construction of Ideological and Political Theory Courses (IPTC) in universities has made significant progress. There have been notable achievements in areas such as policy backing, faculty development, and increased student engagement. However, as the educational environment continues to evolve, the construction of IPTC faces new challenges and opportunities, necessitating further optimization and innovation.

2.1 Continuous Strengthening of Policy Support

The emphasis placed by the state on Ideological and Political Theory Courses (IPTC) has reached an unprecedented level. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Central Committee and the State Council have issued a series of policy documents, such as the Opinions on Deepening the Reform and Innovation of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Schools in the New Era and the Basic Requirements for the Teaching of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Universities in the New Era. These documents provide systematic guidance and support from a top-level design perspective for the reform and development of IPTC in universities. These policies not only clarify the critical role of IPTC within the higher education system but also offer specific directions and standards for the construction of curriculum systems, faculty development, and evaluation mechanisms [2].

With the proactive response from governments and universities at various levels, a top-down policy support system has been established nationwide. This system ensures the standardization and uniformity of IPTC content and drives innovation and diversification in teaching methods. For example, some universities, supported by these policies, have experimented with integrating emerging educational technologies into IPTC, expanding the teaching formats and content through digital platforms and online resource sharing. Additionally, the state has enhanced resource support for IPTC through special funding and faculty training programs, ensuring the effective implementation of these policies in practice.

2.2 Overall Improvement of the Teaching Faculty

The high-quality development of Ideological and Political Theory Courses (IPTC) relies on a teaching faculty with strong political competence and professional expertise. In recent years, the state's emphasis on the development of the IPTC teaching faculty has led to significant improvements in both the quantity and quality of teachers [3]. The Ministry of Education mandates that universities allocate IPTC teachers according to a student-to-teacher ratio of 1:350, and this standard is enforced through strict oversight mechanisms. As of March 2024, the total number of full-time and part-time IPTC teachers in universities across China has increased to 145,000, with over 110,000 full-time teachers. This data not only reflects the growth in teacher numbers but also demonstrates the state's high regard for ideological and political education, providing a solid foundation for the high-quality development of IPTC.

To enhance the quality and capability of teachers, educational authorities at various levels have implemented nationwide teacher training programs and established model teacher studios, focusing on improving professional competence and teaching skills. These training programs cover a range of areas, including ideological and political theory, innovative teaching methods, and the application of educational technology, helping teachers to continuously update their knowledge base and meet the needs of modern teaching. Additionally, with the influx of highly qualified professionals, the overall academic level and teaching quality of the IPTC teaching faculty have further improved, driving the continued optimization of IPTC teaching.

2.3 Significant Improvement in Student Engagement and Sense of Achievement

Active student participation is a key factor in enhancing the effectiveness of Ideological and Political Theory Courses (IPTC). In recent years, innovations in teaching methods have significantly boosted student engagement and learning experiences in the classroom. Traditional didactic teaching has been increasingly replaced by interactive and participatory teaching approaches [4]. For example, by incorporating discussion-based teaching, case analysis, group collaboration, and

other diverse teaching methods, teachers can more effectively stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning, shifting them from "passive recipients" to "active participants." This student-centered teaching model not only increases classroom interactivity but also makes theoretical knowledge more relevant to students' real lives, thus enhancing their interest in and recognition of IPTC.

Moreover, practical teaching activities in IPTC have been further strengthened. Universities have organized activities such as social surveys, thematic presentations, and volunteer services to encourage students to apply the theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom to real-world situations, deepening their understanding of ideological and political theories. This integration of theory and practice significantly enhances students' sense of achievement, helping them develop critical thinking and social responsibility in the process. For instance, students at certain universities have gained a deeper understanding of social issues through community service activities, while also improving their sense of social responsibility and problem-solving abilities.

As teaching methods and content continue to innovate, students' interest in and recognition of IPTC has markedly improved. Increasing numbers of students are actively participating in IPTC-related competitions, such as the "University Student IPTC Speech Competition" and "Microfilm Contest," which not only reflect students' growing emphasis on IPTC but also demonstrate the tangible outcomes of ideological and political education in the new context.

2.4 The Necessity for Innovation and Optimization

Although the construction of Ideological and Political Theory Courses (IPTC) in universities has achieved significant success, the reform and innovation of IPTC remain urgent in the context of the New Era. The rapid changes in the social environment and the diverse needs of student groups have made it increasingly difficult for the traditional IPTC teaching model to fully meet the educational demands of the New Era [5]. Issues such as insufficient personalized teaching, a singular evaluation mechanism, and outdated teaching content continue to affect the effectiveness of IPTC to varying degrees. Therefore, universities must continuously explore new teaching models and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the ongoing enhancement of IPTC's educational effectiveness.

At the same time, the rapid development of globalization and informatization has posed new challenges to both the content and format of IPTC. Key questions include how to incorporate an international perspective into IPTC teaching, how to leverage emerging educational technologies to enhance teaching effectiveness, and how to dynamically update the content of IPTC. These are pressing issues in the current development of IPTC. Universities need to build on and carry forward the excellent traditions of IPTC while actively learning from international experiences to drive innovation and progress in IPTC teaching.

3. OPTIMIZATION PATHWAYS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL THEORY COURSES IN UNIVERSITY

Although significant progress has been made in the construction of Ideological and Political Theory Courses (IPTC) in universities against the backdrop of the New Era, further exploration and innovation in optimization pathways are necessary to address current and future challenges and to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teaching. The following are four proposed optimization pathways based on the current state of IPTC construction, aiming to better harness the leading role of IPTC, build an integrated teaching system, and establish a scientific evaluation system.

3.1 Strengthening the Development of Model Courses to Enhance the Leading Role of IPTC

The development of model courses is an effective means to improve the quality and impact of Ideological and Political Theory Courses (IPTC). First, universities should establish clear standards for model courses, ensuring the integration of knowledge and values. In terms of course content, model courses should have a solid theoretical foundation, cover a wide range of knowledge, and align closely with the core socialist values. By selecting a set of representative and exemplary model courses, universities can create a positive demonstration effect across the campus, thereby enhancing the overall quality of teaching.

During the development of model courses, universities should emphasize the scientific and advanced nature of teaching methods, maintaining a student-centered approach by exploring and

applying diverse teaching strategies. For instance, methods such as case analysis, role-playing, and project-based learning can effectively increase student engagement and improve their learning experience. Moreover, model courses should take a leading role in practical teaching by designing feasible practical activities, enabling students to achieve a unity of knowledge and action through the combination of theory and practice. This integration of theory and practice in model courses will better guide students toward deeper critical thinking, while fostering their sense of social responsibility and practical abilities.

To ensure the sustained development of model courses, universities should also regularly organize IPTC teaching competitions and exhibitions to encourage teachers to actively explore and innovate, improving their teaching design and implementation skills. This not only helps identify and promote excellent teaching outcomes but also fosters mutual learning and collaboration among teachers, creating a positive teaching atmosphere. The demonstration effect of model courses can drive the overall improvement of IPTC teaching quality across the university.

3.2 Building an Integrated IPTC Teaching System to Promote Interdisciplinary Integration and Resource Consolidation

To enhance the overall teaching quality of Ideological and Political Theory Courses (IPTC) in universities, building an integrated IPTC teaching system is crucial. First, universities should establish unified teaching objectives, ensuring that all levels and types of IPTC courses align with these goals to achieve a collaborative educational effort. The development of teaching objectives should incorporate core socialist values and take into account the characteristics of students in the New Era, focusing on cultivating their overall competence.

In the process of constructing an integrated teaching system, universities should break down disciplinary barriers, promoting deep integration between IPTC and other disciplines, such as the humanities and social sciences, natural sciences, and arts and sports. For example, by combining IPTC content with knowledge from related fields, universities can create a multidisciplinary educational environment that helps students understand and grasp key concepts from multiple perspectives. This cross-disciplinary teaching

approach not only enriches the course content but also enhances students' overall competence and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, interdisciplinary teaching can broaden students' horizons, allowing them to closely connect ideological and political theory with real-life situations, thereby improving the course's effectiveness and appeal.

Additionally, universities should establish unified platforms for resource sharing, consolidating various teaching resources to facilitate access for both teachers and students. By creating centralized IPTC resource libraries that collect and organize diverse teaching materials, and utilizing information technology to digitize and provide online access to these resources, universities can simplify the storage, retrieval, and sharing of resources. This not only promotes the widespread dissemination of high-quality educational resources but also maximizes resource utilization, thereby enhancing teaching effectiveness. Through resource consolidation, universities can introduce further innovations in both teaching content and methods, meeting the diverse needs of students.

3.3 Establishing a Scientific Evaluation System to Promote Continuous Improvement in Teaching Quality

A scientific evaluation system is crucial for ensuring the quality of Ideological and Political Theory Course (IPTC) teaching. Traditional evaluation methods for IPTC tend to focus on the transmission of knowledge while neglecting the cultivation of students' overall competence. Therefore, when constructing an evaluation system, universities should adopt a multidimensional and diversified approach. In addition to traditional exams and classroom performance assessments, other forms of evaluation, such as essays, group discussions, and course projects, should be introduced to comprehensively assess students' knowledge acquisition and critical thinking abilities.

The evaluation system should also integrate both formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments, conducted regularly, help track students' learning progress and allow teachers to adjust their teaching strategies in real-time to meet students' needs. Summative assessments, on the other hand, evaluate the achievement of learning objectives at the end of a course. By combining both types of assessments, the system can provide a more comprehensive reflection of

students' learning outcomes and the quality of teaching.

Moreover, the evaluation system should include a timely and effective feedback mechanism to ensure that students are promptly informed of their learning status and can make adjustments under the guidance of their instructors. The feedback mechanism should be personalized and targeted, ensuring that each student receives tailored advice according to their specific needs. In addition, universities can leverage artificial intelligence (AI) technology to analyze students' learning behaviors and performance, generating personalized learning reports. This not only enables teachers to better understand students' learning needs but also provides data-driven insights for optimizing teaching strategies, thereby promoting continuous improvement in teaching quality.

3.4 Promoting the Innovative Application of Educational Technology to Enhance Teaching Effectiveness and Student Experience

With the rapid development of educational technology, universities should actively explore and apply emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and virtual reality (VR) to innovate the teaching methods of Ideological and Political Theory Courses (IPTC). For example, AI technology can analyze data to accurately identify students' learning needs, dynamically adjust teaching content, and provide personalized learning pathways. In addition, the use of VR technology can transform abstract theoretical knowledge into vivid visual experiences, enhancing students' understanding and retention of IPTC content. The application of these emerging technologies not only improves teaching effectiveness but also provides students with a more immersive and interactive learning experience.

In the process of integrating technology, universities should emphasize human-technology collaboration, fully leveraging the teacher's leading role while utilizing technology as a supporting tool. Teachers should incorporate educational technology into their teaching design while maintaining control over the teaching process, ensuring that teacher-student interaction and guidance are prioritized, thus avoiding students' over-reliance on technology. Additionally, the application of technology should take into account ethical concerns and educational equity, ensuring that while enhancing teaching effectiveness,

technology does not negatively impact students. Through the deep integration of technology and teaching, the effectiveness of IPTC and the overall student learning experience can be further enhanced.

4. CONCLUSION

As an essential pathway for cultivating students' values, social responsibility, and political identity, Ideological and Political Theory Courses (IPTC) have always played a critical role in the construction of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era. Although significant progress has been made in recent years, with notable improvements in policy support, faculty development, and student engagement, the constantly changing social environment and the diverse needs of students necessitate continuous optimization and innovation of IPTC.

This study conducted an in-depth analysis of the current state of IPTC in universities, considering the practical demands of the New Era, and proposed four optimization pathways: strengthening the development of model courses, building an integrated teaching system, establishing a scientific evaluation system, and promoting the innovative application of educational technology. These strategies not only provide strong theoretical support for the further development of IPTC but also offer practical, actionable guidance for educators.

However, optimizing the construction of IPTC is a long-term and systematic endeavor that requires sustained attention and improvement. In the future, with the rapid development of educational technology, the teaching models and evaluation methods of IPTC will face new transformations. During this transformation, how to maintain the relevance and adaptability of teaching content, and how to ensure that teaching technologies are aligned with the objectives of ideological and political education, remain critical issues for educators to address.

At the same time, it is a must to remain vigilant about the ethical issues and challenges to educational equity that may arise from the application of technology. For instance, while artificial intelligence can improve teaching efficiency, it may also raise concerns about data privacy and algorithmic bias. Moreover, the widespread use of technology could exacerbate inequalities in the distribution of educational resources, impacting educational fairness.

Therefore, in promoting the construction of IPTC, it is essential to comprehensively consider these issues and ensure the organic integration of technology with educational values.

In the context of globalization and informatization, universities also need to actively draw on international experiences and explore teaching models and content systems that are consistent with Chinese characteristics. By comparing and learning from the successful experiences of other countries and regions in ideological and political education, there is a must to provide broader perspectives for the reform and innovation of IPTC in China. At the same time, ideological and political education in the global context must be locally adapted to ensure that course content effectively addresses the practical needs of Chinese students and social development trends.

Through continuous theoretical innovation and practical exploration, teachers are confident that in the near future, they will create more innovative and contemporary "golden courses" in IPTC, cultivating more well-rounded individuals who are both morally and intellectually accomplished for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Future research should continue to deepen the exploration of IPTC construction, particularly in areas such as interdisciplinary integration, international cooperation, and the application of educational technology, proposing more innovative solutions to better address the opportunities and challenges of the New Era.

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