

The Value and Path of Integrating Red University History and Culture into Ideological and Political Courses in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: Red university history and culture constitute a unique spiritual resource accumulated through the practice of running higher education institutions. Systematically integrating them into ideological and political course teaching helps consolidate the foundation of students' ideals and beliefs and cultivate their national sentiment. To promote the deep integration of the two, efforts must be made in four dimensions: reconstructing the content system, transforming the teaching paradigm, creating an educational ecology, and building a long-term mechanism, so as to continuously enhance the theoretical persuasiveness and practical transformative power of ideological and political courses.

Keywords: Red university history culture; Ideological and political courses in universities; Educational value

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1. Introduction

Red university history culture is an aggregation of historical and contemporary, material and spiritual, explicit and implicit educational resources in higher education institutions^[1]. Using specific university history narratives as its carriers, it embeds multiple codes of national destiny, changing times, and educational missions, constituting a “localized” educational text different from ordinary historical resources. At present, clarifying the coupling relationship between red university history culture and ideological and political courses from a theoretical perspective, expounding its unique educational value, and designing systematic and feasible integration pathways constitute an urgent task for deepening the connotation construction of ideological and political courses.

2. The coupling relationship between red university history, culture and ideological and political courses in higher education institutions

Red university history and culture is a spiritual form shaped by the deep intertwining of universities and the national destiny. It often germinated in the national salvation practices of the revolutionary era, extended through arduous entrepreneurship during the construction period, and acquired new expressions in the reform and opening-up era as

well as in the new era, naturally endowing it with a social edification function that transcends individual experience and continuously releases value messages in everyday campus life.

Ideological and political courses in higher education institutions bear the functions of transmitting mainstream ideology and shaping values and beliefs. The tension between the universality demands of theoretical education and the experiences of the recipients constitutes an inherent difficulty in teaching effectiveness. Red university's history and culture offer a turning point for this dilemma. It anchors the grand narrative of ideological and political courses in specific spatiotemporal coordinates and personality carriers. When the pursuit of truth in textbooks corroborates the life practices of campus predecessors, theory is no longer a suspended knowledge system but becomes a spiritual thread sharing the same cultural field with the recipients. In the process of touching university history, students can concretely understand the historical logic of adapting Marxism to the Chinese context and the times, and can also find practical references for value practice from outstanding alumni predecessors.

Ideological and political courses provide an academic framework and institutionalized channels for activating the red university history culture. According to course objectives and theoretical frameworks, ideological and political courses select, reorganize, and interpret the meaning of university history resources, sublimating them from memory at the empirical level to cognition at the conceptual level. The symbiotic relationship of mutual interpretation and mutual construction between the two enables university history to inject the warmth of life into ideological and political courses, while ideological and political courses endow university history with the depth of rationality.

3. The educational value of integrating the red university history and culture into ideological and political courses in higher education institutions

The integration of red university history and culture awakens students' value consciousness through "the sublime around them," thereby achieving the holistic cultivation of ideals and beliefs, national identity, and moral character.

3.1. Using "on-site history" to concretize the generation of beliefs and achieve the personalized anchoring of ideals and convictions

The great difficulty in ideal and belief education lies in how to transform grand value objectives into spiritual images that individuals can perceive and identify with. Red university history and culture provides an intermediary mechanism. It dissolves normative requirements such as "educating for the Party and cultivating talent for the country" into the real-life choices that took place on campus. When students learn that on the very paths they tread daily, there were predecessors who abandoned their studies to join the righteous cause during national turmoil, or who buried themselves in research for decades under technological blockades, "firming up ideals and convictions" acquires concrete faces and tangible warmth. These narratives built on the bloodline of one's alma mater possess greater emotional penetration than ordinary moral argumentation, prompting students to engage in an inner questioning: What choices did predecessors make at a similar age to mine? How should I set my spiritual coordinates today? In this way, the mechanism of value identification shifts from external regulation to self-awakening.

3.2. Using "affinity narratives" to cultivate national identity and promote the rational sublimation of patriotic sentiment

One risk of patriotism education is that the formulaic expression of grand narratives conceals their deep connection with individual emotions. Red university history and culture can be seen as a microcosm of the national destiny. The life trajectories of those teachers and students who abandoned the pen for the sword and research teams that independently achieved breakthroughs under blockade conditions transform "the nation" from a distant political category into an ethical community intertwined with the honor and disgrace of the alma mater. When students face yellowed letters in the university history museum or listen to the oral accounts of veteran professors, they naturally generate the emotional belonging that "this is our history, this is my country." This emotional progression from the university to the nation,

from the near to the far, is grounded in a rational cognition of history, enabling patriotic feeling to rise from momentary emotional resonance to a mission-based identification founded on historical understanding.

3.3. Using “group exemplars” to sharpen moral practice and promote the embodied transformation of character cultivation

Moral practice is beset by the gap between knowing and doing. The alumni groups in the history of red university provide moral examples for bridging the knowledge-action gap. The deeds of alumni who made extraordinary contributions in ordinary posts, and the teachers and students who demonstrated noble character in the face of major trials, constitute a repository of inspiring moral situations. When such cases are consciously introduced in ideological and political courses, students are no longer placed in an external position of moral judgment but unconsciously insert themselves into the narrative. This process of “experience—comparison—introspection—identification” breaks down the separation between the transmission of moral knowledge and practical behavior. At the same time, the demonstrative effect of alumni group exemplars depends on the shared campus identity and cultural lineage with the recipients; this affinity makes moral emulation psychologically feasible.

4. Practical paths for integrating red university history and culture into ideological and political courses in higher education institutions

To promote red university history culture from a supplementary embellishment to a structural element in teaching, coordinated advancement is needed at the four levels of content, method, environment, and institution.

4.1. Restructuring the content system: from fragmented citation to thematic integration

Currently, the application of red university history in ideological and political courses mostly appears as sporadic examples or background supplements. Fundamental improvement lies in constructing an integrated content framework of “core course theories + thematic red university history modules.” On the premise of following the national curriculum plan, the university history figures, events, and propositions that correspond to the teaching points of various ideological and political courses should be systematically sorted out. For instance, a thematic module on “the choice of the national salvation path in university history” can be set in the course “Outline of Modern Chinese History”; a case study on “the moral choices of alumni groups” can be embedded in “Ideological Morality and the Rule of Law”; and the university motto spirit can be theoretically connected with mainstream values. This integration is not a simple juxtaposition of theory plus examples, but a meaning reconstruction of university history materials according to theoretical logic, making them an organic link in expounding core concepts and principles.

4.2. Transforming the teaching paradigm: From one-way interpretation to multidimensional dialogue

The deep educational value of the red university’s history and culture can be fully released only through students’ active participation and meaning construction. First, problem-driven research-based learning^[2]. Organize students to conduct independent inquiry around specific figures or events in university history, and realize value clarification in research practice. Second, scenario-constructed immersive teaching. With the help of digital university history resources, restore the historical scene in the classroom, and enable students to activate emotional resonance through embodied cognition. Third, field-based walking classrooms. Extend the teaching space to physical sites that carry collective memory, such as university history museums and the birthplaces of disciplines, invite witnesses of university history to give on-site lectures, and achieve the fusion of horizons between historical narrative and present-day experience.

4.3. Creating an educational ecology: from classroom confinement to whole-campus immersion

The environment exerts a “moistening things silently” edifying function^[3]. The teaching effectiveness of ideological

and political courses depends to a certain extent on the same-direction support of the campus cultural environment. First, endow campus physical spaces with narrative functions. Organically embed red university history elements in places such as the University History Avenue and faculty corridors, turning the campus into a “wall-less university history classroom.” Second, strengthen the identity construction function of ritual practices. On occasions such as university anniversary celebrations and opening or graduation ceremonies, design procedural segments like paying tribute to predecessor scholars and revisiting the original aspiration of founding the university, using collective ritual participation to strengthen the spiritual connection between generations. Third, actively occupy the position of online education. Support teachers and students in co-creating lightweight content products such as micro-documentaries and theoretical comics on university history themes, and realize value transmission among peers through forwarding, commenting, and secondary creation.

4.4. Building a long-term mechanism: from individual initiative to institutional impetus

To achieve continuous deepening, the integration of red university history and culture into ideological and political courses must be guaranteed at the institutional level. First, incorporate the educational transformation of red university history resources into the overall plan for the “Grand Ideological and Political Course” construction of the university, and establish a working mechanism with multi-departmental coordination. Second, establish a regular teacher training system. Through university history studies in new teacher induction training, thematic workshops, and other means, systematically enhance teachers’ transformation competence. Third, reform the teaching evaluation methods. Incorporate the process effectiveness of red university’s history, culture, and education into the quality monitoring of ideological and political courses and the comprehensive quality evaluation system for students. Comprehensively use multiple tools such as research reports and practice logs to form a dynamic closed loop of “resource development—teaching practice—evaluation feedback—optimization iteration.”

Red university history and culture is an irreplaceably important resource for ideological and political courses in higher education institutions. Content reconstruction integrates university history narratives into the theoretical framework; paradigm transformation allows history and reality to engage in sincere dialogue; ecological construction links the educational field inside and outside the classroom; and institutional construction consolidates exploratory experience into long-term mechanisms. The synergy of these four aspects promotes the deep integration of red university history culture and ideological and political courses, enabling the red gene to take root and sprout in the hearts of successive cohorts of students, and engrave distinct alma mater marks and the sense of responsibility of the era.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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