

Discussion on the Evaluation of Curriculum Ideological and Political Learning Outcomes

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Abstract: Based on previous studies on the teaching quality evaluation of curriculum ideological and political education, this paper discusses several key points of curriculum ideological and political evaluation from the perspective of “students’ learning”. It puts forward viewpoints including establishing a long-term mechanism for evaluating curriculum ideological and political learning outcomes, integrating curriculum ideological and political evaluation into regular curriculum assessment, prioritizing process evaluation, abiding by authentic evaluation principles and adopting dynamic evaluation models. It is expected to offer modest insights to make curriculum ideological and political evaluation more detailed and implementable, so as to support talent cultivation better.

Keywords: Curriculum ideological and political education; Learning outcomes; Evaluation

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1. Introduction

In May 2020, the *Guidelines for the Construction of Curriculum Ideological and Political Education in Institutions of Higher Learning*, issued by the Ministry of Education, pointed out that comprehensively promoting the construction of curriculum ideological and political education is an important task for fully improving the quality of talent cultivation, and called on educators to resolve the disconnection between professional education and ideological and political education. Curriculum ideological and political education is neither a substitute for specialized ideological and political courses, nor an additional subject or activity added to the curriculum system. Instead, it requires the rational construction of a scientific teaching system within talent cultivation programs, integrating moral education and ideological work into every course and all teaching links. In the process of learning, students can acquire knowledge about majors, industries, the country, international affairs, culture and history, so as to deeply understand core socialist values, consciously carry forward advanced socialist culture and fine traditional Chinese culture, and fulfill the fundamental task of talent cultivation.

2. Significance of evaluating curriculum ideological and political learning outcomes

Relevant research and explorations on curriculum ideological and political education have flourished, with studies focusing on realizing coordinated development between curriculum ideological and political courses and specialized ideological and political courses, construction paths of curriculum ideological and political education, teaching reform approaches for its implementation, and discipline-specific reform routes for individual majors ^[1].

As research and practice of curriculum ideological and political education expand and deepen, an increasing number of scholars have recognized the importance of research on its quality evaluation. Such evaluation serves as a measurement standard for teaching quality, an effective feedback tool to test educational effects, and a key link to form a closed-loop construction system ^[2]. Without a scientific quality evaluation system, objective feedback on the effectiveness of curriculum ideological and political construction cannot be obtained, making it impossible to form a virtuous cycle. Therefore, constructing such an evaluation system carries great practical significance. However, literature retrieval shows that theoretical and practical research on the teaching quality evaluation of curriculum ideological and political education remains a weak area in related academic fields ^[3]. In response, this paper conducts research on refining and implementing curriculum ideological and political quality evaluation, following the requirement proposed in the *Guidelines for the Construction of Curriculum Ideological and Political Education in Institutions of Higher Learning* that “talent cultivation outcomes shall be the primary criterion for evaluating curriculum ideological and political construction; multi-dimensional assessment and supervision mechanisms shall be established and fully implemented in all evaluation and university teaching reform work”. Existing studies mostly focus on teachers, covering what to teach, how to teach and teaching effectiveness, while few researches take students as the entry point. This paper starts from evaluating students’ learning outcomes, supplements a missing link in comprehensive curriculum ideological and political construction to form a closed-loop system, and provides references for related research ^[4].

3. Discussion on evaluation of curriculum ideological and political learning outcomes

Following the quality evaluation requirements stated in the *Guidelines for the Construction of Curriculum Ideological and Political Education in Institutions of Higher Learning*, recent research has shifted focus from exploring ideological and political elements to evaluating teaching quality. Some scholars argue that teachers’ cognitive upgrading and role return form the best internal motivation for curriculum ideological and political education. Other studies attempt to build a 4E theory-based cloud teaching quality evaluation system to record the activity level of online class platforms. Some researchers explore evaluation practices by integrating ideological and political elements into entrepreneurship or physical education courses. These studies fill research gaps in this field, yet there still exist deficiencies in research regarding detailed and implementable evaluation schemes. Based on the above analysis, this paper puts forward the following suggestions:

3.1. Establish a long-term evaluation mechanism

Ideological and political education adopts the approach of “moistening things silently”. It breaks down and integrates elements including the socialist core values, advanced socialist culture and fine traditional Chinese culture into curriculum learning in an organic manner, shaping students’ ideology and in-depth qualities

imperceptibly. Its training objectives feature implicitness, such as patriotism, values, dialectical thinking, cultural confidence and professional ethics, which are indicators that cannot be significantly measured merely through several examination papers. This explains why ideological and political education demands more patience, carefulness and affection and takes a longer period compared with the teaching of pure professional knowledge and vocational skills ^[5]. Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation of the learning outcomes of curriculum-based ideological and political education cannot be completed only with a few objective questions or short-term observations, which makes it particularly vital to establish a long-term evaluation mechanism.

3.2. Integrate evaluation into regular course assessment

As scholars have reached a consensus in relevant researches, curriculum-based ideological and political education differs from ideological and political theory courses. Instead of launching an independent new course, it integrates ideological and political elements into existing courses. Similarly, the evaluation of ideological and political learning outcomes for a specific course needs effective integration with the original course evaluation system, rather than being carried out separately outside the existing evaluation framework. It was clarified at the teachers' symposium held in March 2019 that the reform and innovation of ideological and political theory courses should "uphold the unity of explicit education and implicit education". Likewise, the evaluation of curriculum-based ideological and political learning outcomes can adopt a combined explicit and implicit evaluation approach. On one hand, diagnostic evaluation can be implemented in the course assessment process; on the other hand, formative evaluation can be conducted through students' case discussions, group discussions, essay writing and other relevant assignments.

3.3. Prioritize process evaluation

Besides the acquisition of theories and knowledge, the learning of ideological and political content is essentially an experiential process. When cultivating students' patriotism, values, dialectical thinking, cultural confidence and other qualities, relying merely on textbook knowledge and frequent verbal exhortations from teachers may trigger weariness among students and lead to unsatisfactory outcomes. The constructivist learning theory puts forward the viewpoint "Tell me, I forget; show me, I remember; engage me, I understand". Students need to fully participate in the learning process of curriculum-based ideological and political education and receive immersive experiential learning, so that ideological and political content can be subtly integrated into their minds and hearts. Therefore, favorable learning outcomes of curriculum-based ideological and political education depend largely on students' observation, thinking, experiencing, perception and reflection under the proper guidance of teachers ^[6].

Accordingly, formative assessment should measure, through observation, interviews and documentation, students' engaging level during ideological and political learning. The assessment covers dimensions including teacher-student interaction, teamwork in group activities, contribution to discussions and activities, students' performance in campus events, labor education programs, social practice projects and volunteer public welfare activities, improvements made after reflecting on problems, as well as profound thoughts and values demonstrated in commentary on trending topics.

3.4. Abide by authentic evaluation principles

The authentic evaluation theory proposed by Newman and Archbald in 1988 is a value judgment framework derived from constructivism, serving as an approach to assess students' learning outcomes. It requires students

to apply acquired knowledge, skills and literacy to complete authentic tasks in real contexts. Evaluators observe students' application of knowledge, demonstration of skills, handling of emotions, expression of values and trade-offs of interests during task completion, and pay attention to their physical and mental health as well as comprehensive capabilities. Authentic evaluation avoids rigid restrictions and single exam-based grading, adopting dynamic developmental criteria to assess students' learning performance.

Newman et al. further clarified the core feature of authentic evaluation as "authenticity" in 1993: students are placed in real or highly simulated life scenarios to complete meaningful, practically valuable tasks and deliver finished works ^[7]. Students participate in formulating evaluation criteria and conduct self-assessment based on standards. Through authentic evaluation, students engage with real-world events and tasks, with their knowledge application, emotional regulation, professional ethics and comprehensive abilities trained in the process ^[8].

3.5. Adopt dynamic evaluation models

The dynamic evaluation theory first used by Luria in 1964 emphasizes the integration of evaluation and intervention, forming interactive rolling development between evaluators and learners. It focuses on changes in learners' knowledge construction, cognitive capacity and literacy shaping during learning, as well as their future development potential ^[9]. Teachers conduct progressive dynamic evaluation through targeted intervention, while students actively construct teaching objectives and content via teacher-student interaction. Accurate evaluation of curriculum ideological and political learning outcomes cannot be achieved through one or two assessments; a dynamic model shall be adopted to continuously accumulate data, discover problems and shape students' ideology through proper teacher intervention. This method can assess students' current learning outcomes and track their long-term development, including the advancement of professional skills, professional ethics and moral sentiment after graduation ^[10].

3.6. Construct a benign mutual evaluation ecosystem

American psychologist Nelson proposed that children who feel loved, accepted and self-worthy possess the foundation to fully develop their potential and grow into happy, socially contributing individuals ^[11]. Mutual evaluation among group members can be carried out in group discussions, collaborative learning and other curriculum ideological and political practices. Peer evaluation serves as a key transition of curriculum ideological and political education from implicit indoctrination to explicit practice. It assesses not only knowledge mastery, but also value guidance, teamwork and sense of responsibility demonstrated in group activities ^[12]. Prior to group work, teachers shall publish evaluation dimensions and standards, so students understand that assessment covers cooperation and moral qualities such as national sentiment, cultural confidence, scientific ethics and craftsman spirit rather than merely problem-solving. During evaluation, teachers shall ensure fairness, active participation and in-depth reflection instead of superficial scoring. A reflection session can be set after evaluation, where students explain their scoring reasons against standards for disputed items to encourage self-examination and arbitrary grading prevention. Peer evaluation aims to boost positive development rather than trigger conflicts, and teachers shall act as guides and supervisors, which itself constitutes a vital component of ideological and political education.

4. Conclusion

Constructivist learning theory states that no student enters the classroom as a blank slate^[14]. The formation of students' ideology, personality and conduct does not start upon school enrollment; instead, they gradually acquire such traits from family and social environments through observation, perception and imitation from an early age. Ideological and political education in schools supplements and revises students' prior cognition, which cannot be accomplished overnight but requires long-term patient cultivation^[15]. Students' curriculum ideological and political learning outcomes can be measured via the organic combination of process evaluation, formative evaluation, authentic evaluation and dynamic evaluation. However, after graduation, students will encounter unpredictable, implicit ideological influences from various people and events in the broader social environment. Thus, dynamic progressive shaping and evaluation of students' ideological development during their campus years are particularly important. Only when students fully engage in curriculum ideological and political learning and absorb relevant ideas mentally and emotionally can they achieve better learning outcomes and all-round healthy growth. The stable world outlook, outlook on life and values formed in adulthood will act as the fundamental logic and lifelong guide for individuals.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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