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Practical Difficulties and Optimization Pathways for Integrating "Five Histories" Education into Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Application-Oriented Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: Promoting the integration of education in the history of the Party, the history of New China, the history of reform and opening-up, the history of socialist development, and the history of the development of the Chinese nation into ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities is an important task in building the "Great Ideological and Political Theory Courses" in the new era, and is also an inevitable requirement for local application-oriented colleges and universities to fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. Compared with research-oriented universities, local application-oriented colleges and universities are constrained by total class hours, teaching resources, and students' learning characteristics. In the integration of "Five Histories" education, there are problems such as superficial content, rigid models, formalistic practice, and insufficient teacher adaptability. Based on the actual educational context of local application-oriented colleges and universities, this paper constructs a resource-light, implementable, and normalized integration pathway from four dimensions: content system, classroom model, practice system, and teaching-research mechanism.

Keywords: "Five Histories" education; Ideological and political theory courses; Application-oriented colleges and universities; Teaching integration; Education pathway

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1. Introduction

The history of the Party, the history of New China, the history of reform and opening-up, the history of socialist development, and the history of the development of the Chinese nation (hereinafter referred to as the "Five Histories") are core historical resources and value carriers for ideological and political education in colleges and universities in the new era. The Work Plan for Comprehensively Promoting the Construction

of “Great Ideological and Political Theory Courses” issued by the Ministry of Education and nine other departments clearly proposes to systematically promote the integration of historical educational resources into the main channel of ideological and political theory courses, so that history education and theoretical teaching move in the same direction and work together to educate students [1].

Local application-oriented colleges and universities take the cultivation of high-quality applied talents as their core positioning. Their student body is characterized by prominent practical thinking, relatively strong concrete cognitive ability, and relatively weak initiative in theoretical learning. Their acceptance of grand historical narratives relies more on cases, situations, and practical experience. At present, relevant academic research mostly focuses on the interpretation of value implications, the construction of macro systems, and innovation in overall models, but there are still three shortcomings. First, there is relatively little precise research on the particularities of running application-oriented colleges and universities, and most results are more suited to comprehensive undergraduate universities. Second, there is more macro-level countermeasure research and less micro-level operable path research, lacking normalized and resource-light implementation plans. Third, there is more theoretical and speculative research and less empirical research based on classroom practice. Based on this, this paper is grounded in the actual teaching context of local application-oriented colleges and universities, focuses on implementable, normalized, and low-cost reform ideas, sorts out the practical difficulties in integrating “Five Histories” education into ideological and political theory courses, and details the implementation paths.

2. Practical difficulties in integrating “Five Histories” education into ideological and political theory courses in application-oriented colleges and universities

2.1. Superficial content integration and weak integration of history and theory

At present, the integration of “Five Histories” content suffers from a dual deviation of “absence” and “excess”. First, fragmented misalignment. “Five Histories” content is often inserted into the classroom in the form of scattered historical facts and isolated stories, without forming a logical thread matching the theoretical system of ideological and political theory courses. It is difficult for students to establish the internal connection among “historical logic-theoretical logic-practical logic”. Second, lack of adaptability. Content selection mostly follows generic materials used in general colleges and universities and fails to integrate the professional characteristics and talent cultivation positioning of application-oriented colleges and universities. The content has weak relevance to students’ professional learning and career development, and students’ sense of immersion is not strong. Third, weakened value orientation. Some teaching remains at the level of stating historical facts, with insufficient exploration of the theoretical logic, institutional advantages, and spiritual core behind history. It fails to effectively achieve the sublimation from historical fact cognition to value identification. At the same time, most institutions have not established unified standards for chapter integration and historical material selection, and teachers’ independent integration is highly arbitrary [2].

2.2. Rigid teaching models and insufficient depth of classroom interaction

Constrained by large-class teaching and saturated teaching tasks, ideological and political theory courses in application-oriented colleges and universities still mainly adopt a one-way lecturing model. First, homogenization of methods. “Five Histories” education generally adopts a fixed process of “teacher lecturing + video playing”, lacking differentiated design tailored to teaching content and students’ learning characteristics. Second, superficial interaction. Classroom interaction is mostly factual question-and-answer,

lacking inquiry-based and speculative question design. It is difficult for students to enter a state of deep thinking. Third, a single evaluation method. The assessment of "Five Histories" learning outcomes mostly depends on the final closed-book examination, focusing on memorization of knowledge points. It is difficult to comprehensively measure students' historical understanding, value identification, and practical consciousness. The traditional indoctrination model is difficult to fit the cognitive characteristics of contemporary college students, resulting in weak appeal of history education and unremarkable effect of value guidance [3].

2.3. Formalistic practice-based education and lack of normalized mechanisms

Practical teaching is a key link for "Five Histories" education to enter the mind and heart, but local application-oriented colleges and universities generally face the problems of "difficult to normalize, difficult to achieve full coverage, and difficult to reach depth". First, practice is detached from the curriculum. Off-campus study tours and on-campus activities are mostly independent of course teaching and lack connection with classroom theoretical content. Practice becomes an "extra task" rather than an extension of teaching. Second, narrow participation coverage. Quotas and costs limit off-campus field study and often only target a small number of student leaders, with insufficient coverage. Third, lack of a closed evaluation loop. Practical activities mostly lack clear educational objectives and closed-loop evaluation. After the activity, there is a lack of result sorting, feedback, and consolidation, making it difficult to form continuous value immersion. Off-campus red study tours are constrained by funding, transportation, class hours, and safety management, making it difficult to carry them out frequently and on a large scale. On-campus practice is mostly concentrated in essay writing, recitation, and knowledge competitions, which are seriously homogenized and insufficient in educational depth.

2.4. Imbalanced faculty structure and insufficient integrated teaching capacity

Integrating "Five Histories" education into ideological and political theory courses requires teachers to possess both theoretical interpretation ability and the ability to sort out historical logic. The teaching staff of ideological and political theory courses in local application-oriented colleges and universities is generally young, with obvious structural shortcomings. First, an imbalanced knowledge structure. Most teachers have an educational background in Marxist theory, but lack professional training in history. In particular, they have an insufficient grasp of the broad context and contemporary connotations of the history of socialist development and the history of the development of the Chinese nation. Second, insufficient integration ability. Some teachers cannot design lessons that integrate history and theory and are not good at transforming historical materials into teaching questions and activities, making them prone to separating historical facts from theory. Third, weakened teaching-research support. Teaching-research activities in departmental teaching and research offices mostly focus on regular teaching progress. Special teaching-research activities, collective lesson refinement, and case development for integrating "Five Histories" education are insufficient, and teachers lack a normalized platform for capacity improvement [4].

3. Optimization pathways for integrating "Five Histories" education into ideological and political theory courses in application-oriented colleges and universities

3.1. Reconstructing the content system

Based on the teaching principles of not increasing class hours, not changing the syllabus, and not adding

burdens, the large-scale thematic superposition model should be abandoned, and a resource-light approach featuring "knowledge point anchoring, precise matching, and small-entry integration" should be adopted. Focusing on the course "Basic Principles of Marxism", this approach systematically identifies key and challenging points chapter by chapter in accordance with the teaching syllabus. A three-dimensional integration ledger of "chapter knowledge points-adapted 'Five Histories' materials-classroom education objectives" should be established, clarifying the scope of historical materials, teaching duration, theoretical connection angle, and value-guidance objective. Localized cases should be developed. Relying on local red resources and historical facts of regional construction and development, short, precise, and classroom-appropriate teaching cases should be formed around themes such as local workers' movements, regional industrialization, local reform and opening-up, and high-quality regional development in the new era. The criteria for selecting historical materials should be standardized, adhering to the principle of "three dos and three don'ts": priority should be given to materials that align with chapter theories, contemporary themes, and students' cognition; materials that deviate from course logic, are excessively lengthy, or are highly controversial should not be selected. A resource-light "Five Histories" material library should be gradually established. At the same time, content should be aligned with professional education scenarios. Economics and management majors can be connected with the reform of the market economic system and the development histories of local enterprises in the history of reform and opening-up, while engineering majors can be connected with the industrialization process of New China and the history of self-reliance and self-strengthening in science and technology, enhancing the relevance and immersion of the content.

3.2. Innovating the classroom model

In response to the problems of weak interaction, a dull classroom atmosphere, and insufficient student participation in large-class teaching, a low-cost, easy-to-operate, and standardized classroom model should be constructed. First, historical example introduction should be promoted. In each class, approximately 5 minutes should be used to introduce precise and concise historical facts from the "Five Histories", following the logic of "historical event-question guidance-theoretical extraction", using concrete historical processes to explain abstract theories and reduce the difficulty of understanding. Second, classroom micro-inquiry should be conducted. In combination with chapter content, speculative topics with small entry points, low thresholds, and strong relevance should be set. Relying on short in-class group discussions, impromptu speeches, and mutual evaluation of viewpoints, students should be guided to sort out historical logic, extract theoretical viewpoints, and generate value cognition. Micro-inquiry requires no extracurricular preparation and no complex organization, and is suitable for normalized implementation in large classes. Third, multimodal resources should be utilized. Relying on authoritative historical images, official documentary clips, and red digital exhibition hall resources, short, high-quality, and positive materials should be selected, with the duration of a single material controlled within 3 minutes, to enhance classroom appeal. Fourth, process-based evaluation should be optimized. Classroom discussion performance, short historical essays, and practical activity results should be incorporated into comprehensive evaluation, reducing the proportion of knowledge memorization assessment and highlighting the assessment of historical thinking, theoretical understanding, and value identification [5].

3.3. Improving the practice system

Given the reality of limited resources, high-cost, large-scale, and campaign-style practice models should be

abandoned, and a low-cost, full-coverage, and sustainable normalized practice system should be constructed. First, normalized micro-practice on campus should be consolidated. "Five Histories" education should be integrated into second-classroom activities, with 1–2 "Five Histories" practice themes set around the core content of courses each semester. Relying on important historical nodes, activities such as thematic presentations, red classic reading, historical deliberation salons, and industry development history research should be carried out. Practice results should feed back into the classroom through classroom sharing and assignment displays. Second, nearby small-scale study tours should be refined. Relying on red education bases around the city, stable and nearby practical teaching sites should be established. A "walking ideological and political course" model featuring "small batches, short duration, and high frequency" should be adopted, with batch rotation, gradually ensuring that all students participate in at least one on-site practice during their time at university, reducing transportation costs, safety risks, and class hour pressure. Third, online self-directed extended learning should be strengthened. Relying on authoritative resources such as the Smart Education of China platform, red digital exhibition halls, and official Party history learning platforms, a list of online learning resources for "Five Histories" education should be formed. Students should be guided to use fragmented time for self-directed learning, building a pattern of "systematic learning in class, self-directed learning after class, and extended learning online." Fourth, the closed loop of practice evaluation should be improved. Clear educational objectives and evaluation standards should be formulated for each practical activity. Effectiveness should be tested through practice reports, reflection sharing, and achievement exhibitions, and practical performance should be included in the comprehensive course grade with a certain weight to avoid formalistic tendencies.

3.4. Strengthening faculty and teaching-research development

Faculty and teaching-research mechanisms are the fundamental guarantee for the long-term integration of "Five Histories" education. First, a thematic teaching-research mechanism should be established. Relying on departmental teaching and research offices, a special teaching-research topic on the integration of "Five Histories" education should be established, with one thematic teaching-research activity held monthly on a fixed basis. Collective lesson refinement should be carried out around chapter integration design, teaching case development, classroom problem review, and teaching effectiveness discussion, so as to unify teaching standards and consolidate teaching experience. Second, a "History-Ideology Pairing" capacity enhancement model should be built. Ideological and political course teachers should be encouraged to pair and co-construct with history major teachers and local Party history researchers, jointly carrying out lesson preparation, case development, and teaching seminars. This compensates for the shortcomings in ideological and political course teachers' reserve of historical knowledge and enhances their teaching design capacity for integrating history and theory. Third, a teaching resource sharing platform should be built. Teaching cases, teaching designs, courseware materials, and practice plans should be integrated to establish an on-campus "Five Histories" education teaching resource library. This achieves co-construction and sharing, dynamic updating, reduces lesson preparation costs, and ensures the long-term, stable, and high-quality advancement of "Five Histories" education integration.

4. Conclusion

In the context of the new era, the organic integration of "Five Histories" education into ideological and

political theory courses is an inevitable pathway for improving the quality of education in application-oriented colleges and universities. Different from the systematic and high-investment reform model of research-oriented universities, local application-oriented colleges and universities place greater emphasis on adaptability, pragmatism, and normalization. This paper constructs a resource-light, implementable, and replicable pathway for integrating "Five Histories" education from four dimensions: content embedding, classroom innovation, practice expansion, and teaching-research support. This pathway helps address the previous problems of fragmentation, superficiality, and formalism in the integration of "Five Histories" education, promotes closer integration of history and theory and clearer classroom logic, and enhances students' classroom participation, theoretical understanding, and historical identification.

This study still has limitations: the pilot scope is limited to a single local institution; differentiated teaching design under differences in student learning characteristics across majors needs further refinement; and the long-term tracking mechanism for educational effectiveness still needs improvement. In the future, further exploration can be made into major-specific, category-specific, and precise "Five Histories" integration models, localized teaching resources can be enriched, and the diverse education evaluation mechanism can be improved, so as to continuously enhance the educational effectiveness of ideological and political theory courses in the new era.

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Disclosure statement

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