

Research on the Optimization of Teaching Content of Community Work Course under the Background of the Establishment of the Party Committee Social Work Department

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Abstract: In recent years, China's social governance system has undergone profound changes, and the establishment of social work departments at all levels marks a new historical stage for social work. This significant institutional shift has presented new requirements and challenges to social work professional education, especially to "Community Social Work," a core course. This paper aims to analyze the new context, functions, and methods in community work practice, and based on this, systematically reflects on the lag and deficiencies in traditional community work teaching content. Furthermore, from multiple dimensions such as reshaping teaching objectives, updating theoretical modules, strengthening practical skills, integrating ideological and political elements, and reconstructing the evaluation system, a systematic teaching content optimization plan is proposed to promote the teaching reform of community social work courses and cultivate compound community work talents possess both professional competence and political literacy.

Keywords: Community Social Work, Optimization of Teaching Content, Party Building Leadership, Social Governance.

1. Introduction

Communities are the basic units of social governance and the foundation for the modernization of national governance systems and capabilities. As a core course in social work, the scientific rigor and cutting-edge nature of its content directly impact the quality of professional training and practical effectiveness. Historically, China's community social work education system has been primarily based on classic Western theoretical models of community development, organization, and planning, with some adaptations to local practices. However, with China entering a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the focus of social governance has shifted to the grassroots level. In particular, the establishment and operation of social work departments at the central and local levels have fundamentally reshaped the institutional environment, power structure, and operational logic of community work.

The establishment of the Party Committee's Social Work Department aims to strengthen the Party's comprehensive leadership over all areas of social work, coordinate social work forces, and integrate social governance resources, fundamentally driven by Party building. This means that community social work is no longer merely a third-party service based on professional values and methods, but also an important channel for the Party to connect with, serve, and unite the masses; it is a concrete and professional manifestation of the Party's mass work in the field of social work. Therefore, community social workers must possess dual capabilities: on the one hand, they must be proficient in the professional concepts, knowledge, and skills of social work; on the other hand, they must have a deep understanding of China's unique political system, the Party's organizational operation mechanisms, and grassroots governance practices under the leadership of Party building.

As for the current "Community Social Work" course in

universities, its teaching content still lags behind the rapidly developing practice field, mainly manifested in the following aspects: First, the understanding of Party building leadership remains superficial and fails to integrate it into teaching as a core analytical framework [1]; second, there is insufficient analysis of the complex interactive relationships among the newly emerging multiple subjects in community governance; third, the practical teaching links are disconnected from the real, politically contextualized process of solving community problems [2]; fourth, the ideological and political elements of the course have failed to achieve organic and in-depth integration with professional knowledge [3]. This disconnect may lead to students who, although mastering professional skills, find it difficult to effectively position their own roles and exert professional effectiveness in the real community governance structure.

Therefore, this study, based on the new institutional background of the Party Committee's Social Work Department, takes the course "Community Social Work" as the research object, and explores in depth the optimization path of its teaching content. It aims to bridge the gap between theory and reality, promote the integrated development of course teaching and practice, and provide valuable ideas for social work professional education to adapt to the requirements of the new era.

2. New Context and New Requirements for Community Work

The establishment of the Party Committee's Social Work Department has created a completely new ecosystem for community social work practice. To optimize teaching content, it is essential to first deeply understand the fundamental changes this background has brought to community work.

2.1 Governance Structure: From Multi-Party

Co-governance to Multi-Party Collaboration Under the Leadership of Party Building

Past community governance emphasized multi-party co-governance involving the government, community, market, and social organizations. The emergence of the Party Committee's Social Work Department strengthens the Party's core leadership role in overseeing the overall situation and coordinating all parties among these diverse stakeholders. Community work is no longer a consultation and cooperation between parallel entities, but a collaborative action conducted within the platform and framework established by the Party organization. Social workers need to learn how to work closely with community Party organizations, understand the Party organization's decision-making processes, resource mobilization methods, and political discourse system, and embed professional services into the Party's mass work system. This means that the role of community social workers has expanded from coordinator and enabler to include policy communicator, liaison between the Party and the masses, and professional service provider under the guidance of Party building.

2.2 Work Focus: From the Supply of Professional Services to the Dual Embedding of Political and Professional Functions

In this new context, the goals of community work should, based on providing professional and personalized social services, revolve around the political objective of consolidating the Party's ruling foundation, and include the following: First, conveying the Party's care through professional services and enhancing residents' identification with the Party; second, identifying and resolving grassroots conflicts during the service process to maintain community harmony and stability; third, cultivating and guiding community social organizations to ensure their healthy and orderly development and their cohesion around the Party organization; and fourth, mobilizing residents to participate in community public affairs and developing grassroots democracy. This requires community social workers to possess political acumen and the ability to organically combine micro-level professional services with macro-level political and social goals.

2.3 Methodology and Strategy: From the Three Traditional Models to an Integrated Practice Strategy

The three classic models of community work remain important methodological foundations, but in the new context, the simple social action model needs to give way to strategies that place greater emphasis on consultation, mediation, and institutional reform. Community work emphasizes resource integration, and the Party committee system is precisely the most powerful entity for integrating administrative, market, and social resources. Therefore, the course needs to teach students how to leverage and connect resources using the core mechanism of Party building leadership, how to write project proposals that align with the work direction of the government and the Party committee, and how to conduct effective communication and proposals within the framework of the community's large Party committee mechanism. Simultaneously, innovative practices in community

governance with Chinese characteristics, such as digital governance, grid management, and "red property management," should also be an important component of the teaching methodology.

3. Problems with Traditional "Community Social Work" Teaching Content

In light of the new requirements mentioned above, the current teaching content of the "Community Social Work" course generally has the following shortcomings:

3.1 The Theoretical Framework is Outdated and the Interpretation of Party Building Leadership is Insufficient.

Existing textbooks and course outlines mostly rely on Western sociological and social work theories as their primary analytical framework, with little coverage of theoretical systems closely related to Chinese community practice, such as Marxist views on the masses, the theory of the Chinese Communist Party's mass line, and theories of grassroots Party building. Party building leadership is often mentioned only as a chapter or knowledge point, failing to serve as the core logical thread running through the entire course and permeating all aspects such as community analysis, needs assessment, project design, and process intervention.

3.2 A Lack of Practical Skills, Political Wisdom, and the Ability to Operate Within the System.

Practical teaching focuses primarily on traditional skills such as group work, event planning, and resident mobilization. However, it severely lacks training in more politically charged practical skills, such as how to communicate with community Party branch secretaries, how to understand government policy documents and translate them into service projects, how to navigate complex community power structures effectively through advocacy and negotiation, and how to handle community petitions and mass incidents. Students may excel at organizing a community cultural event, but they may not know how to assist the community Party organization in conducting a successful themed Party Day activity, or how to combine professional services with the dissemination of Party policies.

3.3 The Case Materials are Outdated and Lack Timeliness and Typicality.

The case studies used in teaching are mostly derived from community service projects or Western contexts from many years ago. There is insufficient introduction of new practices, models, and exemplary cases that have emerged since the establishment of the Party Committee's Social Work Department, such as the collaborative working method between community secretaries and professional social workers, the community-based renovation of old residential areas under the leadership of Party building, and the cultivation and guidance of "red" homeowners' committees. This results in a serious disconnect between students' knowledge and current active frontline practice, making it difficult to form an intuitive and profound understanding.

3.4 The Integration of Ideological and Political Education into the Curriculum is not Organically Achieved.

The integration of ideological and political education into curriculum suffers from a forced and ineffective approach. Either the curriculum separates professional knowledge from ideological and political education, or it simply appends a political slogan to the professional content. It fails to naturally integrate core values such as putting people first, joint construction, joint governance, and shared benefits, as well as the Party's mass line working methods, into the explanation of the values, ethics, practical principles, and specific techniques of community work, resulting in superficial ideological and political education.

4. Optimization Path of “Community Social Work” Teaching Content

In response to the above problems and in light of the background requirements of the Party Committee's Social Work Department, this article proposes the following systematic optimization plan for teaching content.

4.1 Reshaping Teaching Objectives: from Professional Social Workers to Professional Compound Talents under the Guidance of Party Building.

Overall, the course's objective should be adjusted to cultivate well-rounded professionals who possess a deep understanding of the socialist governance system with Chinese characteristics, are proficient in the core values and professional methods of community social work, and have the practical ability to effectively conduct community analysis, resource integration, project operation, conflict mediation, and organizational development under the leadership of the Party. Specifically, the knowledge objective is to systematically master the classic theories of community social work and deeply understand the theoretical system and policies and regulations of Party building leading grassroots governance. The competency objective is to develop the ability to collaborate with diverse stakeholders such as community Party organizations and neighborhood committees; to translate Party policies into community service projects; and to apply professional methods to solve practical problems and maintain social stability in complex community situations. The character objective is to internalize the professional ethics of people-centeredness and helping people help themselves, while firmly establishing a people-centered political stance and enhancing political identity, national sentiment, and social responsibility.

4.2 Reconstructing the Theoretical Module and Incorporating the Analytical Perspective of Party Building Leadership.

While retaining traditional theoretical modules such as community concepts, community power structures, community problem analysis, and classic working models, the following content has been added or strengthened: First, a module on Party building leading grassroots governance theory, systematically teaching the mass line and organizational principles of the Communist Party of China, as well as their specific operational methods and practical

models at the community level, such as regionalized Party building, grid-based Party building, and Party building by property owners' committees. Second, a policy and regulation module, focusing on interpreting the spirit of central government documents, local regulations, and policy orientations related to the functions of the Party Committee's social work department and community governance, enhancing students' policy awareness. Third, a module on subject relationship analysis, using a multi-party collaborative framework under the leadership of Party building to deeply analyze the power and responsibility relationships, interaction mechanisms, and potential tensions among various subjects such as community Party organizations, neighborhood committees, property owners' committees, property management companies, social work agencies, resident units, and community residents. Fourth, a module on community work models with Chinese characteristics, theoretically refining and pedagogically processing local innovative practices such as “red property management,” grid-based management + social work services, and the upgrading of the “three-party linkage” to Party building leading community building, forming community work knowledge with Chinese characteristics.

4.3 Update Practical Skills Training and Strengthen Practical Wisdom in the Political Context.

In the practical teaching component, training content simulating real political contexts should be designed, focusing on cultivating the following practical skills: First, communication and collaboration skills, including simulated exercises on how to report to the community secretary and garner support, and how to propose professional motions in community joint meetings. Second, project planning and operation skills, requiring students to design community service project plans that are both professionally sound and politically feasible, focusing on key areas of concern to the Party committee and government, such as new era civilization practices, safe community construction, community elderly care, and child-friendly communities. Third, conflict mediation and crisis response skills, introducing real-life community conflict cases, such as property disputes, neighborhood conflicts, and unresolved issues from land acquisition and demolition, teaching students strategies and techniques for mediation and intervention using professional social work methods under the leadership of the Party organization. Fourth, resource integration skills, training students on how to create and utilize community Party building resource maps, and how to leverage the resources of Party organizations in resident units to achieve resource sharing.

4.4 Innovating Case-based Teaching and Field Study to Link Theory with Reality

First, we need to build a case study database for community work in the new era, establish cooperative relationships with the Party Committee's social work department and advanced communities, jointly develop a batch of typical cases reflecting the latest achievements of Party building in leading community governance, and keep them dynamically updated. Second, we need to implement a dual-mentor system for on-site learning, inviting experienced community Party

branch secretaries or cadres from the Party Committee's social work department to serve as off-campus practice mentors, who, together with on-campus professional teachers, will guide students in conducting community diagnosis and project practice, allowing students to go into the community and personally observe and participate in real-world work scenarios under the leadership of Party building.

4.5 Deepen the Integration of Ideological and Political Education into Curriculum, and Achieve the Unity of Value Guidance and Knowledge Transmission.

The curriculum should organically integrate ideological and political elements into professional teaching. In teaching values and ethics, the principles of client self-determination, confidentiality, and non-judgment in social work should be compared and integrated with the Party's tenet of "from the masses, to the masses, and wholeheartedly serving the people," emphasizing their inherent consistency. In teaching methods and skills, community surveys should be combined with the Party's tradition of investigation and research, and resident mobilization should be compared with the Party's methods of mass mobilization, illustrating their essential unity. Furthermore, through role models, inspiring stories of outstanding Party member social workers serving the community and contributing to society should be told to inspire students' sense of professional mission and identification.

4.6 Reform the Assessment and Evaluation System, and Emphasize Process-oriented and Comprehensive Ability Evaluation.

The assessment method will be changed from a single final exam to a diversified, process-oriented evaluation system. Process-oriented evaluation will account for 60% of the assessment, including classroom participation, case study reports, community project design proposals, performance in simulated negotiation exercises, or writing a course paper based on field research. Summative evaluation will account for 40%, primarily through closed-book exams. The exam questions should focus on assessing students' comprehensive ability to analyze and solve complex community problems from a Party-led perspective, rather than simply relying on rote memorization of knowledge.

5. Conclusion

The establishment of the Party Committee's Social Work Department is a milestone in the history of social work development in China, representing both a rare opportunity and a significant test for opening up and deepening new prospects for urban and rural community social work. As one of the key tools for cultivating future community workers, the course "Community Social Work" must keep pace with the demands of the times, systematically optimize its teaching content, deeply integrate the core concept of Party building leadership into the entire teaching process, and cultivate a new generation of community work talents with both professional competence and political literacy, providing a powerful impetus for promoting the modernization of grassroots governance and consolidating the Party's ruling foundation.

Acknowledgments

This article represents a phased achievement of the following projects: Sichuan Provincial First-Class Undergraduate Program (Social Work) Construction Project (Project No.: SYLZY202408), Sichuan Provincial Teaching Reform Project "Research on the Optimization of Undergraduate Social Work Courses and Content under the Background of the Newly Established Party Committee Social Work Department" (Project No.: JG2024-1064), Yibin University School-level Cultivation Project "Research on the Practical Shift and Talent Team Building of Social Work Participation in Grassroots Governance under the Background of Institutional Reform" (Project No.: 2024XJPY17), and Yibin University School-level Teaching Reform Project "Three Links, Four Drives, and Seven Integrations": A Study on the Teaching Practice of Courses Co-constructed by Government, School, and Community Based on the Cultivation of Job Competency—Taking "Community Work" as an Example (Project No.: 160-22030001-1).

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