

Practical Exploration of Ideological and Political Construction in Youth Social Work Courses

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Abstract: *This study aims to address the urgent need for ideological and political education in colleges and universities in the new era. Addressing current challenges in the “Youth Social Work” course, such as fragmented ideological and political elements, homogenized teaching plans, and disconnected case studies, this study conducts a systematic exploration of ideological and political education in the curriculum to enhance its educational effectiveness. The study follows a “theoretical construction - practical development - summary and promotion” approach. Through literature research, policy interpretation, and interviews with teachers and students, a systematic matrix of “course knowledge points - ideological and political elements” was constructed, resulting in a “Course Ideological and Political Education Elements List.” Subsequently, core teaching modules were selected and, based on the principle of “integrating professional knowledge with value guidance,” the teaching objectives, content, and methods were restructured to develop a “Core Teaching Module Ideological and Political Education Integration Plan.” Finally, closely aligned with social issues and local culture, a “Course Ideological and Political Education Case Collection” was developed, reflecting both contemporary and professional characteristics. This practical exploration has yielded a replicable and scalable ideological and political education teaching resource package, including a systematic “Element List,” a modular “Integration Plan,” and a contemporary “Case Collection.” Practice has proven that this approach effectively addresses the disconnect between ideological and political education and professional teaching, significantly enhancing the curriculum’s value-oriented function and the effectiveness of practical teaching. This practical exploration successfully established a model for the ideological and political development of youth social work courses characterized by “systematic exploration, modular integration, and case-based implementation.” This approach provides a viable solution for cultivating interdisciplinary social workers with both solid professional qualities and a deep sense of patriotism. It also holds significant reference and promotional value for the ideological and political reform of courses in similar humanities and social sciences disciplines.*

Keywords: Youth social work, Ideological and political education in courses, Practical exploration, Teaching reform.

1. Introduction

Cultivating morality and cultivating people is the fundamental mission of higher education. In the context of comprehensively promoting the development of “ideological and political education in courses,” integrating value formation, knowledge transfer, and capacity building has become a core issue in all professional curriculum reforms. Social work, a profession closely linked to social governance and public welfare services, inherently incorporates rich ethical and moral elements into its curriculum, thus possessing inherent advantages and unique responsibilities in ideological and political education.

China is currently at a critical juncture in its pursuit of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The need for higher education, scientific knowledge, and exceptional talent is more pressing than ever. The state has issued a series of important documents, including the “Guiding Outline for Ideological and Political Education in College Courses,” explicitly requiring all courses to “guard their own sections of the canal and cultivate their own fields,” working hand in hand with ideological and political theory courses to create a synergistic effect. This marks a profound shift in the educational philosophy of universities, from a single-track campaign focused on “ideological and political courses” to a comprehensive campaign focused on “ideological and political education in courses.”

As a core course in the social work profession, “Youth Social Work” is directly related to how future frontline social workers guide young people to establish a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values. Its mission of educating people is particularly important. This course not only requires students

to have a precise professional understanding of the characteristics, problems, and needs of youth development, but also requires them to possess a firm political stance, high professional ethics, and a deep sense of humanistic care.

However, in traditional teaching practices, the ideological and political development of this course faces three prominent challenges: First, the exploration of ideological and political elements is fragmented. Value guidance relies heavily on teachers’ individual initiative and sporadic case studies, lacking a systematic connection to the curriculum’s knowledge system. Second, the design of teaching plans is homogenized. Many attempts to integrate ideological and political education remain at the level of crude grafting or simple didacticism, failing to achieve a deep and organic integration with the professional knowledge modules. Third, case teaching practices are homogenized. The selected cases are sometimes outdated or detached from the real situations faced by Chinese youth today, resulting in case teaching lacking a strong sense of the times and practical guidance.

To effectively address these challenges, this study conducted an exploration of educational reform centered on “systematic construction and implementation.” Our overall approach followed a progressive approach: “systematic exploration — module reconstruction—case development.” By constructing a “knowledge point—ideological and political elements” matrix, we developed a list of curricular ideological and political elements; restructured core teaching modules and developed integration plans; and, focusing on social hot topics, compiled distinctive teaching cases to systematically advance the development of curricular ideological and political education.

This chapter serves as an introduction to the entire paper, clarifying the background, motivation, and overall framework of this practical exploration. The following sections will detail the specific practices, methods, and results of the three key steps of element mining, module reconstruction, and case development, hoping to provide a valuable action plan for the ideological and political development of similar courses.

2. Practice of Constructing a List of Ideological and Political Elements in Courses

The foundation of ideological and political education in courses lies in the in-depth exploration and systematic analysis of the ideological and political elements inherent in the curriculum. To address the fragmentation and sporadic infiltration of ideological and political elements, we will first construct a systematic, comprehensive, and closely aligned “List of Ideological and Political Elements in Courses” as the foundation for this practical exploration.

To achieve this goal, we established the principles of “taking the syllabus as the foundation, professional values as the core, and consensus between teachers and students as the bridge.” The first step in this process was to return to the essence of the course. We conducted a deconstructive analysis of the syllabus, curriculum standards, and core textbooks for the “Youth Social Work” course, listing the knowledge and skill points of each chapter one by one, forming a detailed professional knowledge map. This ensured that subsequent exploration of ideological and political elements would fully cover the course content, avoiding omissions.

Methodologically, we employed a dual-track strategy of “matrix construction” and “qualitative interviews.” The core approach was to create a “course knowledge point-ideological and political elements” correspondence matrix. We constructed a preliminary correspondence framework, with professional knowledge as the horizontal axis and ideological and political dimensions such as the socialist core values, legal education, professional ethics, and patriotism advocated by the state as the vertical axis. Subsequently, we organized multiple rounds of special workshops, inviting course faculty, ideological and political teachers, and industry experts to jointly review and complete the matrix, ensuring the accuracy and professionalism of each ideological and political integration point.

To enhance the vitality and recognition of ideological and political elements, we deeply engaged with the teaching community, conducting semi-structured interviews with both faculty and students. Through interviews with faculty, we understood the value orientations they consciously or unconsciously infuse into their teaching; through interviews with students, we grasped their value dilemmas and growth needs during the learning process. This firsthand information ensured that the exploration of ideological and political elements was no longer a rote application of theory, but rather stemmed from the realities of teaching and learning, ensuring the checklist’s practicality and practicality.

After the above systematic practice, we finally formed the “List of Ideological and Political Elements in Youth Social Work Courses”. This list not only clearly lists the specific

ideological and political elements corresponding to each core knowledge point, but also briefly explains its internal logic and educational goals. For example, next to the knowledge point of “Intervention of Deviant Behavior among Youth”, we marked elements such as “Rule of Law Concept”, “Social Responsibility”, and “Fairness and Justice”, and explained that their connection lies in guiding students to understand the social normative boundaries of behavior and the role and mission of social workers to maintain social fairness. This list has become a “navigation map” and “resource library” for subsequent module reconstruction and case development, laying a solid foundation for the construction of ideological and political courses as a whole.

3. Practice of Ideological and Political Reconstruction of Core Teaching Modules

On the basis of completing the systematic sorting of the ideological and political elements of the course, we focused on the key links of teaching implementation and selected the three core modules of “intervention of deviant behavior of adolescents”, “promoting mental health of adolescents” and “social adaptation of adolescents” to carry out ideological and political reconstruction practice, aiming to achieve the organic unity of professional knowledge imparting and value guidance.

The reconstructed practice adheres to the four-pronged design concept of “goals-content-methods-evaluation.” First, at the level of teaching objectives, we established explicit value objectives in addition to traditional knowledge and ability objectives. For example, the “Youth Deviant Behavior Intervention” module has a value objective of “cultivating students’ awareness of the rule of law, social responsibility, and humanistic care,” making ideological and political education a prominent pursuit of teaching.

In terms of reconstructing teaching content, we deeply integrated and reshaped existing teaching materials based on a list of ideological and political elements. In the “Promoting Youth Mental Health” module, we combined positive psychology theory with the core socialist values of “harmony” and “friendliness.” When teaching psychological adjustment methods, we emphasized the dialectical relationship between individual mental health and social harmony, cultivating students’ collective consciousness and social adaptability.

In terms of teaching methods, we are promoting a shift from one-way indoctrination to diversified interaction. In the “Youth Social Adaptation” module, we designed a “Community Cultural Exploration” practical project to guide students into the community and understand social structure, cultural heritage, and social responsibility through practical service. Through project-based learning, scenario simulations, and case studies, we naturally integrate value guidance into students’ cognitive experience and emotional identification.

The teaching evaluation system has also been reformed accordingly. We have established a multi-dimensional evaluation index encompassing value cognition, value emotion, and value behavior. In the assessment of the “Youth Deviant Behavior Intervention” module, in addition to examining the professionalism of the intervention plan, we

also added an evaluation of the ethical considerations, rule of law principles, and social responsibility reflected in the plan, achieving a visual assessment of the effectiveness of value guidance.

After a semester of teaching practice, the module restructuring has yielded significant results. Student feedback indicates that this integrated approach has made professional knowledge more engaging and values more grounded. Teachers also report that the value-based guidance in the teaching process has become more natural and fluid, breaking the previous dilemma of a “two-faced” separation between professional knowledge and ideological and political education. This practice provides a replicable and scalable path for the effective implementation of ideological and political education within the curriculum.

4. Development and Teaching Application of Contemporary Case Studies

On the basis of completing the systematic sorting of ideological and political elements of the course and the reconstruction of core teaching modules, we further carried out the development of contemporary case studies and teaching application practices, aiming to enhance the timeliness and effectiveness of the course, and make ideological and political education closer to reality and students.

Case development adheres to the principles of “contemporaneity, professionalism, and educational value.” We have developed a series of teaching cases focusing on national strategies and contemporary issues such as rural revitalization, digital literacy, and cultural confidence. Among them, “Youth Mission in Rural Revitalization: Community Participation Practices for Youth in a Certain County” serves as a representative example, fully presenting the entire process of case development and application.

This case study, based on a real-life project involving youth participation in community governance in a certain county, includes a comprehensive background analysis, problem analysis, intervention strategies, and effectiveness evaluation. The background analysis section guides students to focus on the contemporary context and policy requirements of the Rural Revitalization Strategy; the problem diagnosis section cultivates students’ ability to apply social ecosystem theory to analyze real-world issues; and the intervention strategy design emphasizes integrating professional methods with the cultivation of a sense of patriotism.

During the teaching process, we adopted a “dual-track” teaching design. In the professional knowledge development track, students are required to complete comprehensive professional training, from needs assessment to project design. In the value-oriented development track, through discussion topics such as “Youth’s Responsibility and Commitment in Rural Revitalization,” we guide students to deeply reflect on the relationship between personal development and national needs. This design enables the simultaneous development of professional competence and the shaping of values, each of which is mutually beneficial.

Case studies emphasize practical design. We organize student participation in the “I Contribute a Plan for Rural Areas” initiative, requiring students to propose practical and feasible community service plans based on research. This process not only solidifies students’ professional knowledge but also deepens their understanding of national and social conditions through personal participation, strengthening their sense of responsibility to serve society.

In terms of teaching evaluation, we have established a multifaceted and comprehensive assessment system. In addition to assessing the professionalism of case analysis reports, we also include students’ value judgments in group discussions and their awareness of social responsibility demonstrated in practical activities. By combining process-based and summative evaluations, we comprehensively assess students’ professional qualities and the development of their values.

After two rounds of practical teaching, the development and application of contemporary case studies have yielded significant results. Students generally report that this type of case study “brings textbook knowledge to life,” deepening their understanding of the value of their profession. More importantly, through participation in real-world professional practice, students’ patriotism and sense of social responsibility have been substantially enhanced, achieving the educational effect of “integrating knowledge and action.”

This practical exploration demonstrates that transforming contemporary issues into teaching cases and achieving value guidance through professional practice in real-world situations is an effective path to advancing ideological and political education in courses. It not only enriches teaching resources but also innovates educational models, providing strong support for cultivating new generations who will shoulder the great responsibility of national rejuvenation.

5. Practical Results, Reflections, and Paths for Promotion

After a year of systematic practical exploration, the ideological and political development of youth social work courses has achieved remarkable results, accumulated valuable experience, and triggered in-depth reflection on future development. This section will summarize the three dimensions of practical results, reflection on issues, and promotion paths.

In terms of practical results, the construction of ideological and political courses has achieved multi-dimensional value enhancement. First, at the level of teaching resources, we have successfully constructed a complete teaching resource system including the “List of Ideological and Political Elements in Courses”, the “Ideological and Political Integration Plan for Core Teaching Modules” and the “Collection of Case Studies with Contemporary Characteristics”, laying a solid foundation for the continuous development of the course. Secondly, at the level of student training, through comparative observations and questionnaires before and after course learning, it was found that students have significantly improved in terms of professional value recognition, social responsibility awareness and patriotism. Especially in the teaching of the

“Youth Deviant Behavior Intervention” module, students showed a deeper awareness of the rule of law and social responsibility. In addition, the teaching ability of the teaching team has also been improved as a whole. Many teachers have won awards in teaching competitions at all levels, and the teaching team has been approved as a school-level teaching innovation team.

However, the practice has also exposed some issues that warrant in-depth reflection. First, the depth of ideological and political integration across different teaching modules remains uneven, and the integration of some highly technical content with ideological and political elements is still somewhat awkward. Second, the effectiveness evaluation system for ideological and political education in courses needs improvement, especially the difficulty of quantitatively evaluating the degree of internalization of values. Third, teachers vary in their initiative in implementing ideological and political education in courses, and some teachers' ability to explore and apply ideological and political elements needs to be further improved. The existence of these problems reminds us that the development of ideological and political education in courses is a long-term process that requires continuous deepening and optimization.

Based on practical experience and reflection on problems, we have built a multi-level and three-dimensional promotion path. At the school level, by establishing a “curriculum ideological and political workshop”, we organize interdisciplinary exchange activities to promote practical experience to other courses in the social work major and related majors. At the same time, the formed teaching resource package will be included in the school's teaching resource library for reference and use by all teachers in the school. At the inter-school level, we share construction experience with sister colleges by participating in national social work education seminars and holding special teacher training courses. At present, we have established course co-construction relationships with the social work majors of three universities. At a broader social level, we actively cooperate with youth service agencies to transform the results of course ideological and political construction into training resources for service personnel, realizing the effective connection between education and teaching and social services.

Looking ahead, we will continue to advance the development of ideological and political education in courses from three perspectives: first, we will deepen research on the integration of ideological and political elements with professional content, particularly in highly technical teaching modules; second, we will improve our multi-faceted evaluation system and develop more scientific tools to assess the effectiveness of ideological and political education; and third, we will expand the development of digital teaching resources and leverage modern information technology to enhance the contemporary and influential nature of ideological and political education in courses. Through these initiatives, we hope to provide higher-quality educational programs for the cultivation of social work talents in the new era and contribute more replicable and scalable practical experience to the development of ideological and political education in similar majors.

This practical exploration demonstrates that systematic ideological and political development in courses can not only effectively enhance the educational function of professional courses, but also promote the professional development of teachers, enrich the construction of teaching resources, and achieve an overall improvement in educational quality. This construction model of “element mining - module reconstruction - case development - effectiveness evaluation” provides a valuable reference for the ideological and political development of professional courses in colleges and universities.

6. Conclusion and Outlook

Through systematic practical exploration, this study constructed an effective path for the ideological and political construction of youth social work courses, achieved the expected educational results, and also provided experience that can be used as a reference for teaching reforms in related fields.

The main conclusions of this study can be summarized in three aspects: First, the development of ideological and political education in courses must be based on a systematic exploration of elements. By constructing a “course knowledge points - ideological and political elements” correspondence matrix, we achieved an organic connection between ideological and political elements and professional teaching content, laying a solid foundation for the in-depth development of ideological and political education in courses. Second, modular reconstruction is an effective way to achieve the integration of ideological and political education. The four-in-one reconstruction model of “goals – content – methods - evaluation” effectively solves the problem of “two skins” between professional knowledge and value education. Finally, the development and application of contemporary case studies is an important means to enhance the effectiveness of ideological and political education. By transforming contemporary issues such as rural revitalization and digital literacy into teaching cases, ideological and political education becomes more realistic and vital.

The innovative value of this study is mainly reflected in three aspects: first, it has constructed a complete operation system for the construction of ideological and political courses, forming a complete closed loop from element mining to teaching implementation to effectiveness evaluation; second, it has innovated the “dual-main-line parallel” teaching design model, realizing the organic unity of professional knowledge imparting and value guidance; third, it has established a multi-dimensional and three-dimensional evaluation mechanism, making the educational effectiveness of ideological and political courses observable and evaluable.

Looking ahead, the development of ideological and political education in youth social work courses needs to continue to deepen in three areas: First, we must further strengthen research on the in-depth integration of ideological and political elements with professional content, especially through the natural integration of these elements into practical teaching. Second, we need to develop more scientific and effective evaluation tools and establish a long-term

mechanism for tracking the effectiveness of ideological and political education in courses. Finally, we must actively promote the development of digital resources and utilize modern educational technologies to innovate the implementation of ideological and political education in courses, enhancing its contemporary relevance and influence.

The development of ideological and political education in courses is a systematic project that requires perseverance. We will continue to uphold the fundamental principle of “cultivating morality and educating people” and continuously improve the ideological and political development system of youth social work courses, contributing to the cultivation of social work professionals with both moral integrity and professional competence. At the same time, we also look forward to providing more replicable and scalable practical experience in the development of ideological and political education in university professional courses through continuous teaching innovation and practical exploration, jointly promoting the high-quality development of higher education in China.

The practice of this study shows that as long as we adhere to systematic design, scientific implementation and continuous improvement, the construction of ideological and political courses will become an important driving force for improving the quality of talent training and inject new vitality into the connotation development of higher education in the new era.

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