Journal of Social Science and Humanities ISSN: 1811-1564
DOI: 10.66069/ojspub.1811261014

The Logic, Risks and Boundaries of Digital Technology Empowering Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in Foreign-Related Legal Studies Courses

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Abstract: ***Digital technology is continuously reshaping the landscape of legal education and provides a unique pathway for empowering Curriculum-Based ideological and political education within courses on foreign-related rule of law. Such education should aim to cultivate high-quality professionals in foreign-related rule of law who possess a firm political stance, strong professional competence, a thorough understanding of international rules, and expertise in foreign-related legal practice, thereby achieving the simultaneous cultivation of moral integrity and legal proficiency. The evolution of digital technology—from platform-based and intelligent systems to immersive experiences—provides support for the cultivation of such professionals through resource integration, scenario-based simulation, and cross-cultural interaction. However, technological empowerment does not imply value neutrality. Technological rationality carries risks, including the erosion of humanistic values, challenges to data sovereignty, and the dilution of the dual subjectivity of both teachers and students. This paper argues that digital empowerment in Curriculum-Based ideological and political education for foreign-related rule of law courses should establish clear boundaries, adhere to a people-centered approach and prioritize values, define appropriate, moderate, and context-sensitive technological limits, and establish a robust, standardized, and feasible institutional framework. By balancing the tension between values and technology, it can achieve a positive and sustainable empowerment of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education within these courses through digital technology.***

Keywords: Digital technology, Foreign-related rule of law, Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in curricula, Modernization of legal education, The integrated cultivation of moral integrity and legal knowledge**.**

1. Introduction

The world today is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century (Xi, 2025); globalization and anti-globalization currents are intersecting and colliding, (Yang & Ma, 2019) while the international rule-of-law environment is becoming increasingly complex. The development of the rule of law concerning foreign-related matters constitutes an essential safeguard for the protection of national sovereignty, security, and development interests. In November 2023, General Secretary Xi Jinping stated during the tenth collective study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee that it is necessary to "cultivate as soon as possible a group of foreign-related legal professionals who possess firm political convictions, strong professional competence, a thorough understanding of international rules, and expertise in foreign-related legal practice." (Xi, 2023) This important statement sets the direction for the cultivation of foreign-related legal professionals in the new era and serves as the fundamental guiding principle for the integration of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education into foreign-related legal curricula.

Digital technology is permeating the field of education at an unprecedented pace. Emerging technologies—including big data, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, blockchain, and digital twins—are fundamentally transforming the processes by which knowledge is produced, disseminated, and acquired. Digital technology has created new opportunities for the integration of educational resources, the simulation of practical scenarios, targeted instructional design, and cross-cultural exchange within the Curriculum-Based ideological and political education component of courses on foreign-related rule of law. At the same time, it has given rise to significant risks, including the dilution of core values, threats to data security, the weakening of subjectivity, and the exacerbation of educational inequality. Clarifying the underlying logic through which digital technology empowers such education, critically assessing its potential hazards, and further delimiting its appropriate scope of application have accordingly become urgent and unavoidable issues in contemporary legal education research.

2. The Logical Mechanism of Digital Technology Empowering Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education in Foreign-Related Legal Studies Courses

Empowering Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in foreign-related legal studies through digital technology does not simply mean integrating technological tools into the teaching process; rather, it requires that, on the premise of clearly defining the objectives and positioning of such education, one follow the inherent logic of technological evolution and achieve an organic integration of value guidance and technological support.

2.1 The objective positioning of Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education in Foreign-related Legal Studies Courses

The objective and positioning of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses on foreign-related rule of law must be understood within the context of Xi Jinping's thought on the rule of law and the overall concept

of national security. General Secretary Xi Jinping has emphasized the need to uphold the principle of fostering virtue through education and cultivating both moral integrity and legal competence, strengthen disciplinary development, provide high-quality legal education, and improve practice-oriented training mechanisms. (Xi, 2023) The distinctive nature of personnel trained in foreign-related rule of law lies in the fact that they must not only possess a solid foundation in law and proficient foreign-language skills, but also a firm political stance, a deep sense of patriotism and national commitment, and a strong awareness of national security. Accordingly, the objectives of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses on foreign-related rule of law encompass at least the following four levels.

First, students must establish an unwavering political stance, coupled with a profound sense of patriotism and steadfast commitment to the nation. This constitutes the foremost objective of integrating Curriculum-Based ideological and political education into courses on the rule of law in foreign-related matters. In the course of handling foreign-related affairs, professionals in this domain are confronted with a highly intricate and ever-evolving external environment, as well as multifaceted interest relations. They must unwaveringly place national sovereignty, security, and development interests above all else, consciously anchoring the national position and security imperatives at the heart of their legal arguments and strategic determinations. Patriotism is by no means an abstract profession of sentiment; rather, it entails sustaining acute vigilance over national interests in concrete arenas—including cross-border litigation, international negotiations, and the interpretation of treaties — thereby ensuring the nation's enduring advancement within the framework of law. Through specialized instruction and practical training, Curriculum-Based ideological and political education should guide students to integrate their personal development with national needs and cultivate a political character characterized by "loyalty to the Party, the country, the people, and the law." (Xi, 2025)

Second, students should cultivate both moral integrity and legal competence and embody the core socialist values. Legal professionals engaged with foreign affairs must not only possess knowledge of domestic law, international law, and foreign-related law, but also demonstrate strong moral character and a legal mindset. Curriculum-Based ideological and political education should take "fostering virtue through education" as its fundamental task, integrate elements of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education into specialized course instruction, and establish a comprehensive framework for education involving all personnel, throughout the entire process, and across all dimensions (Guo, 2023). For legal professionals engaged with foreign affairs, particular emphasis should be placed on cultivating confidence in cultural identity, institutional confidence, and confidence in the path of development. In the process of studying foreign languages and foreign law, they will inevitably encounter foreign ideas and cultures and may even fall into a state of questioning and skepticism. Curriculum-based ideological and political education should therefore help students selectively and dialectically embrace foreign ideas and cultures, thereby preventing them from losing their way amid multicultural influences.

Third, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of international rules and a global perspective. Legal professionals engaged in international affairs should systematically master international law, country-specific laws, and practical legal practices related to foreign affairs, enabling them to effectively safeguard national interests and the rights of citizens in international legal matters. Curriculum-based ideological education does not aim to undermine specialized education; rather, it seeks to integrate value guidance into specialized education. For instance, in courses such as international public law, international private law, and international economic law, instructors should guide students to critically examine the Western-centric narrative of international law (Liao & Wang, 2025) and apply concepts like the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" and the "community with a shared future for humanity" to reflect on legal responses to global challenges. By combining comparative law with the interdisciplinary approaches of international relations and history, students can gain a deeper understanding of the underlying interest conflicts and civilizational differences behind international rules.

Fourth, familiarize students with digital technologies and cultivate their core competencies in the rule of law in the digital era. In the digital age, legal professionals engaged in international affairs must not only understand law and foreign languages but also possess knowledge of digital technologies and the rule of law in the digital context. Emerging areas such as the Digital Silk Road, the digital business environment, cross-border data flows, and artificial intelligence governance have placed new competency requirements on such professionals. Curriculum-based ideological and political education must keep pace with the times, guiding students to focus on how digital technologies are reshaping the international legal order; to understand the implications of issues such as data sovereignty, cybersecurity, and algorithmic governance for national security; and to strengthen their capacity to safeguard national security in international activities.

The four levels of goal orientation described above constitute the "value core" of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education within foreign-related legal studies curricula. The empowerment provided by digital technology must serve this value core; it should not replace or dilute it. The role of digital technology lies in providing richer resources, more authentic scenarios, more precise feedback, and a broader space for interaction to support these educational objectives.

2.2 A Progressive Framework from Platformization to Immersive Experiences

The use of digital technology to enhance Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in foreign-related legal studies is not achieved overnight; rather, it follows a gradual evolution from platform-based approaches to intelligent solutions and, ultimately, to immersive experiences. This evolutionary trajectory reflects both the inherent logic of technological development and the evolving demands of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education for technological support.

Platformization represents the initial form of digital technology empowering Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in curricula, primarily manifested in the construction of online course platforms (Luo, 2021), digital resource repositories, virtual teaching and research offices, etc., to achieve the sharing and integration of high-quality teaching resources. For Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in foreign-related legal courses, platformization holds particular significance. These courses involve a vast array of international treaties, foreign legal cases, documents from international organizations, and multilingual materials, which are difficult to fully present in traditional classrooms. However, through digital platforms, teachers can integrate resources such as cases from the International Court of Justice, WTO dispute settlement reports, international arbitration awards, and foreign legal databases to build a case library for Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in foreign-related legal courses. For example, around themes such as cross-border investment disputes, counter-sanctions and counter-long-arm jurisdiction, and compliance with cross-border data flows during the Belt and Road initiative, typical cases can be developed and ideological and political elements embedded within them. Platformization can also break down inter-university barriers, enabling the cross-campus sharing of resources for foreign-related legal courses.

However, the limitations of platform-based empowerment are also evident. It primarily addresses the issues of resource scarcity and monopolization, but has not yet fundamentally transformed the unidirectional nature of the teaching process. Students continue to rely mainly on browsing, viewing, and downloading, lacking deep interaction and contextual experience. The “subtle and imperceptible influence” required by curriculum-based ideological and political education often proves difficult to fully realize at the platform-based stage.

Intelligence represents the intermediate form through which digital technology empowers Curriculum-Based ideological and political education within curricula. The application of technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, and learning analytics has shifted teaching from a one-size-fits-all approach to precision-based instruction. In the integration of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education into courses on foreign-related rule of law, intelligent empowerment is primarily manifested in the following four areas: First, precise diagnosis of student learning conditions. By collecting data on students ‘learning behavior on online platforms and analyzing their knowledge acquisition, value-based cognitive tendencies, and foreign language proficiency, the system provides teachers with personalized teaching recommendations. Second, intelligent content recommendation (Huang et al., 2024). Based on students’ academic specializations, language abilities, and interest preferences, the system recommends relevant cases on foreign-related rule of law, international law literature, and Curriculum-Based ideological and political education al materials. Third, AI-assisted teaching assistants and intelligent Q&A systems. Utilizing natural language processing technology, these systems provide students with 24/7 online legal knowledge consultations and foreign language translation assistance, thereby alleviating the pressure caused by the shortage of teaching staff in foreign-related rule of law programs. Fourth, virtual simulation experiments. By simulating scenarios such as international commercial arbitration, WTO dispute settlement, and cross-border data compliance reviews, students can develop their legal reasoning and practical skills within a simulated environment.

The key to empowering education through intelligent technologies lies in precision and in implementing tailored instruction. Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in foreign-related legal studies targets students from different language backgrounds, legal traditions, and regional or national contexts, whose knowledge foundations, value systems, and career aspirations differ substantially. Intelligent technologies can help instructors identify individual student differences; however, they also introduce new challenges: algorithmic recommendations may create information cocoons (Xu et al., 2024, p.134), exposing students only to content that aligns with their existing views and thereby undermining critical thinking; the collection and use of learning data may infringe upon students’ privacy; and AI-generated content may contain biases or erroneous information. In the field of foreign-related legal studies, these issues are particularly sensitive because they involve national security and ideological matters.

Immersive technology represents a high-level form of curriculum Curriculum-Based ideological and political education empowered by digital technologies. The development of technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality, mixed reality, digital twins, and the metaverse has made it possible to create highly simulated scenarios for international legal affairs. In immersive environments, students can step into the courtroom of an international court, participate in debates at the UN International Law Commission, experience cross-border investment arbitration firsthand, and engage in legal communication within different legal systems and cultural contexts. Embodied participation and situational experience can significantly enhance the impact and effectiveness of curriculum Curriculum-Based ideological and political education. For international legal affairs curriculum-based ideological and political education, immersive empowerment holds unique value. Professionals in international legal affairs need to possess cross-cultural communication skills and a global perspective, yet these competencies are difficult to acquire solely through classroom instruction. Through immersive technologies, scenarios such as international organization meetings, multilateral treaty negotiations, and transnational commercial mediation can be simulated, allowing students to understand the interests, legal cultures, and negotiation strategies of different countries through role-playing. For example, around the construction of a transnational legal order for the “Digital Silk Road,” virtual negotiation scenarios can be designed, where students take on the roles of representatives from China, the European Union, ASEAN, and other parties, engaging in strategic debates over rules for cross-border data flows. During this process, students not only improve their legal argumentation and foreign language expression skills but also gain a deeper understanding of the tension between safeguarding national interests and promoting international cooperation.

From platform-based approaches to intelligent solutions and then to immersive experiences, digital technology has enabled a clear, logically progressive path for integrating Curriculum-Based ideological and political education into foreign-related legal studies courses. However, the upgrading of technological forms does not automatically equate to an improvement in the effectiveness of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education. Platform-based, intelligent, and immersive approaches each have their own appropriate contexts and limitations. The core of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses lies in value guidance; technology is always merely a means. If we pursue technological "coolness" excessively while neglecting its value content, we risk falling into technological formalism. Therefore, while understanding the logic through which digital technology empowers these courses, we must also maintain a clear awareness of the associated technological risks.

3. Risk Assessment of Digital Technology Empowering Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in Foreign-Related Legal Studies Courses

The use of digital technology to enhance Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses on foreign-related rule of law is by no means a straightforward process. Technology is not a value-neutral tool; while it can provide empowerment, it may also introduce new risks. The application of digital technology to Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses on foreign-related rule of law should be examined from multiple perspectives to identify potential risks, including value-related risks, security risks, stakeholder-related risks, and structural risks.

3.1 The Erosion of Value Cultivation by Technological Rationality

The core of technological rationality lies in efficiency, precision, computability, and controllability; in the field of education, this is typically manifested in using data to measure learning outcomes, employing algorithms to optimize teaching processes, and leveraging platforms to achieve broad-scale coverage. However, when technological rationality becomes excessively inflated, it may erode the value-forming function of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education within curricula. (Huang, 2025)

In the integration of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education into courses on foreign-related rule of law, the cultivation of values holds particular importance. Professionals trained in foreign-related rule of law generally deal with international legal affairs involving national sovereignty, security, and development interests. They need not only to understand "what legal rules are," but also to comprehend "why it is legitimate to safeguard national interests" and "how to firmly uphold national positions while complying with international law." Such value judgments and political stances cannot be objectively quantified through data; they are instead manifested primarily in individuals' subjective perceptions and experiences. If the evaluation of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses relies excessively on quantitative indicators—such as online learning duration, test scores, and the frequency of interactions—it may lead to a tendency to "emphasize form over content" and "emphasize knowledge over values." Students may then merely complete courses or complete exercises merely to meet these targets, without truly internalizing the content of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education.

Beyond this, technical rationality may also entail the risk of "decontextualization." (Wang & Zhang, 2017, p.69) Many core topics in the Curriculum-Based ideological and political education embedded in courses on the rule of law in foreign-related contexts—such as national sovereignty, patriotism, and a community with a shared future for humanity—are highly contextual and historical in nature. They require understanding within specific international political and economic contexts and necessitate that instructors provide explanations based on their own experiences and case studies. However, digital platforms often tend to fragment knowledge into standardized modules, presenting it in the form of short videos, micro-lectures, knowledge cards, and similar formats. Although fragmented dissemination makes it easier for students to study during fragmented periods of time, it may weaken their overall grasp of complex issues and their capacity for in-depth reflection.

Even more concerning is that technical rationality may create the illusion of "value neutrality." (Li & Liu, 2026) Digital platforms and algorithmic recommendations often claim to be neutral and objective; in reality, however, platform rules, algorithmic parameters, and data sources are all embedded with specific values. In the field of foreign-related rule of law, many international legal databases, online course platforms, and academic resources originate in Western countries, and their content selections and discursive frameworks may exhibit a Western-centric bias. If students rely heavily on these digital resources over an extended period, they may unconsciously adopt their underlying value assumptions. If curriculum-based ideological and political education fails to critically filter digital resources and adapt them to local contexts, it may give rise to the paradox in which technological empowerment instead undermines value guidance.

3.2 Data Sovereignty and Ideological Security

The digitalization of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education within courses on the rule of law in international affairs inevitably involves the collection, storage, transmission, and use of large volumes of data. Such data include students 'learning behavior data, teachers' instructional resource data, international cases, and international law literature data. In the field of international legal affairs, data sovereignty and ideological and security risks are particularly prominent.

First is the risk associated with cross-border data flows. (Xu & Yang, 2023) The Curriculum-Based ideological and political education embedded in courses on the rule of law in foreign-related matters is inherently transnational; teachers and students may need to access overseas databases, websites

of international organizations, online courses offered by foreign law schools, and similar resources. During the teaching process, data relating to national security, foreign policy, and foreign-related cases may also be generated. If such data is stored on overseas servers or transmitted via overseas platforms, there is a risk that data sovereignty may be compromised. China's Data Security Law and Personal Information Protection Law impose strict regulations on cross-border data flows, which the education sector must likewise comply with. At present, many universities use online teaching platforms, video conferencing software, and cloud storage services sourced from overseas; the pathways for data storage and transmission in these services are opaque, creating potential security risks. (National Computer Virus Emergency Response Center [CVERC], 2022)

Secondly, there is the risk of ideological infiltration. Digital platforms serve as a significant arena for ideological struggles. The ideological education component of foreign-related legal studies covers topics such as international law, foreign law, and international relations, exposing students to a wealth of Western academic perspectives, legal theories, and media content during their studies. Some overseas institutions may disseminate erroneous ideologies, such as Western values, historical nihilism, and legal nihilism, to students in China through online courses, academic exchanges, database services, and other channels. (Yuan & Zhu, 2022, p.36) If the ideological education in courses lacks effective review and guidance regarding digital content, students may lose their direction amidst the diversity of information. When learning foreign-language-related specialized courses, students in foreign-related legal studies inevitably encounter foreign ideologies and cultures. They are likely to passively compare these foreign ideologies and cultures with their own local ones, potentially even falling into a state of skepticism and doubt. Digital technology has not only expanded the breadth and depth of such exposure but also amplified the risks associated with ideological influences.

Finally, there is the risk of algorithmic bias and information manipulation. Artificial intelligence and big data technologies enable highly personalized information recommendations, but they may also be used to manipulate cognition. In the curriculum-based ideological and political education component of foreign-related rule-of-law courses, if the training data for algorithmic models contain biases, or if recommendation mechanisms are influenced by specific interest groups, students may only encounter narratives in international law that are unfavorable to China, or only see the rule-of-law experiences of Western countries. Information cocoons and echo chamber effects can weaken the guiding effect of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses, and may even cultivate legal professionals who "always refer to the West." Therefore, the empowerment of foreign-related rule-of-law courses through digital technology should be grounded in a high level of awareness regarding data sovereignty and ideological security.

3.3 The Erosion of the Dual Subjectivity of Teachers and Students

While digital technology empowers teaching, it may also undermine the agency, creativity, and interactivity of teachers and students as the primary subjects of education. In the Curriculum-Based ideological and political education component of courses on the rule of law in foreign-related contexts, the risk of such erosion of subjectivity warrants particular attention.

First, the erosion of teachers' agency. The integration of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education into foreign-related legal studies requires teachers to serve not only as transmitters of legal knowledge but also as guides in values and role models in personal conduct. However, the widespread application of digital technologies may reduce teachers to mere platform operators or content distributors. Under a platform-based teaching model, teachers may become overly dependent on preexisting digital course resources, thereby reducing their own deep processing and personalized interpretation of teaching content. Under an intelligent teaching model, AI-assisted teaching assistants may replace teachers in part of their functions related to answering questions and providing guidance, thereby reducing the time teachers spend engaging in face-to-face interaction with students. Under an immersive teaching model, virtual scenarios may replace authentic social practice and interpersonal interaction, causing the personal charisma of teachers to be obscured by technological effects.

It is worth noting that digital technology may exacerbate the "de-skilling" of teachers. (Wang et al., 2025, p.99) When teaching resources, instructional processes, and teaching evaluations are all dictated by platforms and algorithms, teachers 'professional autonomy is constrained. The Curriculum-Based ideological and political education component of courses on the rule of law in international affairs requires teachers to flexibly adjust their teaching strategies in response to changes in the international landscape, students' evolving attitudes, and real-time feedback in the classroom. Such pedagogical wisdom is difficult for algorithms to replace entirely. If teachers rely heavily on technological systems over the long term, they may gradually lose sensitivity to and control over the teaching process.

Second, the erosion of students 'agency. The ultimate goal of integrating Curriculum-Based ideological and political education into foreign-related legal studies is to cultivate students' ability to make independent judgments, make autonomous choices, and take conscious action. Students are not passive recipients of ideological indoctrination; rather, they are active learning subjects with subjective initiative. However, digital technologies may place students in a state of passive learning. (Wang & Yang, 2026, p.240) Watching videos on online platforms, completing automated quizzes, and being ranked by points may lead students to study merely to complete tasks, rather than out of intrinsic interest or alignment with their values. Algorithmic recommendations confine students to content within their comfort zones, creating an "obscuration effect" that diminishes their motivation for active exploration and critical thinking. Although virtual simulations provide realistic scenarios, they are ultimately not genuine legal practice; students may develop a false sense of competence through simulation while lacking the ability to respond to real-world, complex situations.

In the field of foreign-related rule of law, the risk of the erosion of students 'agency manifests in certain distinctive ways. Professionals in foreign-related rule of law need to possess cross-cultural communication skills and teamwork capabilities, which must be developed through genuine interpersonal interaction. Although digital technologies can simulate cross-cultural scenarios, they cannot replace authentic communication with foreign counterparts, officials of international organizations, or foreign-related lawyers. If students become overly dependent on virtual simulations and online interactions, they may feel uncomfortable or even become withdrawn when engaging in actual foreign-related interactions. Moreover, the Curriculum-Based ideological and political education embedded in foreign-related rule-of-law courses emphasizes a sense of national and familial commitment and social responsibility; such commitment and responsibility must be cultivated through genuine social participation and practical experience. While digital technologies can provide information and scenarios, they cannot replace students' own value reflection or their choices regarding action.

Therefore, when leveraging digital technology to enhance Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses related to foreign-related legal affairs, we must guard against the tendency for "technology to replace the subjects." Technology should serve the affirmation of the subjectivity of teachers and students, rather than suppress it. Teachers should become masters of technology; students should become active constructors.

3.4 The Reproduction of the Digital Divide and Educational Inequality

The application of digital technology in education has long been expected to promote educational equity. However, reality shows that digital technology may also reproduce or even exacerbate educational inequality. In the curriculum-based ideological and political education component of courses on the rule of law in foreign-related contexts, this structural risk is particularly insidious and profound.

First, the regional and inter-institutional digital divide. The cultivation of legal professionals with expertise in international affairs is concentrated primarily in certain universities, particularly law and political science institutions, foreign-language institutions, and comprehensive universities. These institutions possess advantages in digital infrastructure, technical talent, and funding, enabling them to take the lead in implementing digitalized teaching reforms. In contrast, universities and local institutions in the central and western regions face the dual challenges of resource scarcity and technological lag. The introduction of digital technologies may further widen this gap. High-quality digital resources, intelligent teaching platforms, and virtual simulation laboratories often require substantial financial and technical support, which is difficult for universities in less developed regions to afford. Consequently, the digital dividends of integrating Curriculum-Based ideological and political education into courses on international legal affairs are concentrated primarily in a small number of universities, while students at the majority of institutions have limited access to these benefits.

Second, the individual digital divide among students. Even within the same university, differences exist among students in terms of digital literacy, device availability, and network conditions. Students from financially advantaged families may have better computers, faster internet connections, and access to a wider range of online learning resources; by contrast, students facing financial hardship may have to rely solely on the university's computer labs or mobile data plans, which can adversely affect their learning outcomes. In the Curriculum-Based ideological and political education component of courses related to foreign-related rule of law, students also need to access international databases and participate in cross-border online exchanges, which places higher demands on network conditions and digital skills. The digital divide may place some students at a disadvantage—or even marginalize them—in the digitalized delivery of course-based Curriculum-Based ideological and political education.

Third, cultural capital and the language divide. The Curriculum-Based ideological and political education embedded in foreign-related legal studies entails extensive engagement with foreign-language materials and cross-cultural content. Within digital platforms, high-quality resources are predominantly available in English, whereas resources in other languages remain comparatively scarce. Consequently, students with strong English proficiency can readily access international academic resources, while those with weaker English foundations encounter formidable language barriers. Moreover, students differ considerably in their familiarity with foreign legal cultures; those from urban backgrounds or with greater opportunities for international exchange may adapt more easily to digital, cross-cultural learning environments. Such disparities in cultural capital, when amplified through digital technologies, risk perpetuating and even deepening educational inequity.

Fourth, the implicit exclusion underlying the rhetoric of "technological empowerment." Digital technologies are frequently portrayed as "neutral" and "inclusive," yet their design logic, interface language, and interaction patterns may implicitly reflect specific cultural preferences. For instance, certain international online course platforms are structured around Western pedagogical conventions, placing considerable emphasis on individual expression and critical debate, whereas Chinese students may be more accustomed to teacher-led instruction and collective learning dynamics. If the digital reform of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in foreign-related courses indiscriminately replicates Western platform models, it may run counter to the cultural habits and cognitive styles of Chinese students, thereby producing a form of implicit exclusion. Therefore, while harnessing digital technologies to empower Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses related to foreign affairs, it is imperative to address the digital divide and to prevent technology from functioning as an amplifier of educational inequality.

4. Defining the Boundaries of Digital Technology's Empowerment of Curriculum - Based ideological and political education in Foreign-Related Legal Studies Courses

Empowering the Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in foreign-related legal studies through digital technology does not entail unrestricted technological expansion; rather, it involves seeking appropriate applications within the triple boundaries of values, technology, and institutions.

4.1 Put People First in Education and Prioritize Values.

Putting education at the core and prioritizing values constitutes the primary boundary for leveraging digital technology to enhance Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses on foreign-related rule of law. Technology is a means; education is the end goal. Any application of digital technology must be judged by whether it contributes to cultivating high-quality foreign-related legal professionals who possess both moral integrity and legal expertise.

First, it is essential to recognize the leading role of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education within foreign-related rule-of-law education. While digital technology can assist in the transmission of knowledge, skill development, and scenario simulation, it cannot replace value guidance and character cultivation. The core objective of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in foreign-related rule-of-law courses is to help students strengthen their political stance, deepen their sense of patriotism and national identity, enhance their cultural confidence, and foster awareness of national security. These objectives can be achieved through teachers 'exemplary conduct, in-depth classroom dialogues, and authentic hands-on experiences. Technology can create immersive scenarios, but it cannot replace the personal influence of teachers; technology can provide vast amounts of information, but it cannot replace students' reflection on their values.

Secondly, it is essential to adhere to the stance and values of China as the guiding principle. The development of digital resources for Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in foreign-related legal courses must uphold the stance of China, disseminate the voice of China's rule of law, and elucidate China's path to the rule of law. When introducing foreign digital resources, critical screening and localization should be carried out to prevent the infiltration of Western-centric discourse. In developing digital courses, it is necessary to organically integrate Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law, the core socialist values, and the concept of a community with a shared future for humanity, thereby guiding students to apply China's theoretical framework in analyzing international legal issues.

Finally, it is essential to respect students 'agency and the natural laws governing their development. Education should be student-centered; this means that the application of digital technologies must align with students' cognitive characteristics, learning habits, and emotional needs. Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in foreign-related legal studies should not be reduced to "technological indoctrination"; rather, it should use methods such as inspiration, dialogue, and experiential learning to guide students in independently forming sound value judgments.

4.2 Appropriate, Measured and Judicious Technical Boundaries

For digital technology to empower Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses on foreign-related rule of law, it is essential to establish appropriate, moderate, and proportionate technical boundaries. In the practice of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in curricula—particularly in the field of courses on foreign-related rule of law—this does not mean adopting a technocentric or technologically perfectionist approach. The use of digital technology to enhance such education must remain grounded in factual reality and involve the continuous pursuit of appropriate technical boundaries.

Appropriateness means that the choice of technology should align with the teaching objectives and content. The Curriculum-Based ideological and political education within courses on foreign-related rule of law involves different types of knowledge and value dimensions. Technological applications should evolve in response to changing circumstances, with teaching carried out in a targeted manner. For knowledge-based content, such as international legal rules and provisions of foreign laws, digital platforms and databases can enhance learning efficiency; for skill-based content, such as international moot courts and arbitration negotiations, virtual simulation and immersive technologies can provide training scenarios; however, for value-based content, such as national sovereignty and patriotism, it is more suitable for delivery through teacher lectures, case discussions, and practical experiences. Moderation means that technological application should be kept within a reasonable scope, avoiding over-reliance and preventing the fall into a utilitarianism devoid of value. While digital technology can enhance teaching effectiveness, it may also lead to issues such as distracted attention, visual health concerns, and social isolation. Therefore, Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses on foreign-related rule of law should foster a focused learning environment that encourages students to engage in deep reading and critical thinking, thereby facilitating value-based dialogue. If the classroom is dominated by the operation of various digital devices and platforms, students will become preoccupied with technical operations and will have no time for value-based reflection. In essence, a moderate technological boundary requires the rational control of the proportion of digital technology in teaching, while reserving necessary time for face-to-face interaction, printed reading, and independent thinking. Appropriateness in moderation means that technological application should achieve an effect where it is "sufficient for the purpose," rather than blindly pursuing technological novelty. Although immersive technologies such as virtual reality and the metaverse are eye-catching, they come with high development costs, significant maintenance challenges, and slow content updates. For most universities, the conditions for large-scale application may not yet be in place. By comparison, established technologies such as high-quality case repositories, online discussion forums, and video conferencing systems may better meet actual needs. The choice of technology should be made within one's capabilities, with an emphasis on practical effectiveness, and should avoid "technological formalism."

In the field of foreign-related rule of law, technical boundaries must also take into account national security and confidentiality requirements. Content involving state secrets, foreign policy, or sensitive cases should not be transmitted or stored through public digital platforms; instead, official data transmission channels with a higher level of security assurance should be used. The development of digital resources for Curriculum-Based ideological and political education within foreign-related rule-of-law courses must strictly comply with national laws and regulations on cybersecurity and data security, ensuring that the application of technology remains secure and controllable.

4.3 A Standardized and Feasible Institutional Baseline

For digital technology to empower Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses related to the rule of law in foreign-related matters, institutional safeguards are also required. These institutional safeguards encompass laws and regulations, policy guidelines, ethical standards, and evaluation mechanisms.

First, it's really important to stick to national laws and regulations—especially the Cybersecurity Law, the Data Security Law, the Personal Information Protection Law, and other applicable rules. When universities build digital teaching platforms, collect learning data, or do cross-border online exchanges, they have to operate strictly within those legal boundaries. And if overseas platforms or data are involved, they need to run security assessments to protect data sovereignty and ideological security. The Ministry of Education and other authorities should put out clear guidelines for how digital tech is used in education, spelling out exactly where the lines are for collecting, storing, using, and sharing data—you know, to keep everything on the right track.

Second, a review mechanism for digital resources for Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in curricula should be established. Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses related to foreign-related legal affairs involves sensitive content such as international law, foreign law, and international relations; digital resources are sourced from a wide range of providers and are updated frequently. Universities should establish review panels composed of experts in fields such as law, foreign languages, Curriculum-Based ideological and political education, and national security, which will conduct reviews of the political nature, scientific validity, and applicability of both imported and self-developed digital resources. For resources originating abroad, particular attention should be paid to their value orientation and ideological background to prevent the infiltration of erroneous ideological trends.

Third, it is imperative to further optimize the training framework for teachers 'digital literacy and their capacity to integrate Curriculum-Based ideological and political education into curricula. The effective empowerment of digital technology in this regard hinges on the competence of teachers themselves. Teachers are expected not only to master relevant digital skills but also to demonstrate the ability to embed ideological and political elements within digitally mediated instruction. Universities should institute systematic and regular training mechanisms aimed at enhancing teachers' digital literacy, their awareness of ideological and political integration, and their interdisciplinary instructional capabilities. Concurrently, the teacher evaluation system ought to be reformed by incorporating the achievements of digital initiatives for Curriculum-Based ideological and political education into performance appraisal, thereby motivating teachers to participate actively and consistently in such endeavors.

Finally, a mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of digital technology–empowered Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in curricula should be established. Evaluation should not focus solely on the frequency of technology use or platform activity; it should also assess whether students' value awareness, political stance, sense of national identity and commitment to the country, and practical capabilities have improved. Scientific evaluation tools should be developed, combining formative and summative assessments and integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches, so as to comprehensively assess the actual effectiveness of digital technology–empowered Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in courses on foreign-related rule of law.

5. Conclusion

The use of digital technology to enhance Curriculum-Based ideological and political education within courses on foreign-related rule of law is the product of the convergence between the trend toward educational digitalization and the objectives for cultivating talent in foreign-related rule of law. Undoubtedly, while digital technology provides opportunities for resource integration, targeted instruction, scenario-based simulation, and cross-cultural interaction, it also introduces challenges such as value erosion, security risks, the dilution of the primary subject, and educational inequity. Taking the objective of Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in foreign-related rule of law courses as its logical starting point and using the progressive trajectory of digital technology—from platform-based to immersive—as its framework, this paper systematically analyzes the logical mechanism through which digital technology enhances such education; it examines its potential risks from four dimensions: value-related risks, security risks, subject-related risks, and structural risks; and it delineates the boundaries of this process from three perspectives: prioritizing the cultivation of the individual and value orientation, maintaining appropriate and moderate technical boundaries, and establishing normative and feasible institutional safeguards. In the future, achieving deep interaction between digital technology and Curriculum-Based ideological and political education in foreign-related rule of law courses is an inherent requirement for the modernization of higher legal education.

Fund

Education Science Planning Project of Guangdong Province: Research achievements in the construction of ideological and political teaching system of law major based on the construction of new liberal arts and the cultivation of outstanding legal talents [Project No.: 2021GXJK205].

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[4] See also Note 3.

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