

Research on the Construction of the Ideological and Political Education System for International Students in China

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Abstract: *With the enhancement of China's comprehensive national power, the number of international students in China has increased, and their countries of origin have become more diverse. In this context, constructing an ideological and political education system for international students in China is of great significance. This paper analyzes the current research status and identifies challenges in areas such as the overall planning of ideological and political education, faculty development, management and training, and the education system. Furthermore, it proposes a framework for the ideological and political education system, including top-level design, team building, curriculum and teaching material development, and quality evaluation. A comprehensive assessment framework focusing on integrated competency evaluation is also constructed. The aim is to achieve comprehensive coordination and all-round education, cultivating high-level international talents who understand, befriend, and love China, and to disseminate China's development model and experiences.*

Keywords: *International students in China; Ideological and political education system; Curriculum-based ideological and political education; Assessment framework*

1. Introduction

After years of development, curriculum-based ideological and political education has achieved fruitful results in the education and training of domestic students. However, there is a lack of relevant experience and models for international students in China. It is generally believed that the concept of curriculum-based ideological and political education is not applicable to foreign nationals, resulting in limited research, exploration, and practice in this area. Currently, it is mainly carried out in a few courses such as "Overview of China," "Chinese Culture," and "Chinese Language," which only marginally spread Chinese culture, ideological concepts, moral norms, and value orientations.

For example, Li Ruiting et al. explored the measures for curriculum-based ideological and political education for engineering international students based on the cultivation status and ideological and political education practices of the School of Energy and Power Engineering at Tianjin University^[1]. Niu Baiwen discussed the significance, current challenges, and practical paths of curriculum-based ideological and political education for international students, providing references for comprehensive and all-round education^[2]. Additionally, scholars such as Su Rui, Wang You, Zhang Zhijun, Guo Guojiao, and Qu Tianliang studied how to integrate ideological and political education into specific courses for international students, exploring methods from aspects such as ideological and political elements, classroom teaching, and new media applications.^[3] However, these explorations are far from meeting the development needs of socialist higher education with Chinese characteristics. Therefore, it is particularly important to study the necessity, existing problems, and implementation plans for the construction of curriculum-based ideological and political education for international students in the new era.

2. Challenges in Ideological and Political Education for International Students

Given the increasing number of international students in China and the diversification of their countries of origin, differences in political systems, religions, and social natures have led to numerous challenges in ideological and political education. Identifying these problems and their causes is crucial for formulating corresponding solutions and improving the level of ideological and political education

for international students.

2.1 Difficulties in Overall Planning of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education

The diversification of international students' national backgrounds, involving different social systems, religious beliefs, and cultural contexts, makes it extremely difficult to reconcile individual differences and formulate overall plans. When developing training programs for international students, ideological and political courses are often not integrated into the training system, resulting in uneven construction of curriculum-based ideological and political education across regions, universities, and majors, and unbalanced development of international student education.

The current training system in China usually relies on courses like "Overview of China" and "Chinese Language" to cultivate international students' affection for China. However, these courses do not focus on China's unique ideological and moral, political, legal, institutional, and safety education. As a result, international students lack effective carriers and approaches for curriculum-based ideological and political education, leading to insufficient learning of Chinese culture, ideological morality, and values. In daily life, they may show indifference, superficial understanding, or even cognitive biases towards China's politics, national conditions, military affairs, and diplomacy. These issues deviate from the goals of the "Study in China Plan" and hinder the development of socialist higher education with Chinese characteristics, as well as its global competitiveness and influence.

2.2 Shortage of Ideological and Political Education Faculty

University teachers are the main body implementing ideological and political education, and their teaching standards directly affect the construction level of curriculum-based ideological and political education. Currently, teachers facing international students are not fully prepared to integrate ideological and political education into their courses, lacking unified guiding ideologies and implementation plans. Moreover, there is insufficient understanding and attention to the concept of curriculum-based ideological and political education for international students. Therefore, in the specific implementation of international student education, university teachers must take the initiative and creativity to achieve the goals of curriculum-based ideological and political education^[4].

The Management Measures for Enrollment and Training of International Students in Schools (2017) jointly formulated by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Public Security of China clearly stipulate the need to establish a management and teaching team that is politically reliable, capable, responsible, and proficient in ideological and political education. This team aims to reverse the current situation where international students prioritize personal interests, lack collective concepts, and have weak social responsibility, in order to achieve the overall goal of all-round education in socialist higher education with Chinese characteristics.

2.3 Disconnection between Management and Training in Ideological and Political Education

Currently, there is a disconnection between the management and training of international students in China. Management is usually handled by the International Cooperation Office, which manages students' academic records, daily lives, and accommodation, with ideological management limited to basic information such as age, ethnic group, and religious beliefs. Academic training is decentralized to departments or faculties, which only focus on teaching cultural and professional knowledge. This disconnection between management and training makes it difficult to achieve the overall goal of collaborative, comprehensive, and all-round education. Therefore, it is necessary to coordinate management and training, establish a collaborative education mechanism among functional departments, integrate ideological and political education into the entire process of management and training, and form a university-wide training model leveraging each department's advantages.

2.4 Incomplete Ideological and Political Education System

Over the past decade since the implementation of the "Study in China Plan," international student education in China has made progress in terms of quantity, diversification of source countries, degree applications, and discipline expansion. However, compared with developed countries in Europe and America, there is still a significant gap, mainly in top-level design. Relevant laws and systems are not perfect, and the curriculum-based ideological and political teaching system and teaching quality evaluation system for international students are still unsound. At the university level, effective cases for

systems such as curriculum-based ideological and political education systems, curriculum goals, training programs, faculty allocation, and evaluation methods are lacking. Therefore, the construction of an ideological and political education system for international students still faces challenges.

3. Framework Design for Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education for International Students in China

3.1 Top-level Design and Overall Planning

China attaches great importance to ideological and political work in universities, explicitly requiring universities to strengthen top-level design for cultivating international students from the strategic perspective of deepening educational opening-up and serving national diplomatic development^[5]. Universities should establish relatively unified and characteristic training systems for international students, leveraging their regional, disciplinary, and professional advantages to develop distinctive programs.

Based on existing general courses for international students such as "Overview of China" and "Chinese Language," and taking professional courses as growth points, universities should vigorously build high-quality demonstration courses for ideological and political education, deeply excavate and refine ideological and political elements in both types of courses, and steadily promote curriculum-based ideological and political education in a subtle way. Courses should multi-perspectively demonstrate the confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics, explain China's unique development path and its significance to global development, showcase the Chinese people's pursuit and realization of dreams, and shape China's national image.

3.2 Building a Strong Team for Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education

First, front-line teachers are key to ideological and political education for international students. Therefore, building a responsible, dedicated, and high-quality teaching team is essential to improving the level of ideological and political education. A professional education team composed of full-time teachers, ideological and political counselors, and class advisors should be established to implement ideological and political education in both in-class and out-of-class teaching and daily management.

Second, university management departments at all levels need to form a joint management team consisting of the university committee, international affairs office, academic affairs office, and secondary schools/colleges. Each department should clarify its responsibilities, coordinate efforts, and play roles in organizing implementation, process management, and assessment evaluation of ideological and political education.

Third, service and support departments such as student dormitories, cafeterias, sports centers, and hospitals, which are at the forefront of student services, should also establish correct values and awareness of ideological and political education. By demonstrating their professionalism and caring for international students, these departments can imperceptibly influence students' values. Through the construction of these three teams, a collaborative ideological and political education team for international students can be formed, achieving targeted education.

3.3 Synchronous Construction of Ideological and Political Courses and Teaching Materials

Courses and teaching materials are important carriers of ideological and political education, and their construction is a key link in promoting ideological and political education for international students. Chinese people to strive for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. This thought is also an important guiding ideology for comprehensively advancing the construction of the textbook system in the new era.

Ideological and political teaching materials mainly include basic courses and professional courses, both of which should be guided by the sinicized theories of Marxism, adhere to the concept of innovative development, strengthen confidence in Chinese culture and academic research, and demonstrate China's stance, wisdom, and values. Specific measures include: (1) improving the management mechanism for textbook construction, formulating, managing, and applying textbooks in strict accordance with central guidelines, and organically integrating ideological and political elements

with knowledge points according to the characteristics of basic and professional courses to ensure natural and acceptable integration; (2) strengthening the incentive mechanism for textbook construction to motivate university teachers to incorporate the concepts and content of curriculum-based ideological and political education into existing textbooks and accelerate the development of digital curriculum resources containing ideological and political education content; (3) integrating China's national conditions, geography, culture, history, and economy into teaching materials, ensuring that textbooks are informative, timely, and sinicized, and comprehensively presenting China to international students.

3.4 Promoting Ideological and Political Progress through Quality Evaluation

Teaching effectiveness and quality are core indicators for evaluating the success of curriculum construction. Teachers lead ideological and political education for international students, students provide quality feedback, and the assessment and evaluation system ensures institutional guarantees. Therefore, universities should establish a scientific and reasonable quality evaluation system for ideological and political education, including evaluation, supervision, and feedback mechanisms for both students and teachers^[6].

On the one hand, this system stimulates international students to master professional knowledge while comprehensively understanding China and deepening their correct perception of the country. On the other hand, it conducts teacher evaluations and incentives, incorporates student and expert teaching evaluations, and uses the effectiveness of ideological and political education as an important basis for teachers' professional title evaluation, position promotion, and performance rewards, enhancing teachers' sense of responsibility and enthusiasm.

4. Assessment Framework for Ideological and Political Courses for International Students

In line with the requirements of talent cultivation in the new era, focusing on the comprehensive capabilities of international students and aiming to reflect their all-round and free development, a scientific and effective assessment system should be established, integrating formative and process-based assessments throughout the teaching activities.

4.1 Focus on Integrated Competency Assessment

The assessment of ideological and political courses for international students should reform the traditional system centered on basic knowledge, focusing instead on the positive changes in students' emotions, attitudes, and values. Guided by the core of comprehensive competency and the goal of all-round human development, assessment indicators should be designed from the aspects of morality, intelligence, physical education, aesthetics, etc., to comprehensively determine the content of ideological and political education assessment for international students over a certain period, guiding their free and all-round development.

Specifically, in the assessment of ideological and political courses, it is necessary to focus on students' academic life, cultivate their keen observation of modern society and the ability to deeply analyze and solve new problems, and conduct scientific and comprehensive evaluations of their comprehensive capabilities based on their performance in these courses, promoting the scientific and comprehensive development of the assessment system.

4.2 Student and Teacher as Assessment Subjects

In the past, the assessment of ideological and political courses was mainly the responsibility of classroom teachers, which may lead to biases^[7]. In addition to interacting with classroom teachers, international students have the most frequent contact with their dormitory classmates. Advisors have more opportunities to understand each student's learning attitude and performance in various activities than classroom teachers, and dormitory classmates have a deeper understanding of each other's living habits, personalities, and ways of dealing with others. People's true behaviors in daily life, where they are more relaxed, provide a basis for comprehensive and in-depth assessment. Therefore, the assessment subjects for international students' ideological and political theory courses should include advisors and roommates to achieve more comprehensive, objective, and reasonable evaluations.

4.3 Competency and Literacy as the Core

In the era of deepening globalization and marketization, the essential capabilities of international students include innovation, analysis and research, written expression, communication, and strong social adaptability. International student education, as a provider of talent, shoulders the responsibility of global builders and must adhere to market rules, cultivating students based on market talent demands to improve supply quality and efficiency.^[8]

Ideological and political courses can give full play to their fundamental role in fostering virtue through education. Taking competency and literacy as the core, corresponding assessment items should be designed for each capability indicator. Scientific evaluations should be conducted based on students' performance in these items, forming an all-round, multi-level, and multi-dimensional assessment of international students, promoting the comprehensiveness of the assessment system and improving the quality and reliability of ideological and political course assessment^[9].

4.4 Scientific Research as a Key Focus

Cultivating international students' capabilities in scientific research, analyzing and solving problems, and exploring cutting-edge knowledge is a priority. While conducting ideological and political education, their research levels should be emphasized through methods such as knowledge competitions, classroom presentations, and course papers.

Knowledge Competitions: Teachers can carefully compile question banks for each module and hold competitions at the end of each chapter to continuously stimulate students' learning enthusiasm. During each competition, a temporary assessment committee composed of randomly selected international students and teachers can record and score the performance of examinees, with results stored in personal electronic information files as the basis for course assessment. Competition results provide effective guidance for students' subsequent learning, and the relevant experience accumulates practical skills for their future work.

Classroom Presentations: Presentations provide a stage for international students to showcase themselves, meeting their individual needs and significantly contributing to the cultivation of their verbal expression ability and confidence. Ideological and political teachers can divide each class into several groups, and within the first 10 minutes of each class, a designated group presents a topic of interest, reflection, or confusion from the previous class in PPT form, explaining the division of labor among group members, followed by teacher comments. This integrates course assessment and evaluation throughout the teaching process, adhering to developmental and process-based evaluations.

Course Papers: Course papers are a main method for cultivating international students' capabilities and a touchstone for testing training results. The paper writing process examines students' comprehensive abilities, including thinking, analysis, independent learning, information retrieval, knowledge integration, problem-solving, and verbal expression. Although time-consuming and labor-intensive, it enriches students' lives, broadens their horizons, and enhances their capabilities.

4.5 Result Analysis as the Foundation

Feedback results play an important role in guidance and motivation. Analyzing assessment results can reveal problems in the current assessment system, identify the root causes, and provide targeted improvements, which are of great significance for perfecting the assessment system. Meanwhile, feedback results motivate both teachers and students. For teachers, it is an opportunity for self-improvement; for students, it is a source of encouragement. Therefore, focusing on result analysis can enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

5. Conclusion

The curriculum-based ideological and political education for international students in China is still in the exploratory stage, with certain deficiencies in the cultivation process due to students' diverse backgrounds. The management, training, and education of international students involve cross-departments, cross-faculties, and cross-disciplines, making it a complex systematic project. Therefore, we need to approach it from the height of national diplomatic strategic needs and the concept of building a "community with a shared future for mankind," integrating ideological and

political education into the student cultivation system.

Starting from top-level design, overall planning, teacher and construction, curriculum development, and evaluation systems, we should achieve comprehensive coordination and all-round education, cultivating a group of high-level international talents who understand, befriend, and love China. Through these efforts, China's development model and experiences can be transmitted to the world, enabling China's solutions, standards, and wisdom to benefit all humanity.

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