Exploring Ways of Incorporating Education about Ideological and Political Theories in All Courses within Higher Vocational Colleges

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Abstract. Promoted by the “Construction Plan of High-level Vocational Schools and Specialties with Chinese Characteristics”, the model of integration of specialty groups with industry chains or job groups will become the new trend of high-quality, higher vocational colleges development. In this context, from the perspective of specialty group construction, exploring the ways of implementing the propagable Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses reform aligning with the characteristics of different schools as well as of specialty group courses has been given new requirements and challenges. Based on the actual situation of Changzhou College of Information Technology, from the perspective of decomposing the ideological and political curriculum standard and constructing banks of ideological and political cases, this paper explores how to activate reforms in terms of building featured projects as well as cultural cultivation of Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses, and accordingly, provides new ideas and methods for the reform in the new era of China.

1. Introduction

At the symposium in Beijing for teachers of ideological and political theory education held in March, 2019, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, pointed out that, “We should adhere to the unifying of explicit and implicit education, and explore the ideological and political education resources contained in other courses and teaching methods to achieve full education of students by all teachers in all dimensions.” On the other hand, along with the gradual advancement of the “Construction Plan of High-level Vocational Schools and Specialties with Chinese Characteristics” (referred as the Plan thereafter) at the national level, it is crucial for the reform of higher vocational colleges to focus on high-tech and high-end industries, activate the agglomeration effect and service function of specialty groups, clarify the ultimate goal of fully integrating the supply side of talents cultivation and the industrial demand side in all structural factors, and vigorously promote the construction of specialty groups in vocational colleges and schools [1].

The specialty group construction based on the Plan is a systematic project. During the implementation, it is necessary to change the specialty construction concept, optimize the specialty group construction ideas, and clarify the specialty relationship within the group [2]. In the process of curriculum planning, it is necessary to restructure the resources within the group to ensure that the curriculum is the core and to implement diversified personnel training. We should not only highlight the cultivation of professional and technical skills in specialty group courses, but also emphasize the function of professional courses in ideological and political education. We must also seek to provide moral value guidance in accord with the characteristics of specialty group reform.

2. Analysis of the problems with the Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses reform in higher vocational colleges

The ideological and political course in higher vocational colleges is important for fostering
integrity, promoting the holistic development of students, and providing moral education. However, it is not the only opportunity to offer ideological and political education in the curriculum. The Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses reform (referred as the Reform thereafter) is aimed at integrating the ideological education of students into every course at school and every aspect of their life [3]. Currently, there are two barriers to implementing the Reform throughout vocational colleges and schools, which are explained in the following sections.

2.1 How to find and consolidate the elements of ideological and political education in professional courses

The key to the implementation of the Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses reform lies in professional teachers. Their knowledge level of ideological and political theory determines its success. Most of the specialty teachers in higher vocational colleges are only equipped with professional knowledge and practical skills in the field. Teachers who are not Party members do not possess deeper understandings of ideological and political theories, and also lack the teaching techniques of the Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses reform. In such a context, even though teachers may have the desire to incorporate ideological and political elements into the curriculum, they are unable to grasp the elements of ideological and political education because of their limited theoretical knowledge. This would be a barrier to the implementation of the Reform.

2.2 How a school can embody the characteristics of a well-rounded education as proposed by the Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses reform

The system proposed in the Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses reform cannot be constructed without a curriculum reform and innovation. In terms of innovating the Reform, it is necessary to root the school’s education and cultivating characteristics into the innovation, to explore implementation methods that align with the school’s orientation of talent cultivation. In recent years, some undergraduate colleges have launched several branded courses as well as ideological and political reform practices based on their individual educational characteristics. For example, the course Jade Carving and Jade taught at the China University of Geosciences addresses the study of jade culture in order to inspire students to learn about its connotations in Chinese culture: as the saying goes, “be modest as a gentleman, be graceful as jade”. In another case, Fudan University has promoted the practice of the Reform throughout its two courses inspired by “China Xilie” (which literally means a range of courses related to China and Chinese culture), 13 well-rounded education courses and 28 professional courses. Moreover, the university has taken these courses at the first batch of experimental courses among which the school has been pushing hard in implementing the Reform. The third case is East China University of Political Science and Law, which is known for its legal education. The university teaches the course Rule of Law in China, which proactively explores ways to effect curriculum reform as part of the Reform. The team led by Cao Suqun at the Huaiyi Institute of Technology also designs a curriculum compass to help develop the Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses reform.

However, consolidating the elements of ideological and political education based on the individual culture and educational characteristics of different colleges is still an open topic. Most of colleges are still at the exploration stage of the Reform and have not established a systematic curricula redesign. The ideological and political elements embedded in the specific professional courses are also based on the personal understanding of the teachers, and no case banks have been formed with reference to relevant ideological and political theories. Under this circumstance, it is particularly urgent to explore and construct a curriculum system for the Reform that is easy to promote and adapt to individual schools.
3. Ways of Implementing the Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses reform in higher vocational colleges from the perspective of specialty group construction

With the release of the “Implementation plan on National Higher Vocational Colleges Reform” and the “Construction Plan of High-level Vocational Schools and Specialties with Chinese Characteristics”, higher vocational colleges have gone from focusing on extension to connotation, and from scale expansion to quality improvement and characteristic development [4]. On the other hand, the structure of professions is the basis and framework for education in vocational colleges. Based on industry demands, the structure of professions is optimized by professional groups. They can better adjust to the rapid occupational iteration triggered by new technologies, exert the agglomeration effect, maintain the vitality of development, and underline the characteristics of higher vocational colleges. The following section refers to the case study of Changzhou College of Information Technology (referred as CCIT thereafter) to discuss major ways of implementing the Reform in higher vocational colleges from the perspective of specialty group construction.

3.1 Deconstructing the ideological and political curriculum standard and constructing banks of ideological and political cases

CCIT is based on the information industry. It meets the demand for technical and skilled talents required by the developing and changing Internet industry. Aiming to cultivate high-quality composite technical and skilled talents, it offers inter-disciplinary courses and innovative practicum courses. It carries out enterprise project and entrepreneurship project practice, and builds a “quality-oriented, practice-based, and professional-integrated” curriculum system.

The school has designed and constructed a curriculum system of “sharing at lower-level, differentiating at middle-level, integrating at higher-level, and compounding at top-level”, which has brought the cluster advantage of the professional group in the extension curriculum. In this context, the Reform and the professional curriculum should not be separated, and the infusion of techniques and of ideological and political content knowledge can be carried out from the perspective of the professional group. To be specific, we should incorporate general professional education into the professional group and integrate the general knowledge or specific professional knowledge with elements of ideological and political education. We should mainly implement explicit ideological and political education in the general compulsory courses and focus the reform on the professional introductory courses and core courses. At Huaiyin Institute of Technology, they use an ideological and political compass model and set up the first-tier criteria with the following courses: “Basic Principles of Marxism”, “Mao Zedong Thought and Socialist System with Chinese Characteristics”, “Ideological and Moral Cultivation and Introduction to Law”, “Outline of Modern History of China”, and “the Spirit of the Three Heroes in Changzhou”. It then further deconstructs these criteria into multiple second-tier criteria to quickly intersect elements of the Reform with professional knowledge. Afterwards, it develops the case bank among professional courses. And finally, it optimizes the distribution and division of all the criteria from the perspective of specialty group to construct a full-fledged ideological and political system in all professional curricula.

3.2 Constructing the characteristics of the Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses reform based on the orientation of school education

Based on the actual conditions of CCIT, a characteristic project of the Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses reform was built. We should implement the “1310” Ideological and Political Educational Work Quality Improvement Project (“1” as continuing to firmly grasp one educational orientation; “3” as the combination of ideological and political educational work with teaching and research, with well-rounded education, and with organizational management; “10” as the in-depth implementation of the top ten education systems in terms of curriculum, research, practice, culture, network, psychology, management, service, funding, and organization). Each department in charge should clarify the roadmap, timetable, and person in charge according to the construction standards, as well as perfect the implementation and feedback system, to achieve the
holistic education of all students. Additionally, focusing on explicit ideological and political courses, the college has strived to design a culture of the Reform, to help teachers and students enhance their cultural knowledge and self-confidence, to establish a “red culture research studio” based on local revolutionary resources such as the “Three Heroes in Changzhou” memorial hall, and to promote the building of other red cultural brands such as “Walking Class” and “Red Play”. Through cultural platforms, the college has strived to spread “Stories of CCIT”, as well as present a range of typical cases in terms of socialist core values education.

4. Summary

There are not many examples of curriculum reform in vocational colleges to draw from. Promoted by the Plan, the model of integration of specialty groups with industry chains or job groups will become the new trend of high-quality higher vocational colleges development. Therefore, to implement the Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in All Courses reform in vocational colleges, from the perspective of specialty group construction, we should explore boldly, use innovative implementation methods, build a curriculum resource pool related to the Reform, and actively promote its pilot. Additionally, we must strive for stability in the process of development, and avoid a one-for-all approach. Rather, through the project-based implementation, it is necessary to gradually explore a set of implementation plans that acknowledge schools’ cultures.

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References


