

Trends and Challenges in the Teaching of Ideological and Political Courses in the Era of Digital Transformation: A Case Study of the "Ideology, Morality, and the Rule of Law" Course

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Abstract: In an era where digital technologies are transforming societal productivity and the 20th National Congress of the CPC discusses the "advancement of education digitalization", the integration of ideological and political education (IPE) with digitalization represents the future path for IPE teaching in universities. Under the external push of digital technologies, endogenous changes in ideological and political education occur through the use of digital IPE resources, channels, and modes to enhance the vitality of IPE classrooms. However, in the implementation of digital IPE teaching reforms, challenges persist in ideological leadership, digital infrastructure, and educational philosophy.

Keywords: Digitalization, Ideological and Political Education, Teaching Reform, Educational Philosophy.

1. Introduction

In the era of generative artificial intelligence (AIGC), where concepts like ChatGPT and the metaverse have become reality, digital technologies have sparked social transformations. The report from the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China explicitly states the need to "advance the digitalization of education" to provide education that satisfies the people. "China's Education Modernization 2035" emphasizes the need to "accelerate the educational reforms of the information age," and the "Opinions on Deepening the Reform and Innovation of Ideological and Political Theory Classes in the New Era" propose to "vigorously advance the reform of teaching methods in ideological and political education... and promote the application of artificial intelligence and other modern information technologies in the teaching of these classes." Clearly, digital technologies, characterized by mobility, networking, and intelligence, represent a comprehensive and deep empowerment revolution.[1] They are set to drive continuous changes in the goals of ideological and political education, resource allocation methods, and the organization and evaluation models of teaching. This will lead to a profound transformation and reshaping of educational philosophies and practices. However, digitalization is a double-edged sword. While it can significantly empower ideological and political education, it can also lead to the 'absence' of such education. Digital technologies may overstep their bounds, undermining the value-leading function of ideological and political education and shaking the security of mainstream ideology, [2]posing significant challenges to the digital transformation of ideological and political education classes. In advancing the development of ideological and political education in universities, it is crucial to correctly understand and respond to the impacts of technological development on education. By leveraging technological tools, we can promote the reform and innovation of educational methods, making ideological and

political work more relevant to the actual needs and realities of students. This promotes the organic integration of education and technology, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education.

2. Trends in the Digital Transformation of Ideological, Moral, and Legal Education Courses.

(1) External Boost from the Development of Information Technology

The digital transformation of ideological and political education is an external efficacy bestowed by the advancement of digital technology. The global technological revolution has profoundly influenced people's thinking, cognition, and practices. The integration of digital technology with various fields has created new technological paradigms that transcend time, space, and national borders, displaying innovations of global significance. Successive proposals in China's 20th National Congress report and "China's Education Modernization 2035" to promote the development of digital education align with these technological trends, seizing the opportunity to empower the development of educational endeavors through digital technology and embracing the new global tide of digital education. New forms of ideological and political education in the digital environment have emerged, adapting to online spaces and networked existence. Artificial intelligence has become the "infrastructure" and "innovative factor" for the practice of ideological and political education. [3] The deep integration of digital technology with various components, structures, and processes of ideological and political education creates a symbiotic effect, becoming the core driving force and basic condition for the development of digital education. For instance, digital technology enables the visualization and perceptual enhancement of educational scenarios. Through generating simulated, visualized, transcendent, and

experiential virtual scenes, it replicates and reproduces real educational settings and even creates abstract conceptual scenes, opening up entirely new teaching scenarios and experiences for ideological and political education. This digital transformation not only enhances the effectiveness and quality of education but also injects new vitality and possibilities into educational innovation and development. Therefore, the ongoing development of digital technology will externally propel the digital transformation of ideological and political education, shaping a more vibrant and forward-looking educational model and practice.

(2) Intrinsic Changes in the Teaching Model of Ideological and Political Classes

In the process where digital technology reshapes social structures, the teaching model of ideological and political classes consciously adapts and actively evolves to enhance its service utility. [4] The essence of ideological and political classes is to reason effectively, which is not an easy task. It requires not only avoiding rote preaching but also innovating the content and presentation of the courses to engage students in a manner they prefer and are accustomed to. [5] Generation Z vocational students, who dominate the digital landscape, are adept at using technology for learning, capable of multitasking, and prefer a fast-paced learning style. These students value practical and experiential learning and have a demand for personalized education, challenging the traditional teaching models of ideological, moral, and legal courses. Traditional teaching relies on paper-based materials, while digital teaching offers diverse learning resources, employing multimedia technologies and online courses to make learning more vivid and intuitive. Additionally, digital teaching increases interactive opportunities, providing richer ideological exchanges through online discussions and offering real-time learning assessments and personalized learning pathways. In short, to better meet the personalized learning needs of the new generation of vocational students, ideological and political classes, with their inherent proactive nature for change, adapt to developmental needs and evolve towards high-quality development through digital empowerment.

3. Practice of Digital Transformation in Vocational Ideological, Moral, and Legal Education Courses

(1) Digital Ideological and Political Resources, Triggering Emotional Resonance

The teaching resources for ideological and political education empowered by digital technology offer high-fidelity, three-dimensional dynamic interactions that provide users with a more embodied experience. This creates an immersive atmosphere for ideological and political education, distinct from the traditional use of multimedia and other modern equipment to display related images and 2D videos. Typically, digital immersive resources for ideological and political education create realistic scenarios that stimulate students' interest in learning, immersing them in a learning state that enhances teaching levels and effectiveness. For example, when the 3D red resources of a school's ideological and political practice base are combined with ideological and political courses, students wearing 3D glasses can immerse themselves in the history of the Red Revolution. Thus, when learning about the "Spirit of the Chinese Revolution" in the

third chapter of "Ideology, Morality, and the Rule of Law," students experience stronger embodied cognition and spiritual resonance, moving away from an indifferent attitude in class. Additionally, digital technology provides a wealth of digital teaching resources, enriching the content of ideological and political education, increasing the engagement and responsiveness in classes, and enhancing the emotional appeal of ideological and political education.

(2) Digital Communication Channels, Generating Classroom Vitality

Digital technology can construct new models for ideological, moral, and legal education classrooms, further increasing the timeliness and interactivity of ideological and political courses. It promotes the mutual conversion of theory and practice, allowing students to apply theory in practice and observe practice through theory, avoiding the disconnection between theory and practice, and achieving interactive "teaching" and "learning". Traditionally, students rarely participate actively in discussions and learning in ideological and political classes. Student participation is a critical aspect of teaching effectiveness; when classes lack points of interest, participation decreases. Digital technology provides students with rich learning resources and digital platforms, breaking the closures and restrictions of traditional education. This allows students in ideological and political education to have more agency and autonomy, achieving self-education and self-realization, and gaining a sense of achievement and value from education. At the same time, students can not only use digital platforms like online historical and Red museums individually but also perform multi-user collaborative operations within the educational space, enabling more effective participation in online discussions and high-quality learning exchanges. Based on students' digital learning statuses, teachers using digital analytical methods in blended teaching will further understand students' personalized needs, better enhancing students' perceptions of changes and developments in the new era. Digital technology creates more realistic practical scenarios for students, allowing them to perceive the intertwining of theory and practice in practice, thereby stimulating the vitality of the classroom.

(3) Digital Classroom Forms, Infusing the Essence of Life

An important view in the educational philosophy of Tao Xingzhi, a renowned Chinese educator, is that "life is education". Contemporary higher vocational education in ideological and political courses also advocates for the infusion of life, integrating ideological and political education discourse into daily life, allowing students to naturally come into contact with and accept these discourses, thus achieving better educational outcomes. The infusion of life into digital large classrooms of ideological and political education needs to be achieved through various means. For example, teachers can provide different forms of teaching resources via online educational platforms, making learning in the classroom more interesting and allowing students to more conveniently acquire relevant knowledge and apply it better in real-life practice. Simultaneously, utilizing digital technology to create innovative educational content like "large classrooms" and "large ideological and political classes," and setting up familiar life scenarios for students, mobilizes their existing life experiences, generating emotional resonance. Then, by guiding students to further reflect on familiar things and feel the knowledge of morality and the rule of law in life, and by adopting a new educational model that combines education

with life, ideological and political education discourse can better align with students' lives, stimulating their interest and initiative, allowing them to continuously receive education in life. Applying education in life promotes deep learning among students, thus forming a digital ideological and political "large classroom" that is rich in the essence of life within the ideological and political classroom.

4. Challenges of Digital Transformation in Vocational Ideological, Moral, and Legal Education Courses

(1) Challenges of Digital Value Leadership

Digital ideological and political classes must adhere to the principle of cultivating morality and talent, avoiding the pitfalls of global ideological competition driven by digital technology. Ideological and political courses are central to the mission of moral education, with a distinct political attribute of ideology. Although digital transformation is an inevitable trend of the times for these courses, it is essential to maintain their socialist attributes, adhere to Marxism and socialist core values, and utilize digital technology to innovate educational content, models, scenes, resources, and platforms. This enhances the effectiveness of moral education and serves the Party's and nation's talent training and modernization efforts. Digital transformation opens up new arenas for ideological competition, embedding globally relevant digital ideologies into the fabric of digital communities, [6] thus triggering developments in digital ideologies and their conflicts. For instance, the responses generated by generative artificial intelligence are based on its pre-trained neural networks, and due to uncertainties in parameter settings, the same query might yield vastly different responses. Using generative AI in digital ideological and political classes could result in content that either aligns with or contradicts mainstream thought, presenting significant uncertainties. Moreover, generative AI might tend to produce content that satisfies individual preferences or needs, a "people-pleasing" algorithmic mechanism that struggles to address educational goals such as public sentiment, shared ideals, and value consensus. This could exacerbate ideological divisions and opinion polarization, making it challenging to achieve the goals of ideological and political education like value integration and community shaping. [7] In the digital transformation of these courses, it is crucial to continually uphold the political task of safeguarding ideological security, ensuring adaptation to the new dynamics, arenas, and methods of global ideological competition, and guaranteeing that ideological and political education continues to serve as a safeguard of ideological security. Combining digital and AI technologies with the pursuit of cultivating morality and talent, in a collaborative and co-constructive manner, aims to achieve innovative educational goals, using technology to empower optimal educational practices, and promoting digital and intelligent teaching practices that form a new model of moral education in universities.

(2) Challenges in Building Digital Infrastructure

Constructing new digital infrastructure for ideological and political education is an inevitable choice that involves digitally transforming traditional educational facilities and equipment, posing new challenges for infrastructure construction in university ideological and political classes.

These courses focus on cultivating students' ideological and moral character and social responsibility, necessitating the introduction of new digital classrooms into ideological and political education to foster changes in the educational landscape and inject fresh vitality into these efforts. This involves integrating political, historical, and cultural elements into ideological and political education practices at various levels and dimensions, such as using virtual labs and simulation classrooms to allow students to better appreciate the deep meanings behind events and figures. Additionally, the seriousness and depth required by ideological and political classes demand high-quality network environments and information technology support from digital facilities, ensuring the effectiveness and stability of teaching. Furthermore, as times evolve, digital teaching models should possess the capacity for rapid updates and flexible adjustments to accommodate the changing social and student needs. For example, introducing virtual reality (VR) equipment into ideological and political classes, using VR headsets and digital resources like "Climbing Snow Mountains" and "Crossing Grasslands" can immerse students in the revolutionary era of the Long March, deeply experiencing the unyielding will and conviction of Chinese revolutionaries. This integration of historical events with virtual reality technology provides a surreal experiential teaching method, breaking the spatiotemporal limitations of traditional teaching modes, and offering students a more authentic learning experience.

(3) Challenges in Transforming Educational Thinking

The digital transformation of ideological and political classes represents a comprehensive change in educational elements, systems, and structures, not merely an update of teaching tools but a holistic enhancement of educational thinking and capabilities, forming a new model of education. Currently, as digital technology progresses into a phase of deep integration and integrated innovation, the combined application of various digital technologies becomes a new trend. In contrast, the digital transformation of ideological and political classes still focuses on the isolated application of individual digital technologies, lacking a systematic and holistic approach to integrating digital technologies. [8] The use of digital technology will revolutionize the teaching models of ideological and political teachers. In the digital age, where information explodes online, students, as "natives" of the digital era, assimilate information and knowledge at an extremely rapid pace. If ideological and political teachers continue to employ traditional didactic teaching methods, their teachings will become outdated relative to the era, resulting in a misalignment with what students want to learn, leading to dull and monotonous lectures. Teachers must integrate ideological and political education elements into digital technology, such as intelligent filtering, recommendations, and guidance based on digital platforms, to understand beforehand what students wish to learn, thus conducting targeted ideological and political education. Simultaneously, ideological and political teachers should guide students to transition from passive recipients of ideological elements to active participants and sharers in the responsibilities of national rejuvenation and becoming pioneers of the new era, resonating with patriotism and love for the people. Through this, digital technology can innovate the teaching models of ideological and political classes and explore constructive relationships between digital technology and ideological and political education, improving traditional

educational thinking to transform technological advantages into effective educational outcomes.

5. Conclusion

Under new technologies, the transformation of the educational model for ideological and political courses is an ongoing process. The relationship between traditional and modern educational forms, diverse digital technologies, and various educational resources is not simply one of replacement or exclusion, but rather a coupling relationship that interconnects, influences each other, and continuously evolves and iterates in an orderly manner. [9] Moving from traditional offline teaching models to integrated digital and offline teaching methods, digital empowerment enhances the effectiveness of ideological and political courses, thereby enriching their teaching resources and improving teaching efficiency and interaction. Through the digital transformation of educational thinking, digital ideological and political classes can utilize digital analytics to precisely understand students' learning needs and behavioral characteristics, thereby providing a more personalized learning experience. However, the process of digital transformation requires ongoing exploration and optimization. While adhering to the fundamental values of cultivating virtue and talent, ideological and political courses should not lose their original intent in the process of digitalization. Looking to the future, the educational effectiveness of ideological and political courses will continue to develop and improve under the drive of digital empowerment. Ideological and political classrooms will become more vivid, interesting, and effective, providing robust support for training qualified builders and successors for the socialist cause.

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