

Research on the Path of Enhancing the Quality and Effectiveness of Civics Classes in Private Colleges and Universities under the Environment of Media Convergence

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Abstract: In the milieu of media convergence, elevating the teaching quality and efficacy of ideological and political theory courses in private colleges presents a challenging endeavor. Confronted with the novel demands that the era of new media imposes on education, private institutions of higher learning must align with the current of the times and undertake innovative reforms in their politico-ideological curricula. Presently, the pedagogy of such courses at private colleges is beset with various issues that necessitate refinement - ranging from content and methodology to assessment and the cultivation of the teaching cadre. This demands a multifaceted approach: refreshing the curricular content, revolutionizing teaching methodologies, renovating assessment techniques, and fortifying the instructor cohort, all in a bid to meet the developmental requisites of the new media age. This study aims to explore potential avenues for enhancing the quality and impact of ideological and political education in private colleges amidst this context, thereby fostering the healthy progression of the field.

Keywords: media convergence, private colleges and universities, civics class, quality and effectiveness

Introduction

In the swiftly evolving landscape of media convergence, the era of new media presents private colleges with a novel and fertile ground for ideological and political education courses. In this context, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of these courses is not only a necessity for educational innovation but also an integral strategy for building the socialist core value system. While media convergence broadens the platform and scope for teaching activities in ideological and political courses, it simultaneously elevates the demands on course content, pedagogical approaches, and teacher competence. This paper aims to analyze the challenges and opportunities that private colleges face in the teaching of political courses in the new media era, to delve into the avenues of reform, and to construct a framework of thought and an action guide for the reformation and enhancement of ideological and political courses in private institutions of higher education.

1. New requirements for teaching civics classes in private colleges and universities in the new media era

In the era of new media, ideological and political courses at private higher education institutions confront unprecedented challenges and opportunities. The evolution of the Internet, social platforms, and multimedia technologies

has not only restructured the paradigms of information dissemination but also redefined the interactive dynamics between teaching and learning. Against this backdrop, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of ideological and political education necessitates keeping pace with the times. It is imperative to shed the conventional pedagogical layers and employ more vibrant and interactive teaching methodologies to kindle students' enthusiasm for learning and their capacity for critical thinking. Within this broad context, adapting to the novel pedagogical demands of ideological and political courses in the new media age is an urgent topic for discourse. The demand for interactivity both inside and outside the classroom is on the rise, and traditional didactic methods are becoming increasingly incongruent with students' learning habits. Classroom instruction must undergo a transformative upgrade, embracing more interactive and participatory multimedia and social tools, such as educational videos, online discussions, and interactive polling, to accommodate new avenues for knowledge acquisition^[1]. Concurrently, the topicality and pragmatism of ideological and political course content must be reinforced. Content should move away from lofty slogans and embrace timely analyses of current affairs and case studies. By examining typical events in contemporary society, students can deepen their understanding of societal phenomena and enhance their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Moreover, the objectives of ideological and political education should not be confined to the transmission of knowledge but should also encompass the cultivation of students' abilities to accurately discern online information, engage in critical thinking, and nurture a sense of social responsibility. To navigate the complex and ever-changing online environment, educators must continually elevate their professional expertise and media technology proficiencies, guiding students through the discernment and critique of online information via the study of real-life cases. Significantly, the practicality of ideological and political courses should be augmented. Through simulated social practice activities, such as role-playing, debates, and field research, students can learn through practical engagement, cultivating their capacity to resolve real-world issues. Only by meticulously crafting instructional strategies and methods, and by integrating the extensive application of new media tools, can private higher education institutions truly advance the pedagogical quality and impact of their ideological and political courses, allowing such education to thrive with vigor and vitality in the grand narrative of the new media age.

2. Analysis of the current situation of civic and political class teaching in private colleges and universities

2.1 Private colleges and universities and their characteristics

Private colleges, as a vital and dynamic component of China's higher education system, have emerged rather like a miniature revolution within the realm of education. Compared to their public counterparts, these institutions are distinctly characterized by their agility, adaptability, and innovative mechanisms. In essence, private colleges resemble nimble start-up enterprises with the capacity to swiftly adjust to market fluctuations—a trait often absent in the standardized, institutionalized operations of public universities. Ideological and political education, a compulsory course in higher education, assumes the critical role of guiding students toward the formation of accurate worldviews, values, and life philosophies. Nevertheless, within the context of private colleges, this course encounters unique challenges^[2]. Due to the pressure to closely heed market demands for institutional survival and growth, private colleges may excessively prioritize vocational-oriented curricula, consequently underinvesting in resources and attention towards ideological and political education. This is also evident in the allocation of teaching staff, the refreshment of teaching content, and the innovation of pedagogical methods. Classroom discussions often revolve around the same old topics, failing to ignite student interest or resonance. Another issue faced by ideological and political education in private colleges is the diversity of the student body. Students enrolled in these institutions hail from varied regions and cultural backgrounds, and their aspirations and career plans are equally diverse. In this setting, traditional 'one-size-fits-all' teaching models struggle to satisfy everyone's needs, thus compounding the complexity of educating in political ideology. However, those responsible for delivering these courses in private colleges are actively seeking breakthroughs. Educators have begun to integrate new media tools, utilizing videos, microblogs, WeChat, and other platforms for interactive learning, enhancing the appeal of the curriculum.

Additionally, some are striving to merge course content with students' real-life experiences and future career challenges, transforming the course from aloof lectures to something closely linked with the students' actual lives. The current state of ideological and political instruction in private colleges presents its distinct challenges but also harbors opportunities for reform. For these institutions, the pertinent question they must address is how to maintain their unique features while elevating the quality and impact of their ideological and political coursework—an imperative issue for educators.

2.2 Analysis of the academic situation of teaching civics and political science in private colleges and universities

In the expansive media landscape, the issue of enhancing the quality and efficacy of ideological and political education courses in private higher education institutions has garnered considerable attention. Given the dynamic and complex societal scenarios, it becomes particularly pivotal to analyze the current situation of political education pedagogy within the unique context of these institutions. Despite the distinct differences in resource allocation, curriculum planning, and faculty development, ideological and political courses in private colleges must keep pace with the zeitgeist, realizing their irreplaceable significance. Analytical insights into student profiles at private institutions reveal a diverse and individualized student body. Variations in age, experience, and values among these students significantly influence their receptiveness to and the impact of ideological and political coursework, leading to pronounced individual differences. Moreover, the proliferation of social media and online platforms has further compounded the complexity of student ideologies. This requires instructors to closely integrate their teachings with student realities, ingeniously designing course content and utilizing a variety of pedagogical approaches. Specific analyses point to a concerning lack of interest among students in these courses, highlighting a pressing need to enhance their sense of participation and belonging. Traditional didactic teaching methods also reveal their limitations in this context, struggling to provoke student thought and discussion. Additionally, the disparity in teacher qualifications impacts the quality of instruction. To elevate both the standard and outcomes of these courses, private institutions must conduct thorough analyses of student circumstances, fortify faculty development, stimulate intrinsic student motivation, and ensure that teaching content and methods are congruent with students' actual needs^[3]. Thus, the media convergence environment presents new channels and interactive platforms for political education. In light of these analyses, it is imperative for ideological and political education in private higher education to embrace technological innovations, adopt a student-centered approach, innovate pedagogical practices with veracity and pragmatism, and fully leverage media convergence tools to refresh educational content, optimize dissemination methods, and enhance educational outcomes.

2.3 Analysis of the system of teaching civics and political science in private colleges and universities

In the multifaceted media landscape, the pedagogical quality and efficacy of ideological and political education courses in private institutions of higher learning garner considerable scrutiny. The institutional mechanisms wield a direct and profound influence over the educational outcomes. Despite ongoing enhancements in classroom interaction and knowledge dissemination, the ideological and political curricula at private colleges and universities still bear discernible institutional footprints. The distinctive nature of these schools prescribes the structural design of their policies both in theory and practice. Compared to their public counterparts, private institutions may experience more constraints in financial support and resource allocation. These limitations pose challenges in attracting high-caliber educators, upgrading educational facilities, and broadening platforms for student engagement. Policy framers must acknowledge and address these disparities, facilitating equitable resource distribution. Notably, the varying levels of commitment to ideological and political education among private higher education institutions deserve attention. Certain private entities may prioritize immediate economic returns over the enduring impact and societal contribution of their curricula. This tendency undeniably undermines the depth and breadth of political education, impeding enhancements in teaching quality. Consequently, establishing a system attuned to the evolution of media convergence is not an overnight endeavor.

Educational authorities must work hand-in-hand with private institutions to contrive a teaching and evaluation framework that aligns with the media convergence environment. Initiatives encouraging the enrichment of curricula with multimedia and internet resources are essential, but maintaining the substance and rigor of these materials is imperative. Such efforts, in conjunction with traditional teaching methodologies, will synergistically amplify the pedagogical excellence and impact of ideological and political education classrooms.

2.4 Analysis of software and hardware of teaching civics and political science in private colleges and universities

When considering the quality and efficacy of ideological and political education (IPE) courses at private higher education institutions, it is imperative to evaluate both tangible and intangible elements. The tangible aspect encompasses the material conditions and instructional facilities that schools allocate for IPE classes; whereas, the intangible aspect pertains to curriculum content, pedagogical approaches, instructor qualifications, and student receptivity. From the tangible perspective, private institutions frequently encounter constraints in resource allocation. Their educational facilities may fall short of public counterparts, evident in areas such as multimedia classrooms, the abundance of electronic resources, and the integration of intelligent educational platforms with information technology, potentially leaving something to be desired. The absence of cutting-edge equipment and adequate learning environments not only hinders the efficiency of content delivery but also diminishes the allure of IPE for students. On the intangible side, the issues are more intricate. Private institutions grapple with the challenge of recruiting highly qualified IPE instructors. Instructors might lack seniority or the requisite emphasis on IPE teaching, and may even be deficient in student-centered and innovative pedagogical methods. After dissecting the issues related to both the tangible and intangible facets, it is also necessary to consider other aspects of IPE at private institutions, such as the rationality of course structuring, equitable distribution of educational resources, the actual needs of students, and ways to integrate ideological and political education into everyday teaching practices. A comprehensive consideration of these factors is crucial to enhance the overall quality and impact of IPE courses, with the ultimate aim of fostering well-rounded individuals.

3. Reform strategies for teaching civics and political science classes in private colleges and universities in the new media era

3.1 Teaching content of civics and political science classes in private colleges and universities in the new media era

In the media convergence landscape, ideological and political education courses at private colleges and universities are confronting both challenges and opportunities for redefining their curricula. Traditionally reliant on textbooks and direct classroom instruction, these courses are now compelled to evolve in response to contemporary students' patterns of information consumption and cognitive processes inherent to the digital age. Ideological and political curricula infused with new media characteristics should engage with current political dynamics, societal shifts, and the perpetuation and innovation of historical and cultural heritage. Incorporating internet phenomena as case studies could spur students' interest in current affairs, bridging theoretical instruction with practical application, and enhancing interactivity and practicality. By leveraging platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and short video apps, and integrating multimedia elements, such as images and audiovisual content, ideological and political education can enrich students' sensory experiences as well as facilitate the swift propagation and assimilation of information. In the quest to intertwine ideological discourse with tangible life experiences, one must not overlook the dual-edged nature of new media, necessitating that instructors meticulously curate teaching materials and guide students towards a critical absorption of information, thus cultivating sound values and worldviews. Positioning students at the helm, teachers can craft interactive discussions and blended learning environments that foster proactive contemplation and vigorous participation. Furthermore, amplifying cross-cultural exchanges and comparative scholarship, new media's global perspective and openness can assist students in establishing a national

identity and international comprehension amidst a globalized milieu. With a curriculum that transcends mere knowledge transmission to broaden horizons and elevate individual competence, private higher education must adapt to the pace of new media development, ensuring the course remains relevant and resonant with students. Only through continuous self-improvement, mastery of new media technology, and pedagogical innovation on the part of educators and professionals can they ensure that ideological and political instruction not only keeps pace with the times but effectively engages with students. It is through such means that one can truly enhance the caliber and impact of ideological and political education in an media convergence environment^[4].

3.2 Teaching methods of civics classes in private colleges and universities in the new media era

In the soaring epoch of new media, private higher education institutions have long transcended the traditional didactic paradigm of instruction and learning. The rise of the internet, social networks, and multimedia technology has infused political education with vivifying vigor whilst also ushering in a plethora of challenges. Modern pedagogical approaches aspire not merely to the transferral of knowledge but to the ignition of student engagement and participation. Against this backdrop, private higher education must propel the enhancement of political instruction, and pedagogical methods ought to be firmly rooted in the zeitgeist, adeptly wielding the tools of new media. Platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and Zhihu have become the vanguard for disseminating educational content, and political education classrooms should proactively capitalize on them to cultivate interactive learning experiences that bolster communication between educators and students. For instance, employing WeChat mini-programs to conduct real-time quizzes encourages students to think actively and respond promptly during lessons, thereby elevating the interactivity and relevance of classroom discourse. Beyond the classroom setting, short video platforms like TikTok and Bilibili offer educators an opportunity to craft concise instructional videos imbued with humor and dynamic presentations, a format that not only captures student interest but also facilitates shared viewing and discussion, promoting a synthesis of ideas and perspectives. Notably, these instructional videos offer anytime viewing, greatly enhancing the flexibility of learning. Furthermore, when leveraging new media tools, private institutions must be mindful of the depth and practicality of content. It is essential to captivate students stylistically while ensuring the substance and accuracy of informational content so as to preserve the fundamental aims of political education. Consequently, the educator's commitment to continual learning and professional development is paramount. As purveyors of wisdom, mentors, and solvers of enigmas, they must become adept at navigating new media applications, guiding students through the discernment of truth amidst a surfeit of information, and fostering critical thinking abilities. In summary, for political education at private higher institutions to achieve qualitative leaps in the age of new media, they must embrace technological progress and innovate educational philosophies and methodologies. Only by crafting an interactive, content-rich, and intellectually profound new model of political education can the quality and effectiveness of political courses at private higher institutions be genuinely enhanced.

3.3 Assessment methods of teaching civics and political science classes in private colleges and universities in the new media era

In the era of new media, the pedagogical approach to ideological and political education at private institutions of higher learning is undergoing a profound transformation. The paradigm of traditional assessment in these courses faces an unprecedented challenge and must therefore evolve and innovate. Under the auspices of new media, evaluation methods should emphasize students' capacity for critical thinking and a propensity for innovation. Interactions on platforms such as microblogs, WeChat, and forums enable students to articulate their perspectives on societal issues. Educators may gauge students' participation quality on these platforms by criteria such as the coherence of their logical reasoning, the suitability of their arguments, and their ability to creatively resolve problems. Furthermore, the utilization of multimedia and interactive software opens up fresh prospects for assessment in political ideology courses. Through online assessments and simulated scenarios, students can demonstrate their problem-solving skills in settings that closely mirror real-world

contexts. This mode of assessment also offers timely feedback, aiding instructors in refining their pedagogical strategies and permitting students to promptly gauge their learning progress. Crucially, assessments in the new media epoch should integrate both formative and summative evaluation, encouraging students to document and reflect upon their learning journey and transformations. This could be facilitated by creating electronic portfolios that aggregate a student's learning processes and outcomes, allowing for a comprehensive appraisal. Though new media presents challenges to the teaching of political ideology courses, it also furnishes novel spaces and methodologies that enliven the discipline's depth and gravity by aligning closely with students' lived experiences, thereby igniting their interest and initiative in learning. In this vein, a contemplative and inventive approach to assessment stands as a pivotal element in elevating the caliber and efficacy of education^[5].

3.4 Teacher team building for teaching civics and political science classes in private colleges and universities in the new media era

In the context of the new media era, the pedagogy of ideological and political education courses at private institutions of higher learning is confronting unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Elevating the quality and effectiveness of teaching necessitates paramount attention to the construction of the teaching faculty. This denotes that educators must not only deeply comprehend the essence and objectives of political theory courses, but also must master and exploit new media tools to establish efficient communication mechanisms. At the forefront, for political theory instructors, continuing education and professional training become especially significant. It is imperative to ensure their proficiency and adeptness with new media technologies and their leadership in virtual classrooms. This means that periodic technical training updates and pedagogical method workshops are no longer optional, but essential. Teachers need to enhance their media literacy and deepen their understanding of cyberspace dynamics through ongoing learning, enabling them to better forge the conduits of knowledge transfer within a new media milieu. The diversification of the teaching cohort is also key to enhancing the instructional outcomes of political theory courses. The collaboration and exchange between younger instructors and their more seasoned counterparts can foster the rejuvenation of educational philosophies and the innovation of teaching methodologies. Younger teachers often have greater familiarity with new media operations and internet culture, capturing students' interests, while veteran educators possess profound knowledge in curriculum content and design. Their symbiotic collaboration can animate and deepen the political theory classroom experience. Through the utilization of new media platforms, educators can meticulously plan online discussions, virtual symposiums, and even extramural educational activities, all of which can significantly amplify the interactivity and practicability of learning, enhancing students' affinity and engagement with political theory courses. Political theory instructors at the frontier of the new media age in private institutions are inevitably holistic developers, equipped with forward-thinking mentality, adeptness in technology use, and innovative pedagogic strategies. Their progression represents not only their individual professional development trajectory but also a crucial safeguard for the overall enhancement of political education quality in private colleges and universities. Continuous renewal in teaching philosophies, methodologies, and techniques ensures that the ideological and political education courses in private higher education institutions can thrive with renewed vitality in the new media landscape.

4. Conclusion

In the era of new media, private institutions of higher education are confronted with novel challenges and presented with fresh opportunities in the realm of ideological and political education. An optimal reform strategy for ideological and political courses should embrace the full spectrum of new media tools, invigorating the educational content and methods, refining the assessment mechanisms, and bolstering the construction of the educators' collective to amplify the interactivity, specificity, and practical impact of these courses. Private colleges and universities should adopt an open-minded approach to the transformations brought about by new media, actively exploring educational paradigms that align with their unique developmental trajectory with a sense of responsibility and purpose. This endeavor is not merely instrumental in fostering students' core values, it also contributes significantly to the elevation of private institutions' overall quality of ideological

and political education and is of salient importance for cultivating well-rounded socialist builders and successors.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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