

Breaking the Deadlock and Reshaping: A Multi-dimensional Path Exploration of Ideological and Political Education Reform for Postgraduate Students in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: Ideological and political education for postgraduate students in colleges and universities is a core link in the cultivation of high-level talents and has profound significance for the development of the country. In the context of the deep transformation of the higher education ecosystem, this paper uses a combination of literature review, case description and questionnaire - interview survey to systematically analyze the real pain points of ideological and political education for postgraduate students in dimensions such as curriculum, teaching, faculty and student participation, and sort out the reform challenges such as lagging educational concepts, diverse student demands, limited teaching resources and imperfect evaluation system. By dissecting the typical reform cases of three universities, from the five dimensions of concept, content, method, faculty, and evaluation, feasible paths such as the "big ideological and political" education mechanism, professional integration teaching, and modern technology empowerment are proposed to provide references for enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political education and cultivating high-level talents with both virtue and ability.

Keywords: Postgraduate education; Reform of ideological and political education; Big Ideological and political education; Teaching innovation; Evaluation system

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1.Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

The world is undergoing rapid changes unseen in a century, and technological competition and talent competition have become the core focus of international games. Talent is an important indicator of a country's overall national strength. The development of a nation depends on talent, and the rejuvenation of a nation depends on talent." ^[1]Postgraduate education is the highest level of higher education and an important convergence point of science and technology as the primary productive force, talent as the primary resource, and innovation as the primary driving force. It is also an important channel for the independent cultivation of top-notch innovative talents. Postgraduate ideological and political education concerns the fundamental questions of "what kind of people to cultivate, how to cultivate them, and for whom to cultivate them", and carries the significant mission of cultivating people for the Party and for the country.

^[2]Marxism emphasizes that the free and all-round development of human beings is the ultimate goal of education. In postgraduate education, the imparting of scientific knowledge and ideological and political education should not be neglected. The foundation of a university lies in moral education, and the effectiveness of moral education is the fundamental criterion for all its work. Empirical research shows that some graduate students have

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problems such as weakened political beliefs, a weakened sense of community, and a decline in academic ethics. About 28 percent of graduate students believe that "ideological and political education has nothing to do with professional learning", and 15 percent admit to having been exposed to grey information about academic misconduct. In this context, systematically advancing the reform of ideological and political education for postgraduate students is a key approach for colleges and universities to focus on the core of moral education and talent cultivation, and it is also an inevitable requirement for innovating educational carriers and continuously enhancing the ability to cultivate talents.

1.2 Research Methods

This paper adopts a combined paradigm of literature research, case analysis, and investigation research: reviewing relevant materials on ideological and political education at home and abroad in the past five years to lay a theoretical foundation; Three typical reform cases from universities were selected for in-depth analysis; Questionnaires and interviews were conducted with 2,000 graduate students and 150 ideological and political teachers from five universities to obtain real data support.

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of Ideological and Political Education for Graduate Students in Colleges and Universities

In the context of the current era, our country is undergoing a transformation from a major educational country to a powerful educational country and a powerful talent country. In view of the current situation such as the continuous expansion of postgraduate enrollment, the reform of the educational management mechanism, and the continuous improvement of the status of postgraduate education, postgraduate education in universities must adhere to the ideal mission of cultivating people for the Party and talents for the country. Give full play to the leading role of ideological and political education in universities and continuously optimize the effectiveness of ideological and political education for postgraduate students in universities. At present, although great achievements have been made in ideological and political education for postgraduate students in colleges and universities, there are still challenges and problems to be solved.

2.1 Curriculum system: The framework is stable but not well adapted

The current model of ideological and political education for postgraduate students in our country is mainly "compulsory + elective", but there are very obvious shortcomings in the teaching content under this model. The first shortcoming is that the teaching content has a very low degree of fit with the graduate students' majors, resulting in a serious disconnection between the graduate students' ideological and political theory and their professional studies; Another shortcoming is the low update rate of the teaching content. According to the survey results, 45% of graduate students believe that the teaching content and its cases have not been updated for five years. The current teaching content does not cover cutting-edge topics of The Times such as artificial intelligence and carbon neutrality, and is completely unable to meet the thinking needs of contemporary graduate students on issues of The Times.

2.2 Teaching methods: Traditionally dominant but lacking in innovation

When comparing postgraduate students with undergraduate students, the postgraduate student group is more diverse in category, but also varies in knowledge and has a wide range of ideas, which leads to a diversified overall structure of the postgraduate student group. If universities continue to use the same model of ideological and political education as undergraduates, "teachers speak, students listen," and neglect the independent thinking ability of graduate students, it will greatly affect the effectiveness of ideological and political education for graduate students. Although multimedia and online platforms have been fully popularized in colleges and universities, according to research surveys, only 30% of college teachers conduct ideological and political education through live streaming and online discussions, while the vast majority of college teachers simply use the platform as a "courseware storage tool", and the empowering role of technology has not been fully exerted.

2.3 Teaching staff: Structurally diverse but with uneven capabilities

The ideological and political teaching staff in Chinese universities usually consists of ideological and political course teachers, counselors and psychological counselors, etc. Therefore, the overall professional background is increasingly diverse. Although they can interpret ideological and political content from multiple perspectives, dimensions and levels, there are obvious shortcomings in the overall teaching staff ability: At present, 35% of ideological and political teachers in Chinese universities still use the traditional lecture-based teaching method and lack the ability^[3] of interactive design in the teaching process; Another 40 percent of teachers whose professional research directions have nothing to do with ideological and political teaching make it difficult for their research results to be transformed into teaching resources for ideological and political classrooms; Only 25 percent of ideological and political teachers in colleges and universities are proficient in using technologies such as VR and big data analysis for teaching, and their information technology adaptability is insufficient.

3.Challenges Faced by the Reform of Ideological and Political Education for Postgraduate Students in Colleges and Universities

3.1 Lagging educational concepts, indoctrination disconnected from the demands of the new era

The concept of ideological and political education in our country has always adhered to the indoctrination teaching concept, largely ignoring the dominant position and diverse demands of postgraduate students in our country's universities. This teaching concept is completely inconsistent^[4] with the requirements of cultivating "innovative, practical and international" talents in our country. The current new era demands that postgraduate students in colleges and universities be able to apply the ideological and political theories they have learned to deal with our real social problems, but the traditional teaching of ideological and political education often shows a disconnection between theory and reality.

3.2 Students' demands are diverse and homogeneous education is difficult to adapt to

With the continuous expansion of graduate student enrollment in Chinese universities, our educational subjects have shown a diversified feature as a whole. On the one hand, the structure of the graduate student group is complex and the overall age range is wide, with 35% of previous graduates having work experience and 65% of recent graduates; On the other hand, postgraduate students in China have more mature mental characteristics and relatively stable values compared with undergraduates. Therefore, the traditional homogeneous education in our ideological and political education simply fails to meet the individualized development needs of postgraduate students in universities.

3.3 The educational carrier path is monotonous and insufficiently integrated with scientific research practice

Graduate students in universities are quite different from undergraduate students. The main form of study in graduate students is not concentrated learning in the classroom, but rather the guidance of graduate students' research projects. Therefore, research groups and laboratories have become the main places in the study and life of graduate students in universities. Therefore, ideological and political education in our universities also relies on professional scientific research and academic cultural carriers of postgraduate students. This also leads to problems such as the relative limitations of ideological and political education for postgraduate students in colleges and universities and the difficulty in integrating professional academic research, which leads to the inevitable trend of "isolation" of ideological and political education in the postgraduate teaching stage. Therefore, ideological and political education in colleges and universities should identify the key points and achieve the goal of enhancing the effectiveness of education.

3.4 The evaluation system is imperfect and monotonous, making it difficult to measure comprehensively

The evaluation system in the teaching stage of postgraduate students in colleges and universities is not perfect and has obvious flaws. On the one hand, the evaluation indicators in ideological and political education are more

focused on knowledge memorization. 70% of the assessment and evaluation methods of ideological and political education in colleges and universities are closed-book examinations, and the assessment content is mainly textbook knowledge points, with no direct feedback on the ideological and political quality and practical ability of postgraduate students in colleges and universities. On the other hand, the subject of evaluation in ideological and political education is only teacher evaluation. Written tests account for 80% of the ideological and political course grades of postgraduate students in some universities in our country, but their classroom performance only accounts for 20%. This leads to frequent high scores among postgraduate students in universities, but they lack a sense of social responsibility, which is inconsistent with the original intention of ideological and political education for postgraduate students in our universities.

4. Analysis of Successful Cases of Ideological and Political Education Reform for Graduate Students in Colleges and Universities

4.1 Qingdao University of Science and Technology: "Three Methods and Five Dimensions" Innovative Teaching Model

Qingdao University of Science and Technology, with "activating student subjectivity" as the core, constructs the "three methods" teaching approach and the "five combinations" three-dimensional model. The "Three methods" include the intersubject interaction method, which builds a trinity interaction of "teacher-student-technology"; Problem-based inquiry approach, which guides students to propose solutions around hot topics such as gene editing and carbon neutrality; Simulated scenario method, using VR to recreate the May 4th Movement and poverty alleviation scenes to enhance immersion^[5]. "Five combinations" integrate classroom, multimedia, case, network, and practical teaching to form a "theory-visual-practice" closed loop. After the reform, students' classroom participation increased from 30% to 75%, and their participation in practical activities increased to 60%.

4.2 School of Stomatology, Shandong University: "Ideological and Political + Professional" Integrated Training

Based on the characteristics of stomatology, the school builds a systematic "ideological and political +" education system. The first is to compile a collection of cases on the integration of ideological and Political education and professional courses in stomatology, exploring ideological and political elements in professional courses, such as explaining cases of the integration of dental implant technology with the sentiment of "domestic technology breaking foreign monopoly"; Second, construct ideological and political education throughout the entire cycle of "theory - research - clinical", theoretical classes talk about the spirit of predecessors, research laboratories strengthen academic integrity, and clinical chairs cultivate the awareness of "patient first"; Third, create brands such as "Dean's Guided Ideological and Political Class" and invite academicians and outstanding alumni to share their initial medical experiences. After the reform, students' professional identity has increased by 80 percent, and the proportion of graduates working in primary medical institutions has risen from 15 percent to 35 percent.

4.3 Xidian University: "Characteristic brands" Expand ideological and Political space

Relying on the advantages of information technology, the university has created three ideological and political brands to extend ideological and political education from the classroom to society. "Walking Ideological and Political Classes" organize teachers and students to conduct on-site teaching in rural areas, enterprises and memorial halls, and combine professional explanations of the application of technology and the connotation of ideological and political education; In 2023, more than 20,000 teachers and students participated in the "cloud-based study Tours" in collaboration with various venues. The Future Technology Ideological and Political Class organizes students to visit chip laboratories and artificial intelligence enterprises to understand "self-reliance and self-strengthening in science and technology" through technological experiences. The three brands have raised students' recognition of "serving the country through science and technology" by 90%.

5. Effective Strategies for Reforming Ideological and Political Education for Postgraduate Students in Colleges and Universities

5.1 Update concepts and build a "big ideological and political" education pattern

To build the "big ideological and political" framework, it is necessary to uphold and strengthen the Party's overall leadership, and at the same time, with "all people, all processes, all aspects" as the core, do a good job in direction guidance and overall planning, so as to break the "island effect" of ideological and political education for postgraduate students in colleges and universities. All-staff education: Clarify the educational responsibilities of school leaders, ideological and political teachers, professional course teachers, counselors, and administrators, and promote the integration of relevant indicators of ideological and political work into the university's discipline evaluation, talent evaluation and other work systems to form a collaborative education system in universities.

5.2 Content optimization to achieve a dual integration of "contemporaneity and professionalism"

Under the new era's educational concepts, ideological and political education in postgraduate courses in Chinese universities should run through the entire process of postgraduate education in universities, aiming to guide postgraduate students in universities to establish correct outlooks on life and values. Therefore, the curriculum design should attach importance to integrating contemporary and professional elements into ideological and political teaching content^[6]. At the same time, ideological and political education courses for postgraduate students in universities should establish a content update mechanism, adjusting one-third of teaching cases and materials each semester in accordance with policies and hotspots.

5.3 Methodological innovation to empower teaching with modern technology

Innovation in teaching methods should also reflect the recognition function of ideological and political education in courses. Therefore, colleges and universities should make full use of high-quality resources such as research, the Internet and film and television to innovate ideological and political education teaching methods and enrich the content of ideological and political elements in courses, thereby strengthening technological empowerment. Ideological and political education for postgraduate students in colleges and universities should focus on the goal of talent cultivation, design and make good use of methods such as in-school classroom teaching, social practice and expert lectures, integrate red resources into ideological and political teaching in courses, and effectively promote the internalization of ideological and political literacy^[7]. Use big data to analyze students' interests and push personalized learning resources; Using VR and AR technologies to recreate historical scenes and simulate social problem-solving to enhance the learning experience, students' theoretical understanding increased by 65% after a pilot "VR poverty Alleviation classroom" at a certain university.

5.4 Evaluation improvement: Building a "multi-dimensional + diversified" system

Rebuild the evaluation system for ideological and political education to measure the effectiveness of education. The indicator design covers three dimensions: knowledge, ability, and quality. The knowledge dimension (mastery of ideological and political theory) accounts for 30%, the ability dimension (problem analysis, practical innovation) accounts for 40%, and the quality dimension (moral character, sense of social responsibility) accounts for 30%^[8]. Evaluation subjects construct a trinity synergy of teaching, learning and society, with 50% empowerment for subject teachers, 20% empowerment for students' self-evaluation and peer evaluation, and 30% empowerment for social practice bases and employers; The evaluation method is "process-oriented + summative" evaluation. The process-oriented evaluation includes classroom presentation and practice report, while the summative evaluation adopts the "professional field ideological and political analysis report + defense" model.

6. Conclusions and Prospects

6.1 Research Summary

Through systematic analysis, this paper finds that the core problems of current ideological and political

education for postgraduate students are insufficient curriculum adaptation, single teaching methods, uneven teaching staff capabilities, and passive student participation. The main challenges of reform are lagging educational concepts, diverse student demands, limited teaching resources, and imperfect evaluation systems. The reform cases of the three universities show that "activating student subjectivity", "integrating professional characteristics" and "expanding educational space" are the key entry points of the reform. The reform strategies proposed from the five dimensions of concept, content, method, faculty and evaluation can effectively break through the current development predicament and provide operational practical paths for the reform of ideological and political education for postgraduate students.

6.2 Future Outlook

In the future, the reform of ideological and political education for postgraduate students will move further towards personalization, practicalization and internationalization. In terms of personalization, big data and AI will enable "one person, one plan", generating personalized ideological and political learning plans by analyzing students' learning behaviors; In terms of practice, "university-local-enterprise" cooperation will be deepened. Universities will build more practice bases with rural areas and technology enterprises, allowing graduate students to learn by doing. In terms of internationalization, students' awareness of a community with a shared future for mankind and cross-cultural communication skills will be cultivated through ideological and political sessions of international academic forums and overseas practice projects. Further research could focus on issues such as the ethical risks of artificial intelligence in ideological and political education and the standards for training interdisciplinary ideological and political teachers, to continuously improve the ideological and political education system and enhance the quality of education.

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