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Ideological and Political Teaching-Learning Synergy in the “Information User and Service Research” Classroom

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Abstract

Through thoroughly studying and implementing General Secretary Xi Jinping’s important discourses on education, the author undertook curriculum reform for the course “Information Users and Services Research,” with emphasis placed on how to appropriately cite Western textbooks, guide student reading, and integrate ideological and political education content into both daily life and classroom instruction. Following practical implementation and positive student feedback, favorable outcomes were achieved, and the initiative received media coverage in the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences’ university journal, WeChat official account, and website. The experience summary encompasses: course positioning, teachers’ own ideological and political education learning, the integration of ideological and political content in the first class and its permeation throughout the entire curriculum, drawing upon others’ experiences, and interactive communication.

Full Text

The Mutual Enhancement of Ideological and Political Education in the “Information Users and Services Studies” Classroom

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Abstract

In response to General Secretary Xi Jinping's important discourses on education, the author has undertaken curriculum reform for the course "Information Users and Services Studies," focusing on three key aspects: how to appropriately utilize Western textbooks, how to guide student reading, and how to integrate ideological and political content into both daily life and classroom teaching. Through practical implementation and positive student feedback, the reform has achieved promising results and garnered media coverage in the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences journal, WeChat official accounts, and website. This paper summarizes the key lessons learned, including course positioning, the instructor's own ideological and political learning, integrating such content in the first class and throughout the entire curriculum, drawing on others' experiences, and fostering interactive communication.

Keywords: ideological and political education; investigation and research; information users and services studies; social science methods

1. Introduction: What is "Information Users and Services Studies"?

Information users and services studies represents not only the foundation for the development of libraries, documentation, information science, archives, publishing, and communication industries, but also the axis driving academic progress in these fields, and indeed the basis for science and technology information policy. Through the efforts of several generations, this research direction has become increasingly specialized, while overall standards and entry requirements continue to rise. Currently, the international frontier is developing rapidly, and as social changes in China generate new demands and transformations for knowledge services, this research direction continuously faces new topics and challenges—an exciting and worthwhile endeavor.

On one hand, this course must continuously track the latest foreign developments in knowledge, technology, and case studies; on the other hand, it must strengthen students' patriotic consciousness and practical abilities. This raises several critical questions: How can ideological and political content be integrated into teaching? How should the introduction and critique of foreign textbooks be handled? How can various ideological and political confusions encountered by students and even teachers in their practical work, study, and daily life be addressed? The primary objective of this course is to cultivate librarians who serve frontline researchers, the public, and even larger graduate student communities. If teachers and students fail to maintain firm ideological grounding, master necessary competencies, and exercise proper self-control, the consequences will be significant. Moreover, neglecting these issues or abandoning the course altogether would have an even more insidiously destructive

impact.

Over seven years of teaching, we have accumulated 83 courseware presentations, a 300,000-word teaching manual, and 166 video lectures, all openly accessible through the Chinese Academy of Sciences Institutional Repository (<http://ir.las.ac.cn/handle/12502/12046>). Therefore, both the course content and the practical experiences described below can be verified.

Furthermore, the course has received positive student evaluations, being featured on page 5 of the “*I Love My Teacher*” *Issue 2021-6* and receiving coverage in the “Star Classroom” interview published on pages 48-53 of *University of Chinese Academy of Sciences Journal, Issue 2022-4*. Since these publications primarily focused on course content, student experiences, and Q&A sessions of interest to students, without elaborating on the ideological design woven throughout the curriculum, this paper aims to outline the framework and stimulate further discussion.

2. Preparations Required Before Integrating Ideological and Political Content

In short, instructors must actively participate in and conscientiously study the ideological and political training programs offered by the university. Without the instructor’s own solid grounding in ideological and political theory, or if the instructor merely goes through the motions perfunctorily, it becomes impossible to genuinely integrate such content into teaching activities. Having grown up in Taipei without access to formal Marxist education until age twenty, and subsequently spending the next two decades juggling work and technical research, I inevitably harbored certain regrets and deficiencies in this area.

Fortunately, since the end of 2020, through various ideological and political courses and theoretical study meetings organized by the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences and the National Science Library, I gradually established a solid foundation. Key training experiences include:

- **November 23-24, 2020:** Completed the training program on *Lectures on General Secretary Xi Jinping’s Important Discourses on Education*, organized by the Ministry of Education’s Textbook Bureau and undertaken by the National College Teachers Network Training Center, obtaining the *College Teacher Training Certificate* (No. XJY654188).
- **May 2021:** Participated in the UCAS supervisor training program, delivering a speech on behalf of supervisors from the National Science Library, and received the *Graduate Supervisor Study Certificate* (No. 202104191) from UCAS. In November 2021, completed the “Specialized Training on Ideological and Political Teaching Competence” organized by UCAS (16 credit hours), obtaining the *College Teacher Training Certificate*

(No. GXSZ37020) from the National College Teachers Network Training Center of the Ministry of Education.

- **December 2021 to January 2022:** Completed the online training program “Deepening the Quality Construction of Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education, Enhancing the Effectiveness of Moral Education in Higher Education Institutions” (National Education Letter [2021] No. 17) organized by the National Academy of Education Administration, fulfilling 40 credit hours (45 minutes per credit) and obtaining the *Credit Hour Certificate* (No. 2021C02144306005808). In March 2022, participated in “Deepening Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Construction, Improving the Effectiveness of Moral Education in Higher Education Institutions” (Certificate No. 2022c02144306005808). In October 2022, participated in the specialized online training “Enhancing Teachers’ Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Teaching Competence” (Certificate No. 2022c02144307739523).
- **October 2022:** Participated in the *Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education* training organized by the School of Economics and Management, systematically absorbing how other institutions conduct ideological and political education and how UCAS SEM organizes related lectures and interactive exchanges.

Over the past three years, under the organization and call of UCAS, teaching faculty have registered for relevant courses through SEM and the National Science Library, participating in training, exchanges, and examinations, ultimately passing all assessments. However, this alone was insufficient for my peace of mind. I needed to exchange my lingering doubts with colleagues, gain insights, write multiple reports, and submit them to the Party Office and school faculty for discussion. Only after several rounds of back-and-forth engagement could I confirm the correctness of my theoretical understanding before applying it in actual courses.

3. Clarifying the Course Mission in the First Lecture of “Information Users and Services Studies”

Information users are those who access information (books, journals, various online materials), and service studies (consultation, retrieval, recommendation, etc.) represent a continuous optimization process. But what constitutes the core value of this cyclical process of engaging in practical work, extracting rules and patterns from these practices, and feeding them back into application? Chapter 19 of *Study Outline of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era*, titled “Mastering Marxist Methodology and Work Methods,” emphasizes that investigation and research must achieve “depth, substance, detail, accuracy, and effectiveness.”

During lectures, we conduct in-depth interpretations of this content, elaborating on how the requirements for investigation and research in rural development share common spirits, principles, and demands with our information users and services studies, which provides high-quality knowledge services (literature, intelligence, disciplines, data). Additionally, in the first lecture, we distinguish three levels of theory discussed throughout the course, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Different Levels of Theory and Their Interrelationships

Level	Meaning	Relationship to Course
Grand	National strategy and organizational development	Ideological and political content, such as the guiding principle of “depth, substance, detail, accuracy, and effectiveness” in serving the people.
Middle	Disciplinary field and library science	Understanding Western knowledge systems, theoretical frameworks, and technical methods while distinguishing surface knowledge from genuine mastery. For example, the theoretical roots of <i>Seeking Meaning</i> lie in empiricism about how humans think.
Small	Operational position and academic viewpoints	Applying these to daily practice and distilling academic achievements based on practical experience. For example, researching and applying Web 2.0 academic information behaviors.

This framework allows ideological and political content to be clearly explained from the outset. Whether introducing domestic or foreign achievements, students have a “classification system” to systematically grasp key points and modules within their appropriate contexts. Simultaneously, this serves as a “benchmark” for determining which content requires memorization and absorption versus analysis and critique. This prevents blind adherence to Western thought while also ensuring students understand it, providing an ideological foundation for the processes of digestion, absorption, application, and ultimately transcendence.

4. Integrating Ideological Content Throughout the Entire Teaching Process

Merely explaining this in the first lecture may leave students unable to fully comprehend why and how it permeates both the course content (teaching) and

external aspects (practical work). Therefore, to achieve what *The Analects* describes as “consistent application of a single principle,” we intersperse reminders of this framework in every class session.

For example, when teaching the *Focus Group Method*, beyond clarifying that focus groups are not merely casual chats or meetings but require specific principles and methods, the most important point is to explain what general textbooks omit: the method’s origins in World War II for boosting military morale. In 1941, Paul Lazarsfeld (a founder of mass communication studies) at Columbia University’s Office of Radio Research invited Robert Merton (a founder of the sociology of science) to evaluate audience reactions to radio programs. After programs concluded, listeners discussed positive and negative events with reasoning; post-war, Merton adapted this technique into individual interview methods. Moreover, the original text “excitedly” demonstrated how the United States used this method between 1989-1991 to undermine Soviet popular will and reshape domestic public opinion. Through such explanations, examples, and connections to information users and services studies, we stimulate students’ enthusiasm and deep understanding, accomplishing “silent nourishment” ideological education through introduction, analysis, and critique.

Similarly, when teaching *Interpretive Interactionism* as a qualitative research methodology and its knowledge system, I explain that while the textbook is valuable, its limitation lies in the author’s American-based synthesis of various European intellectual currents without considering realities and emerging theories from China and East Asia. I note that the author’s critiques of positivism, logical positivism, post-positivism, and particularly behavioral scientism help us understand these methodologies’ limitations, while his references to symbolic interactionism, feminism, and structuralism help us track cutting-edge developments in these areas. However, students must recognize that the author treats Western Marxism as representative of Marxism overall, describing it as an anger-inducing, rigid “idea” from the 19th century that ranks equally alongside other intellectual currents—a perspective requiring vigilance. As the saying goes, “Believing everything in books is worse than having no books at all.” These texts contain their own ideologies; we introduce them to understand them, not to alter our beliefs or our beautiful pursuit of socialist construction in China. Therefore, when using “Western textbooks,” instructors must thoroughly understand the material themselves before teaching it.

5. Learning from Other Ideological and Political Courses

Traditionally, our social science education has been considered “neutral” and “apolitical,” a notion that profoundly influences and constrains our research, teaching, and work. However, as previously discussed, ideology is invisible, intangible, and pervasive. This requires that in textbook selection and even compilation, instructors must thoroughly digest and comprehend the materials to

achieve “mastery.” Given that current technology remains Western-dominated and social sciences must actively acquire foreign experience, we still need to gradually explore how to maintain proper balance, what key points require attention, and how to arrange curricula and compile textbooks. One of the fastest ways to gain experience is to observe how the School of Marxism handles disciplines like economics, history, sociology, and political science—if they have already achieved integration, my own courses could certainly draw lessons from their approach.

Introduced by UCAS SEM, I participated in the training program for 26 key textbooks of the Marxist Theory Research and Construction Project, organized by the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee in December 2021. After daytime work, I attended online lectures at night for over three months, passing various examinations to obtain 26 certificates, as shown in .

Although not a faculty member of the School of Marxism, I actively enrolled in Marxist theory courses because practice revealed knowledge gaps that required theoretical study to better apply what I learned. This process of learning from practice and returning to theory made my teaching more grounded.

6. Conclusion: Emphasizing Student-Faculty Exchange and Discussion

Student feedback and mutual discussion provide the best validation. During the course, the instructor periodically shared supplementary reading materials in a temporary WeChat group. For example, on October 9, students received the original text of *Reform Our Study* with this excerpt: “...not focusing on studying the present situation, not focusing on studying history, not focusing on applying Marxism-Leninism. These are extremely bad practices... flashy but insubstantial, brittle without solidity. Self-righteous, number one under heaven, ‘imperial envoys’ flying everywhere... we must make comrades understand that without investigation there is no right to speak; empty talk and simple enumeration of one, two, three, four are useless.” These three excerpts were shared for mutual encouragement, inviting students to discuss their connection to course content.

The instructor engages in self-reflection and shares this process with students, demonstrating that constant self-examination leads to continuous improvement. For instance, on October 15, I wrote: “After visiting western regions in August and beginning to teach ‘Information Users and Services Studies’ in September, I thoroughly reflected on my research, teaching, and work, increasingly recognizing the importance of this text. I have reread it carefully, slowly digesting its meaning.” I shared a short article from *Guangming Daily*: “...clarify the situation, clarify the people’s thoughts and aspirations, resolutely abandon ‘dragonfly skimming water’ style investigation, ‘imperial envoy’ style investigation, ‘being investigated,’ and ‘poverty-disdaining, wealth-loving’ style investigation. Truly

regard the people as teachers, learn from the people, and genuinely devote effort to understanding actual conditions, proposing practical measures, handling concrete matters, and seeking practical results.” This invited students to help the instructor engage in ideological and political reflection.

I attempted to combine my experience teaching this master’s-level professional course with my insights from studying *Das Kapital* in a two-hour lecture with half-hour interaction titled “Brief Discussion on How Studying *Das Kapital* Stimulates Scientific Research Creativity,” presented at the fourth session of the doctoral supervisor forum of the Department of Library, Information, and Archives Management. The outcome excellently stimulated the ideological and political atmosphere among master’s and doctoral students both within and outside the department.

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