Research on the Reform of Practical Teaching in the Civics and Political Science Curriculum of Applied Undergraduate Programs Based on OBE Concepts

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Abstract: With the rapid development of society and the accelerated process of globalization, the patterns of higher education are continually evolving and innovating. Applied undergraduate education, as a critical component of higher education, aims to cultivate high-quality talents equipped with practical skills and innovative spirit for society. Ideological and political courses, as an important channel for the ideological and political education of university students, undergo significant teaching reforms. The teaching model based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) focuses on learning outcomes, emphasizing the cultivation of students' practical abilities and qualities, aligning closely with the goals of applied undergraduate education. This study investigates the practical teaching reforms of ideological and political courses based on the OBE concept in applied undergraduate education, exploring teaching strategies and measures that meet contemporary needs, providing theoretical support and practical guidance to enhance the teaching quality of ideological and political courses and the comprehensive qualities of students.

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the rapid development of socio-economic conditions and the continuous advancement of information technology, higher education is facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Under this backdrop, applied undergraduate education has gradually emerged, aiming primarily to cultivate highly capable applied talents with practical skills and innovative thinking. Within this educational framework, courses in ideological and political theory serve as crucial components for nurturing students' correct values, political beliefs, and social responsibilities. The effective reform of teaching methods becomes a focal point of attention. The teaching model based on Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) has arisen in response to these challenges. OBE emphasizes student-centered approaches, designing and implementing teaching activities based on expected learning outcomes, with a strong emphasis on comprehensive enhancement of student abilities and qualities. Since its inception, the OBE concept has gained broad recognition and application globally, guiding the teaching process and evaluation criteria through clearly defined learning outcomes. Its application in ideological and political courses not only addresses the imbalance in traditional teaching methods, which tend to prioritize knowledge impartation over skill development, but also better meets the needs of applied undergraduate education. This approach enables students

to acquire theoretical knowledge while possessing the capability to analyze and solve problems. However, despite its numerous advantages, the practical application of OBE in applied undergraduate ideological and political courses faces several challenges. These include effectively integrating OBE principles into curriculum design, assessing student learning outcomes rigorously, and fostering students' interest and initiative in learning. Addressing these issues requires extensive theoretical research and continuous exploration in teaching practices. This paper will systematically study the practical teaching reforms in applied undergraduate ideological and political courses based on the OBE concept, proposing corresponding strategies and measures aimed at providing valuable insights for educational reforms in related fields.

2. The theoretical basis of the OBE concept in the Civics and Political Science program

The concept of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) is a modern educational theory that emphasizes the ultimate outcomes of education, focusing on cultivating practical abilities in students and achieving comprehensive individual development. Introducing the OBE concept into ideological and political theory courses effectively addresses the drawbacks of traditional educational models, such as overemphasis on knowledge transmission at the expense of skills development. At the core of OBE is a student-centered approach, utilizing clear learning outcome objectives to design curriculum content and teaching methods, thereby clarifying educational goals, making teaching processes more targeted, and establishing a more scientifically rational assessment system. Implementing OBE in ideological and political theory courses requires a reevaluation of course objectives, explicitly defining the essential competencies and capabilities students should possess upon course completion. This encompasses not only mastery of theoretical knowledge but also values, political beliefs, social responsibilities, and practical problem-solving abilities. Such goal-setting better guides the selection of teaching content and implementation of teaching methods, making course design more purposeful and effective. Additionally, OBE advocates for high alignment between teaching and assessment, employing diverse evaluation methods to comprehensively measure student learning outcomes. Unlike traditional ideological and political theory courses that often prioritize exam scores, OBE introduces various forms of assessment such as case analyses, project reports, and classroom discussions to holistically reflect student learning processes and achievements. This approach stimulates student interest and initiative, nurturing their comprehensive qualities. The implementation of OBE also necessitates a transformation in the role of teachers, shifting from knowledge providers to guides and supporters of student learning. This requires teachers to not only possess profound subject knowledge but also modern teaching methods, catering to individual student differences, encouraging independent learning, and fostering an explorative spirit. Such a transformation fosters a more open and interactive classroom atmosphere, enabling ideological and political theory courses to truly serve as crucial vehicles for student growth and development. In conclusion, the application of OBE in ideological and political theory courses represents not only an innovation in teaching methods but also a profound transformation in educational philosophy. Through an outcomes-based educational model, students' comprehensive qualities can be better cultivated, promoting their overall development and nurturing highly qualified talents with a sense of responsibility and innovation. While this process presents challenges, the educational transformation and societal benefits it brings about are profound and enduring [1].

3. Design Principles of Applied Undergraduate Civics Program Based on OBE Concepts

3.1. Student-centered teaching design

In the context of applied undergraduate ideological and political courses, the core of instructional design based on the OBE philosophy lies in placing "student-centeredness" at its heart. This concept not only transforms traditional teaching approaches but also involves a profound reexamination and deepening of educational essence. Emphasizing student-centeredness requires educators to originate instructional activities from the actual needs and developmental potential of students, aiming to foster their holistic development. Such instructional design underscores the initiative and agency of students during the learning process. Teaching evolves beyond unilateral information transmission into a bidirectional interactive process. Educators must comprehend each student's interests, background, and capabilities, tailoring instruction accordingly to encourage participation in classroom discussions, case analyses, and project implementations. This approach not only sparks students' interest and motivation but also cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Moreover, student-centered instructional design necessitates that curriculum content be practical, emphasizing applicability. Ideological and political courses are not solely about imparting theoretical knowledge but also about cultivating values and a sense of social responsibility. By integrating with real-world issues such as societal hot topics and ethical dilemmas, students can apply learned knowledge to analyze and judge specific contexts, thereby enhancing their practical skills and comprehensive qualities. Furthermore, assessment methods should align with the student-centered philosophy. Conventional exam formats often struggle to comprehensively reflect students' learning outcomes. Diverse assessment methods like course reports, project showcases, and collaborative team achievements provide a more comprehensive and authentic reflection of students' learning processes and practical capabilities. This not only better motivates students but also assists educators in promptly understanding and adjusting teaching strategies. Student-centered instructional design also underscores equality and interaction between teachers and students. Educators no longer function merely as authoritative figures of knowledge but rather as guides and partners in student learning [2]. Within this equal interaction, students can freely express viewpoints and raise queries, fostering autonomous learning and innovation capabilities. Meanwhile, educators enhance their professional competence and teaching standards through continuous reflection and improvement of instructional methods.

3.2. Student-centered teaching and learning design Student-centered teaching and learning design Combination of practical cases and problem-oriented course content design

In the context of undergraduate ideological and political courses based on the OBE philosophy, the design of practical case studies and problem-oriented curriculum is pivotal. This approach not only enhances the vividness and practicality of teaching content but also effectively cultivates students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. By incorporating real-life cases and current issues, students can intuitively grasp the application scenarios of theoretical knowledge, thereby enhancing the practicality and relevance of their learning. The selection of practical cases should closely align with course objectives and resonate with students' lives and societal realities. For instance, societal hot topics, significant historical events, ethical dilemmas, among others, can serve as case materials in the curriculum. These cases not only hold practical significance but also resonate with students, prompting deeper understanding and internalization of the course content. Through case analysis, students not only learn to apply theoretical tools to analyze problems but also undergo emotional and values-based reflections, fostering the development of correct values and social responsibility. Problem-oriented curriculum design emphasizes placing problems at the core, guiding students to learn and apply knowledge in the process of solving real-world issues.

Teachers can devise a series of challenging and inspiring questions, encouraging students to discover, analyze, and propose solutions through discussion and research. This teaching approach not only stimulates students' interest in learning but also cultivates their abilities in independent thinking and collaborative problem-solving. Emphasizing process and methodology, problem-oriented teaching encourages students to continuously reflect and summarize in practice, gradually mastering systematic thinking and problem-solving skills. The integration of practical cases and problem-oriented curriculum design can be achieved through interdisciplinary and cross-professional collaboration. The fusion of knowledge from different disciplines and specialties provides students with a comprehensive and diverse perspective, equipping them with stronger comprehensive qualities and interdisciplinary thinking skills when tackling complex societal issues. This instructional model not only enhances teaching quality but also promotes students' holistic development, laying a solid foundation for their future careers. Through the design of practical cases and problem-oriented curriculum, ideological and political courses are transformed from dry theoretical lectures into dynamic and challenging learning experiences. Students learn and grow in real-life contexts, better transforming theoretical knowledge into practical abilities, and fostering their comprehensive qualities and innovation capabilities. This teaching design not only adheres to the core requirements of OBE philosophy but also strongly supports the goals of applied undergraduate education.

3.3. Interdisciplinary and interprofessional curriculum integration and linkage

Guided by the principles of Outcome-Based Education (OBE), the integration and synergy of interdisciplinary and cross-professional curricula have become pivotal in the design of applied undergraduate ideological and political courses. This principle not only transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries but also aims to cultivate students' comprehensive qualities and multifaceted thinking abilities, thereby equipping them to face complex societal realities and professional challenges with greater preparedness. The essence of interdisciplinary curriculum integration lies in the organic fusion of ideological education with knowledge from other fields, creating a multidimensional teaching model. Through such integration, students can not only understand ideological theories within a broader knowledge context but also stimulate innovative thinking through the intersection of different disciplines. For instance, combining ideological courses with law, sociology, and economics enables students to grasp legal provisions, social phenomena, and economic principles while studying political theory, thus forming a more holistic and profound cognitive system [3]. Cross-professional synergy emphasizes achieving collaboration between different fields in practical applications. Through project-based learning, students can work with peers from other disciplines on real-world problems, fostering teamwork and appreciating the practical value of diverse professional knowledge. For example, a social service project involving engineering and ideological students allows the former to incorporate humanitarian considerations into technological applications, while the latter deepens their understanding of technology and engineering through practice, thus achieving complementary and collaborative knowledge development. Additionally, the integration and synergy of interdisciplinary and cross-professional curricula require flexible teaching structures and innovative methods. Formats such as workshops, seminars, and interdisciplinary research groups provide students with diverse and open learning platforms. These platforms enable students to explore connections between disciplines freely, developing cross-boundary thinking skills. Simultaneously, educators need to break down disciplinary barriers and engage in collaborative teaching across disciplines to design and implement comprehensive courses. This interdisciplinary and cross-professional teaching model not only enhances the richness and challenge of the curriculum but also better stimulates students' interest and creativity. In such an environment, students are no longer confined to a single disciplinary knowledge framework but can explore freely within a vast knowledge network, discovering new issues, proposing new perspectives, and creating new knowledge. This ability is of

significant importance for their future career development and contributions to society.

4. Practical teaching reform strategies and measures

4.1. Clarification and quantification of course objectives and learning outcomes

In the reform of practical teaching, the clarity and quantification of course objectives and learning outcomes are crucial. This approach ensures not only the direction and assessability of teaching but also provides students with clear pathways and motivation for learning. Within the framework of Outcome-Based Education (OBE), precise course objectives should prioritize the cultivation of students' capabilities, emphasizing their comprehensive development in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Objectives need to be specific, explicit, and closely aligned with students' future career development. For instance, in courses on ideological and political education, objectives may focus on students mastering fundamental political theories, enhancing critical thinking abilities, and strengthening social responsibility. By refining these objectives, educators can purposefully design activities and assignments to ensure that each instructional component serves the achievement of the ultimate goals. Quantification of learning outcomes constitutes another critical aspect. Quantification serves not only to assess students' learning effectiveness but also to motivate continuous improvement. By establishing clear assessment criteria, such as course performance, completion of practical projects, and final evaluations, teachers can objectively and fairly assess students' learning outcomes. Quantitative assessment criteria can be detailed to assess specific knowledge mastery, practical abilities, and overall competencies. For example, within a project, students' performance can be evaluated across multiple dimensions including teamwork, problem-solving skills, and project reports. Furthermore, quantified assessment of learning outcomes should integrate both process-oriented and results-oriented evaluations. Process-oriented assessment focuses on students' performance and progress during the learning process, such as classroom participation, contributions in group discussions, and completion of regular assignments. Results-oriented assessment, on the other hand, focuses on students' performance in final exams or project presentations. This comprehensive evaluation approach not only reflects students' learning status comprehensively but also enables timely identification of issues for improvement [4]. Strategies that clearly articulate and quantify course objectives and learning outcomes enhance the transparency and fairness of teaching. With explicit guidance from defined objectives, students can engage in learning and practical activities more purposefully, thereby enhancing the intentionality and initiative of their learning. Educators, armed with quantified data, can scientifically adjust teaching strategies to improve teaching quality. Ultimately, this educational reform strategy will continually enhance the application-oriented undergraduate courses in ideological and political education, cultivating highly qualified talents more aligned with societal needs.

4.2. Diversified teaching methods and resource integration

The diversified teaching approach aims to enhance pedagogical effectiveness by employing a variety of instructional methods and formats, thereby stimulating students' interest and engagement. For instance, methodologies such as case-based learning, discussions, role-playing, and project-based learning enable students to apply theoretical knowledge in diverse contexts, fostering critical thinking and practical skills. Case-based learning introduces authentic or simulated cases, facilitating students' profound understanding of the practical applications of theoretical knowledge when analyzing and resolving real-world issues. This approach not only enhances classroom interaction and appeal but also effectively cultivates students' problem-solving abilities and spirit of teamwork. Discussions, through both small group and whole class formats, inspire students' intellectual exchange, deepening their comprehension of knowledge from multiple perspectives and levels. Role-playing and project-based learning further integrate theory with practice, allowing

students to master skills and knowledge through firsthand experiences in simulated real-world environments and tasks. Resource integration serves as a crucial support for the effective implementation of diversified teaching approaches. In today's era of rapid information technology advancement, the utilization of digital resources and online educational platforms enriches teaching resources. Teachers can integrate a variety of instructional resources, such as e-books, online courses, virtual laboratories, and open educational resources, thereby constructing a diverse and inclusive learning environment. This integration not only broadens students' learning channels but also meets the diverse learning styles and needs, thereby enhancing the adaptability and personalization of teaching. Resource integration extends beyond digital resources to encompass both on-campus and off-campus educational resources. On-campus resources such as libraries, laboratories, and academic lectures, as well as off-campus resources including social practice bases, corporate internships, and expert lectures, can all be integrated into the educational system. Through the organic integration of these resources, students can learn and grow within a broader perspective, enhancing their social adaptability and comprehensive qualities. The ultimate goal of diversified teaching methods and resource integration is to cultivate highly skilled talents with innovation and practical capabilities. This educational reform not only breaks the monolithic and closed nature of traditional teaching models but also provides students with richer learning experiences and growth opportunities. In such an educational environment, students not only acquire knowledge but also learn how to apply it and find their own position and direction in a complex and ever-changing society. This shift in educational philosophy will undoubtedly promote the continuous development of application-oriented undergraduate ideological and political courses, thereby nurturing more outstanding talents for society [5].

4.3. Establishment and optimization of student participation and assessment mechanisms

Effective engagement and assessment mechanisms not only enhance students' initiative and enthusiasm for learning but also facilitate comprehensive improvement in teaching quality. Mechanisms for student engagement need to be comprehensively constructed across three levels: instructional design, teaching implementation, and feedback mechanisms. In instructional design, consideration should be given to students' interests and needs, leading to the development of diverse teaching activities. For instance, designing challenging project tasks allows students to address practical issues through independent inquiry and group collaboration, fostering teamwork and problem-solving abilities. During teaching implementation, educators should emphasize interactive teaching methods, such as classroom discussions, case analyses, and role-playing, to stimulate students' thinking and expressive desires. Following class, organizing students to participate in social practice activities further enhances their ability to connect theory with practice. The optimization of assessment mechanisms is equally crucial. Traditional assessment methods often focus on the outcomes of final exams, which may inadequately reflect students' actual learning outcomes. Guided by OBE principles, assessment mechanisms should be more diversified and process-oriented. A combined approach of formative and summative assessments allows for a comprehensive evaluation of students. Formative assessments focus on students' performance during the learning process, including class participation, completion of assignments, and contributions to group discussions. Summative assessments encompass final exams, project reports, and outcomes from social practices. This integrated assessment approach more accurately reflects students' learning progress and achievements. Moreover, clear and quantifiable assessment criteria are vital for optimizing assessment mechanisms. Establishing specific and actionable assessment indicators, such as mastery of knowledge, practical skills, teamwork abilities, and innovative thinking, enhances the objectivity and fairness of assessments. Timely feedback of assessment results to students enables them to understand their strengths and weaknesses and identify areas for improvement. Concurrently, educators can continually adjust and refine teaching strategies based on assessment outcomes to enhance teaching relevance and effectiveness. The establishment and

optimization of student engagement and assessment mechanisms also benefit from the support of information technology. Learning management systems and online assessment tools enable educators to conveniently record, analyze, and address learning data issues promptly. This digitized assessment approach not only improves assessment efficiency and accuracy but also enhances transparency and fairness in evaluations. Establishing and optimizing mechanisms for student engagement and assessment not only uphold the principles of OBE but also respect and strengthen the student-centered approach. Under such mechanisms, students evolve from passive knowledge recipients to active learners and practitioners. Through active participation and ongoing feedback, they can better grasp knowledge, enhance their abilities, and realize their self-worth. This educational reform not only enhances the teaching quality of ideological and political courses but also cultivates high-quality talents with comprehensive qualities and innovation capabilities, contributing to social development and progress.

5. Conclusion

The practical teaching reform of ideological and political courses at the undergraduate level based on the OBE concept is not only an innovation in teaching mode, but also a profound reflection and sublimation of educational philosophy. By defining course objectives, optimizing teaching methods, and establishing effective evaluation mechanisms, students' comprehensive qualities and practical abilities can be better cultivated. Despite facing numerous challenges during the reform process, as theoretical research deepens and practical experience accumulates, these issues will gradually be resolved. In the future, further deepening the application of the OBE concept in ideological and political courses, actively exploring new teaching modes and methods, will inject new vitality into the development of higher education, nurturing a greater number of high-quality individuals with innovative capabilities and a sense of social responsibility.

Acknowledgements

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