

# *Research on Enhancing the Affinity and Relevance of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Universities in the New Era*

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**Abstract:** As the main channel of ideological and political education in universities, Ideological and Political Theory Courses (hereinafter referred to as "IPTC") play a crucial role in achieving the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. Affinity and relevance are key to realizing the educational effectiveness of theory, and are important directions for promoting the reform of IPTC in universities. In the new era, to enhance the affinity of IPTC in colleges and universities, colleges and universities should adhere to integrity and innovation, firmly maintain the main position of classroom teaching, and constantly improve the classroom affinity of IPTC through the reform of teaching methods and means. Universities combine knowledge with action to promote large-scale social practice classes and enhance the relevance of IPTC teaching. Colleges and universities should adopt the differentiated teaching of the same course, strengthen the construction of IPTC teachers' teaching team in colleges and universities, establish the cooperation mechanism between various disciplines and IPTC, improve the effectiveness of IPTC, and make it a truly popular course among college students.

## **1. Introduction**

"The IPTC is a key course for implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. ... To promote the reform and innovation of IPTC, we must continuously enhance the ideological, theoretical, affinity, and relevance of IPTC." [1] "In the new era and on the new journey, the construction of IPTC faces new situations and tasks, and must have new outlooks and new actions... continuously improving the relevance and attractiveness of IPTC." We must "continuously create a new situation in ideological and political education in the new era, and strive to cultivate more patriotic and dedicated young people who shoulder the important task of national rejuvenation." [2] These far-sighted discussions provide basic guidelines for the reform and innovation of IPTC in universities in the new era, and point out the goals and directions for the development of IPTC in universities. As the main channel of ideological and political education in universities, IPTC plays a crucial role in achieving the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. Affinity and relevance are key to realizing the educational effectiveness of theory and are critical points for improving the teaching effectiveness of IPTC in universities.

In the new era, enhancing the affinity and relevance of IPTC in universities means adhering to

integrity and innovation, maintaining the main position of classroom teaching, integrating knowledge and action, combining the small classroom of IPTC with the large classroom of social practice, adopting differentiated teaching for the same course, building a collaborative mechanism between courses, and forming a synergy. Only then can we continuously enhance the affinity and relevance of IPTC in universities, improve the effectiveness of IPTC, and make IPTC a course genuinely loved by college students.

## **2. "Upholding Integrity and Innovation" to Enhance the Affinity of Ideological and Political Courses**

Affinity refers to an attraction, influence, and impact that make the educational subjects willingly accept, positively embrace, and highly identify with the content. Enhancing affinity plays a crucial role in achieving the instructional goals, conveying the teaching content, and attaining the desired teaching outcomes, making it a significant factor influencing the effectiveness of higher education. To achieve the educational goals of ideological and political courses, the primary task is to enhance their affinity, making students interested in IPTC and firmly guarding the main classroom teaching grounds of IPTC.

Overall, the degree to which university students nationwide like IPTC is not optimistic. Some students study IPTC merely to earn credits. So, what are the key factors that make it difficult to enhance the affinity of IPTC. First, the "theoretical" nature of IPTC affects their affinity. Theoretical nature is an inherent attribute of IPTC, which makes it challenging for most students to understand and grasp. Although each IPC has its unique characteristics, there are overlapping aspects and content among them, resulting in a low sense of achievement for students. Additionally, as a compulsory public course in universities, the theoretical foundation of students varies, leading to differing levels of understanding and grasp of the content. IPC teachers must fully consider these differences in their teaching.

Secondly, the traditional "indoctrination" teaching method also affects the enhancement of affinity. There are still many instances of unilateral indoctrination in IPC teaching across universities, and teaching methods need innovation and development. Any educational activity involves the relationship between "teaching" and "learning." According to traditional teaching theories, teachers dominate the entire teaching process, while students are the participants in learning activities. Students tend to be relatively passive in the learning process, lacking initiative. However, given the unique characteristics of IPTC compared to other courses, which are more abstract and theoretical, it is more necessary to stimulate students' learning initiative to better understand and master IPTC. Therefore, during the teaching process, IPC teachers must creatively reform teaching methods, allowing students to take the lead through classroom discussions, thematic presentations, classroom debates, etc., to stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning.

Thirdly, the "closed" educational methods hinder the enhancement of affinity. A key feature of modern education is open education, which requires: firstly, more flexible teaching methods for IPTC, reducing monotonous theoretical lecturing; secondly, more diversified educational media. Contemporary university students have grown up with the internet and cannot live without it, so modern emerging media technologies should be fully utilized to enhance the affinity of IPTC.

In summary, IPTC essentially involve explaining principles clearly and thoroughly to strengthen students' ideals and beliefs. Therefore, in the teaching process of various IPTC, it is essential to uphold the political and guiding nature of these courses to enhance their affinity. Guided by Marxism, IPTC help students establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values, and strengthen their ideals and beliefs in socialism with Chinese characteristics, deeply rooting patriotic sentiments in students. This means guiding the education of ideals and beliefs into students' souls

through the profound reflection of history and reality, ultimately pointing to the affinity and influence of theory. IPTC teachers must listen to the voice of the times, respond to issues raised by the times, seriously address and solve a series of major real-world issues that concern students, clearly explain the problems faced in the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, cultivate students' "four consciousnesses," strengthen the "four self-confidences," guide students to firmly believe in Marxism and communism, and assist university students in actively practicing. This way, students can transform their ideals and values into practical actions, enhancing their sense of real-world experience and the theoretical influence of IPTC, ultimately making students consciously integrate their personal aspirations into the country's and nation's endeavors, and courageously become pioneers and innovators at the forefront of the times.[3]

### **3. "Unity of Knowledge and Action" to Enhance the Targeted Nature of Ideological and Political Courses**

Targeted nature refers to the directivity of things, involving specific measures taken for a determined target. The teaching activities of IPTC in universities are focused on nurturing individuals, with students being the center and key point of the entire educational activity. Marxism is a theoretical system that unifies theory and practice. To enhance the targeted nature of IPTC, it is essential to start from the needs and developmental characteristics of the educatees, grasp the regularity, and achieve the unity of knowledge and action, allowing students to test and internalize what they have learned in extensive social practice. As Marx said, "The question of whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. Man must prove the truth, i.e., the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking in practice." [4]

The learning process of students should not merely be a transition from theory to theory; theory must be connected to practice. In practical teaching, attention should be paid to supporting the necessity of practice with theory and proving the scientific nature of theory through practice, effectively improving students' ability to analyze and solve problems. Teachers can design practical teaching activities that allow students to apply what they have learned, integrating and comprehending it so that the truth truly enters their minds and hearts, ultimately externalizing in their actions, thereby genuinely enhancing the targeted nature and directionality of IPTC. Specifically, it is essential to focus on students' growth characteristics, studying and analyzing their current state while also paying attention to their future needs. Building positive interactions between teachers and students, creating a student-centered active classroom, fully mobilizing students' learning enthusiasm, and stimulating their learning needs are crucial.

This process can be summarized as follows: designing IPTC educational and teaching practice plans based on the characteristics of the educatees—engaging in interaction and communication with students in specific contexts—making judgments on students' reactions and reflecting on the practical teaching process—forming new educational and teaching practice plans—conducting new rounds of educational and teaching practice activities, continuously cycling and rising. In this process, students' learning needs can be continuously stimulated, and the targeted nature of IPTC can be further enhanced, as illustrated in the following Figure 1:

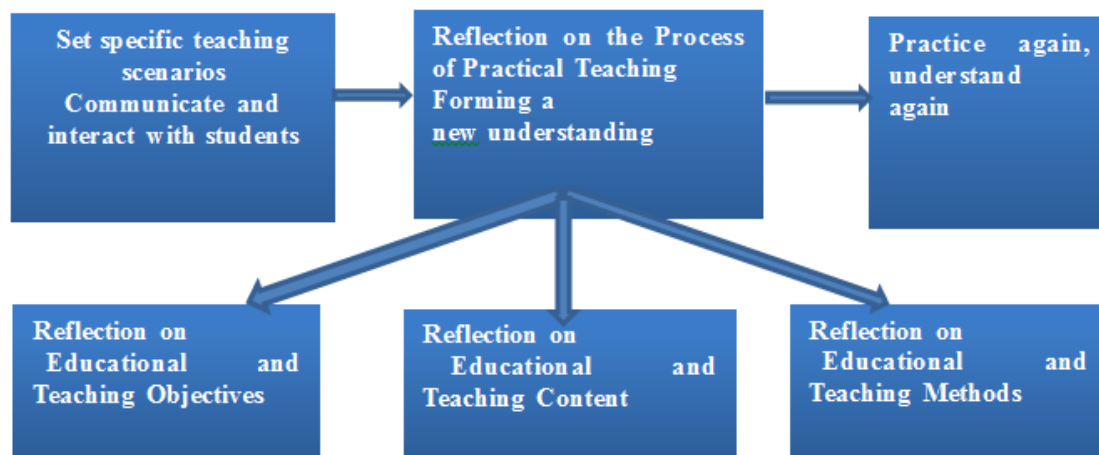


Figure 1. The Process of Practical Teaching

Secondly, to enhance the pertinence of ideological and political courses, we must innovate according to the times and circumstances, keep pace with the times, base on the construction of ideological and political courses, and promote curriculum system reform. The setting of the ideological and political curriculum system has corresponding norms and requirements by the education department, which is the fundamental guarantee to ensure the realization of the goal of cultivating talents in colleges and universities. Placing the ideological and political theory course in the coordinates of the times requires continuous promotion of the reform and innovation of the teaching material system and teaching system of the ideological and political course. The current ideological and political course textbooks are based on the national "05 Plan," whose authority and scientific nature are beyond doubt, but there is still room for improvement in vividness and timeliness. The ideological and political course textbooks should keep up with the times, incorporate the latest theoretical achievements into the textbooks to enhance the persuasiveness of the content. In terms of teaching, we must continuously improve classroom teaching methods, clarify the course teaching assessment methods. Through the introduction of classroom interaction, multimedia teaching, problem-oriented thematic teaching and other methods, colleges and universities achieve diversified teaching, so that students can fully experience the appeal and appeal of the theory. Colleges and universities pay attention to teaching effect and teaching evaluation, and combine teaching and evaluation to realize the mutual integration of teaching and evaluation.

Finally, to enhance the pertinence of ideological and political courses, we must leverage modern emerging media technology to create a new platform for online education. In the Internet era, ideological and political courses must adapt to the changes in the information field, occupy the high ground of the network, make full use of the grid communication carrier, and enhance the sense of the times, attractiveness, and influence of the ideological and political courses. Ideological and political courses should be good at using the advantages of network media technology, making the presentation of the course a process of aesthetic appreciation, making the course more attractive. For example, in the production of PPT courseware, appropriate pictures, videos, music, etc., can be inserted to make the classroom more visually impactful. Additionally, the use of network technology has effectively expanded the learning field of students, combining online and offline, conveying the theory to students more conveniently, and improving the educational effect of ideological and political courses.

#### 4. "Different Construction of the Same Course" to Build a Collaborative Mechanism for Courses and Enhance the Effectiveness of Ideological and Political Courses

The different construction of the same course builds a collaborative mechanism for ideological and political courses, greatly enhancing the effectiveness of ideological and political courses. The different construction of the same course here means not only the same content of the same course being constructed and interpreted by different teachers of the course but also the interpretation presentation of the same knowledge point in different disciplines by different teachers. As pointed out in the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities, "All classrooms have educational functions, and ideological and political work cannot be regarded only as a matter of ideological and political theory courses. All other courses must guard their channels and fulfill their responsibilities." [3] This statement clearly points out that various disciplines should always be in the same direction as the ideological and political theory course, helping the educational effect of the theory course. All college teachers should have the concept of "great ideological and political education," recognizing all educational and teaching activities in the university from the political height of mission responsibility.

From the relationship between ideological and political courses and other courses, ideological and political education must adhere to the unity of explicit education and implicit education. Ideological and political courses are the main front of ideological and political work in colleges and universities, and are important courses for implementing the fundamental task of cultivating virtue and morality in colleges and universities. Therefore, it is natural for ideological and political courses to be explicit courses in colleges and universities. At the same time, attention should be paid to handling the relationship between ideological and political courses and other professional courses, "making various courses and ideological and political theory courses go in the same direction and form a synergistic effect." [3] Thus achieving the organic unity of explicit and implicit education. Specifically, in the educational and teaching process of ideological and political courses, improving the effectiveness of ideological and political courses requires strengthening top-level design, enhancing organizational management and group responsibility awareness of college teachers, strengthening the construction of the team of ideological and political course teachers in colleges and universities, actively promoting the integration of ideological and political courses with other disciplines, forming a synergistic effect, jointly helping to improve the effectiveness of ideological and political courses in shaping souls and educating people, making the final educational effect present a spiral upward development trend. The illustration is shown in Figure 2:

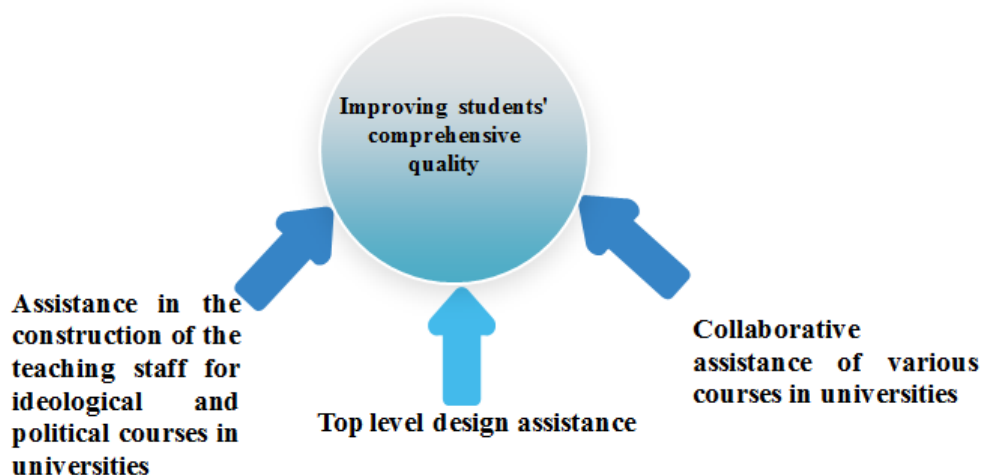


Figure 2. Factors Boosting the Effectiveness of Ideological and Political Courses

Specifically, first and foremost, it is necessary to strengthen top-level design, forming a new work pattern with unified organization and leadership by universities and joint management by all teaching departments. Universities must attach great importance to the construction of ideological and political courses, highlighting their significant status. In terms of the construction of ideological and political courses, it is crucial to establish a problem-oriented consciousness, work together to address the shortcomings of these courses, clarify the teaching effects, and make overall plans. Colleges and universities should establish and improve the standards for the construction of ideological and political courses, strengthen the scientific connection and overall coordination among related courses, and turn the advantages of ideological and political work into advantages for the development of colleges and universities.

Secondly, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of the teaching team for ideological and political courses in universities, enhancing the sense of main responsibility among these teachers. Strengthening the construction of the ideological and political course teaching team is the key point and focal point to improve the effectiveness of these courses. University ideological and political course teachers shoulder the important mission and responsibility of guiding values and cultivating ideals and beliefs for young college students. The quality of these teachers and their educational level directly affect the quality of fostering souls and educating people. Ideological and political course teachers must possess firm ideals and beliefs, continuously improve and train their self-cultivation, and be confident in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics. They should strive to cultivate students into socialist builders and successors with full development in morality, intelligence, physique, and labor.

Finally, universities should promote the alignment and cooperation between various courses and ideological and political courses to form a synergistic effect, thus enhancing the educational effect of ideological and political courses. On one hand, it is necessary to continuously strengthen the consolidation of ideological and political courses, deepen theoretical research, and improve the actual effect of theoretical education. On the other hand, it is essential to enhance the integration of ideal and belief education in other disciplines with ideological and political courses. Although the teaching objectives of other professional courses differ from those of ideological and political courses in soul-building and education, they play a very important guiding and promoting role in the growth process of students. It is always necessary to adhere to Marxism as a guide to ensure the consistency of ideological and political courses with other professional courses in the education of socialist core values and ideals and beliefs.

## 5. Conclusion

Enhancing the affinity and pertinence of ideological and political theory courses in universities in the new era is an important pathway to achieving the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. Through adhering to innovation, enhancing the appeal and influence of classroom teaching, and promoting deep integration of social practice with classroom teaching, students' interest in learning and their sense of gain can be effectively improved. Meanwhile, the collaborative mechanism of different courses with the same objectives and the application of modern emerging media technology further enhance the effectiveness and sense of the times of ideological and political courses. To achieve these goals, it is necessary to strengthen top-level design and unified leadership by universities, reinforce the construction of ideological and political course teaching teams, and establish a new pattern of coordination between various courses and ideological and political courses across the university, thereby forming a good situation of joint management and ensuring that ideological and political courses truly become courses that college students love and recognize.



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