The Reform and Thinking of Integrated Teaching of "Three Bases, Three Methods" in Ideological and Political Course

—Based on the perspective of unity of knowledge and practice

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Abstract: Based on the perspective of unity of knowledge and practice, Sichuan Agricultural University proceeded from the learning and teaching conditions of major students in science, engineering, agriculture and forestry, and large class teaching system, explored the new method of integrated teaching characterized by moral education, i.e. "case-based teaching method" +"participation-based interpretation method"+ "project-based independent learning method"("three bases, three methods" in abbreviation). Thus, “three bases, three methods” integrated new teaching system initially formed, featuring interaction and mutual learning between teachers and students and among students, integration of curricular and extracurricular, online and offline education resources in one, and unity of morality, knowledge and practice. Affinity and pertinence of ideological and political course teaching are effectively enhanced. Due to its innovativeness and operability in education thinking and teaching practice path, this model carries value in reference and promotion for ideological and political education in colleges and universities.

1. Introduction

China is a socialist country. "Ideological and political work in colleges and universities is a fundamental issue that relates to what kinds of people are trained by colleges and universities, how to cultivate people and for whom to cultivate people." [1] Ideological and political course is the main channel for ideological consensus, values cultivation and political civilization in colleges and universities. Since the implementation of ideological and political course program 05 in colleges and universities, effectiveness of ideological and political theory courses has been greatly improved. However, in some schools, there are still some problems such as "single", "obsolete" teaching methods, teacher “dominance” in class, insufficient combination between theory and practice in teaching and students’ reality. As a result, students think that ideological and political course is not "interesting", leading to low “attendance”; that ideological and political course is “boring”, leading to low “head-up rate”; and that ideological and political course is "useless", leading to low "absorption rate". The phenomenon of three "lows" is because students affected by multi-purpose evaluation thought in the mobile Internet era have stronger subject consciousness. It is also a result of ideological and political teaching methods’ incapability to meet students’ cognitive habits and development needs. Then, how to explore new path of teaching pleasant to students through teaching innovation, find out the integrating point of fostering value identification of ideological and political course and students' self-development needs, enhance students’ inner learning motivation and improve effectiveness of ideological and political learning, becomes the starting point and ending point of ideological and political teaching reform. To this end, guided by “mutual progressing” "concentric" type cooperative education thinking, Sichuan Agricultural University proceeded from the learning and teaching conditions of major students in science, engineering, agriculture and forestry, and large class teaching system, started from the concept that ideological and political course is also “method course” [2], explored the new method of integrated teaching characterized by moral education, i.e. “case-based teaching method" +"participation-based
interpretation method"+ "project-based independent learning method"(“three bases, three methods” in abbreviation). Thus, “three bases, three methods” integrated new teaching system initially formed, featuring interaction and mutual learning between teachers and students and among students, integration of curricular and extracurricular, online and offline education resources in one, and unity of morality, knowledge and practice. Affinity and pertinence of ideological and political course teaching are highlighted.

2. Acting points of "three bases, three methods" integrated teaching

2.1 Case-based teaching method – leveraging “fields”, take field visits as the main carrier so that knowledge starts with practice

Case-based teaching method is a teaching mode with students' personal participation in production of ideological and political field cases as the core that integrates "participation-based interpretation" and "project-based independent learning". It features interaction between teachers and students and among students and integration of "virtual" and “actual” education resources. Through students’ personal participation, this method combines the rich ideological resources of CCP with fresh practical cases, achieving the integration of education and self-education by presenting facts in reasoning.

The model is made of "one guarantee + five steps". "One guarantee" means that schools and colleges provide guarantee for the effective implementation of case-based teaching in class hours, organization, funding and base construction. Schools and school of Marxism arrange special funds for ideological and political teaching practice. There will be at least 4 periods of practice in which leaders lead teams to a series of ideological and political teaching practice bases, including Ya’an City Shimian County Anshunchang Red Army Memorial Hall for Forced Crossing of Dadu River, Tianquan County Renyi Township Red Army Village, Qionglai Red Army Long March Memorial Hall, Jiajinshan Memorial Hall and Wenchuan Yingxiu earthquake relic. With base as an important carrier, case-based teaching is carried out for Outline of Chinese Modern History, An Introduction to Mao Zedong Thought and the Theoretical System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.

Case-based teaching is implemented in "five steps." Step one: Set the appropriate teaching questions around General Secretary Xi Jinping’s series of important speeches and teaching objectives. Step two: organize student representatives to inspect the practice teaching base and select typical materials as preparation for case-based teaching under teachers’ guidance; all the students are asked to collect materials online and think about related questions simultaneously. Step three: teachers instruct students to analyze the field cases with scientific theories and methods and form teaching cases. Step four: instruct students to participate in classroom discussion around the teaching questions with field cases or network cases. Students interact and exchange, then teachers conclude. Step five: incorporate the activities into examination, to achieve integration in teaching, learning, evaluation. By organizing students to make, analyze, discuss and summarize the teaching cases, the organic combination of teacher’s leading role and student subject is achieved, pertinence of theoretical teaching and persuasion of scientific theories are enhanced.

According to the cognitive characteristics of agriculture and forestry majors, the important commemorative activities of CCP and the state, spirits of important speeches and important themes of the course are organically integrated. Mixed teaching methods and means are designed with case-based teaching method as the main, participation + project-based methods as the auxiliary for timely teaching. For instance, taking the commemoration of 80th anniversary of the victory of the Long March as an opportunity, we organized all the students to participate in the education campaign entitled "The Long March Memorial in My Heart" launched by People's Daily Net during the teaching. At the same time, around the two major issues of “Land Revolution” and "Red Army Long March", students logged onto the online Red Army Long March memorial hall and made relevant cases. Also, we organized student representatives to Qionglai Red Army Long March Memorial Hall, let students collect relevant historical materials and produce teaching cases for “Land Revolution” and "Red Army Long March”. In the organized classroom discussions, teachers
provide timely comments, and students actively participate in case-based teaching, attracted by the demonstration activities. The salutary influence of mastery of scientific theories and enthusiasm for learning theory are pleasant to the ear and mind. The teaching reform shows that in case-based teaching, we should first ensure consistency between case and teaching content, goals; [3] second, handle the relationship between respecting the initiative of students and teachers' guidance to give play to effectiveness of case-based teaching.

2.2 "Participation-based Interpretation" - leveraging "circumstances", take flipped classroom as a carrier for students to lecture on stage

Aiming at the knowledge structure and thinking habits of Sichuan Agricultural University students, “participation-based interpretation method” is to let students take part in the teacher lecture with group as a unit around the teaching questions in due time. Supplemented by "case-based teaching" and project-based independent learning method, it is a teaching model combining lecture method, discussion method, reading tutoring method, multimedia methods and means. Featuring interaction and mutual teaching between teacher and students and among students, as well as integration of "virtual" and "actual" educational resources, it effectively gives play to teacher guidance and students' subjectivity. "Participation-based interpretation method" consists of "question chain + three steps".

The core problem in students' participation in teaching is how to screen questions. In "participation-based interpretation method", question chain is set based on “one outline and two questions”. One outline means contents and spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speeches. The first question is to set up pre-class questionnaire system to understand students' ideological confusion and cognitive needs; the second question is to study textbooks, syllabus to determine teaching focus and difficult issues in the semester. Then, with spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speech as the entry point, the semester "question chain" is constructed by combining students' confusion and important and difficult points in teaching.

"Three Steps": "Reading and thinking" before the activity. Based on the content of teaching materials, students read the recommended books and mainstream media literature, thinking upon teachers' questions. "Talk and comment" during the activity: Individual speech and group speech are combined for teachers and students' comment and teacher's conclusion. "Practice and test" after the activity: students do the usual exercises around the discussion questions, whose discussion and practice will be examined. Based on students’ participative behavior characteristics and its development law in the learning process, “participation-based interpretation method” arouses students' awareness of subjectivity and constructs a teaching community featuring teacher-student interaction and unity of knowledge and practice.

Diversified "participation-based interpretation" is a feature of the method. Sichuan Agricultural University organized a variety of participatory interpretation activities to form different participatory interpretation modules. For example, "please come in + please go up onto the podium" mechanism. In the teaching of "the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics", outside experts are invited into the classroom for exchange and interaction with students in the form of lectures; also, there is "micro-history lecture" mechanism. Students first read the designated books in groups, interview their own families with micro topic of change in "clothing", "food", "shelter", "means of travelling" of my family before and after the reform and opening up. Then, in 8 minutes' flipped micro classroom, students walk onto the podium and take on the role of little teacher. In the lively classroom, both lecturing students and students off the podium are actively involved and learn from each other.

2.3 "Project-based independent learning method" ---- leveraging "time", take project study as a carrier to promote learning by research

"Project-based independent learning method" is a teaching method for students to carry out investigation and research inside and outside the school in self-formed groups under the guidance of teachers, acquire new knowledge and improve theoretical quality and comprehensive ability with project research as a carrier. In the implementation process, "project-based independent learning" is
the core. Supplemented by "participation" "case-based" and online learning and self-media learning methods, actual research and theoretical study are combined around questions so that research, learning and doing are integrated, ideological guidance and unification is achieved, education effectiveness is enhanced. "Project-based independent learning method" is characterized by "one system, three questions and three stages".

"One system": a learning committee is established with teaching class as a unit. A teaching management channel of "course group - teacher - subject representative – study secretary- group leader" is constructed with students as the main body, and QQ groups and WeChat groups are set up to provide organization guarantee for carrying out project-based learning and research.

"Three questions": the subject source consists of three parts. First, spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping’s important speeches is the core of the project research. Second, solicit questions from students. Conduct pre-class "questionnaire" to understand students’ concerns and confusion. Third, the key questions in curriculum teaching.

"Three stages": in the first stage, gathering information in groups – topic selection and argument; in the second stage, division of labor in research – sorting and writing; in the third stage: exchange or participate in lecturing – comments and conclusions.

For example, in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese Anti-Japanese War and the World Anti-Fascist War, the course group of "Outline of Chinese Modern History" carried out project-based independent learning combining online and offline, curricular and extracurricular activities. Nearly one thousand students were organized to participate in prize-giving knowledge contest sponsored by Qiushi Network, Communist Youth League Central Committee to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese Anti-Japanese War and the World Anti-Fascist War. Questionnaire on students’ feedback to the activities were collected and published in Qiushi Network in the form of summary report. At the same time, based on the textbook contents and participation in Anti-Japanese War in the school and the region, 10 research directions were listed. Guided by General Secretary Xi Jinping's speech, students formed their own research results after their own team formation, topic selection, investigations and group discussions. Then, they reported in the classroom or timely joined teacher’s lecture "national anti-Japanese war". The teaching method was highly affirmed by Qiushi Network hailing it as “new method for university theory propaganda”. The most significant meaning of “project–based independent learning method” is to "enable students to deepen understanding, absorb, digest and consolidate the ideological and political theories they have learned through practical activities so that they adopt theoretical perspective more flexibly to observe the world, analyze problems and solve ideological confusions." [4]

3. Features of "three bases, three methods" integrated teaching

3.1 Investigation of learning conditions, general secretary’s speech as the theme

We should understand college students’ cognitive characteristics and behavioral habit, “teach students in accordance with their aptitude”. Only in this way can we purposefully care for student growth and serve students' needs. Since the teaching reform, we have insisted on investigation combining questionnaires targeting at all the students with individual conversations and have formed systems. In each semester, we understand students’ knowledge structure, ideological confusion, learning needs, etc. through pre-class teaching questionnaire survey, and use the result as the basic basis for selection and formulation of teaching programs, teaching methods, topics, cases for new students. In this way, education and teaching methods are purposeful, and education contents are pleasant to the students’ minds.

Ideological and political education emphasizes the cultivation of reliable successors to socialism with Chinese characteristics, and possesses strong ideological characteristics. The important resolutions promulgated by CCP and the state at different periods and their spirits constitute important parts of ideological and political course teaching and carry great guiding significance. Spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's series important speeches since the 18th CPC National
Congress has become the core content of ideological and political education in colleges and universities. Sichuan Agricultural University proactively seizes the education opportunity, and gradually opens a new path of organizing students to participate in project-based learning supplemented with related methods and means. For example, in Outline of Chinese Modern History curriculum, thematic educational activities are carried out based on project-based independent learning method around "China Dream","80th anniversary of the victory of the Long March" and "95th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party." For instance, with "China Dream" as the core, thematic practice of “film viewing- history recalling-reflection- dream catcher footsteps” was organized. Students are required to analyze the main characters, main events depicted in the film, historical background, status and significance (or lessons learned) of the theme of the film from the perspective of modern Chinese historical task of national rejuvenation in conjunction with the relevant theories of outline of Chinese history. Then, students discuss in groups, give mutual assessment and comment to form vivid written reports. Next, based on textbook content and class progress, students walk onto the podium with group as a unit to lecture on "China dream." Through investigation of outstanding figures’ efforts in the school and in the region, college students compare history with reality, thus achieving the effect of promoting "learning" with “viewing”, promoting "teaching" with “presentation”. Students lecture about important resolutions and spirit of CCP, and have group discussions and comments on their favorite films, exploring what is scientific historic view and what historical dialectical thinking we should have.

3.2 "Virtual"-"actual" combination, "target-oriented" teaching normalization

In terms of the particularity of ideological and political education, education methods and means are to guarantee the realization of teaching goal. How to achieve high consistency and conformity between teaching methods, means and educational goals is also the key issue for "three bases, three methods" integrated teaching. Teaching content serves the teaching goal. The choice of "case" and "project" totally depends on the teaching goal, especially new resolution, new spirit and new idea of CCP, namely "target-oriented" teaching. At the same time, field education is combined with education resources of mainstream new media. For example, based on Xi Jinping’s important speeches in the 95th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party and the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Long March in 2016, we determined "Land Revolution under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party" as an important staged teaching target after considering condition of Sichuan Agricultural University and students’ knowledge structure. To achieve the teaching goal, we have taken three major measures: First, we organized all our students to participate in the nationwide educational campaign conducted by the mainstream media People's Daily: "Recommend ‘the Long March Memorial in My Heart’". At the same time, we arranged questions related to the Long March and conducted classroom tests in time to check the learning effect. Second, we organized more than 20 student representatives to Qionglai Red Army Long March Memorial Hall for field visits. Students were asked to collect and produce cases for “fighting against local tyrant and distributing land among people” and “friendly harmony between military and civilian” with cultural relics and historical site data. Students witnessed common people's ballads in support of red army, manuscripts of boycotting a levy, doggerel of class division, farmers’ land certificate after land distribution and real story that veteran physician in TCM cured the wound for Red Army and red army left a shoulder pole as a physical evidence for reward after the liberation. Then, “fighting against local tyrant and distributing land among people” on textbooks become a living fact and “friendly harmony between military and civilian” on textbooks has evolved into a shoulder pole left until today. Third, after returning to school, students write research reports and make thematic cases. In the flipped classroom of "eight minutes' micro-class ", students assume the role of little teacher: "Look, this is the report to provincial Party committee by Qionglai special party branch secretary which is now displayed in the memorial hall: Kuomintang’s excessive taxes and high-handed policies have forced the people into desperation, and only the revolution can solve the problem. This is the No.1 document of Shangchuannan levy-boycotting
alliance: organize a branch of levy-boycotting alliance and set up levy-boycotting army as soon as possible to march toward the frontline, eliminate all harsh duties, overthrow the present government and set up a government without taxes. Then, the later Soviet government came into being. By distributing grain to the poor and land to the poor peasants, it naturally won the support of the people.” Students on the podium pour out words, while those off the podium are in high spirit, ask questions and have discussions with lecturing classmates based on data collected after online learning. With teacher comments in good time, the class atmosphere is lively and orderly, and students have intuitive, specific understanding towards the unfamiliar and important issue of land revolution, which then escalates into rational thinking and ideological recognition.

For this pedagogical approach, “Education Herald” quoted the assessment of a course teacher: “Qionglai was the only Soviet area established in Chengdu at that time. Making good use of this red education base is conducive to promotion of relevant course study. The process from visit to flipped classroom can help perceptual awareness rise to rational understanding ”[5].

From education through “entertainment”, to education through “reality” and further to education through “reason”, the educational goals-oriented well-designed online-offline “virtual”-“actual” combination and organic combination of case and participation-based methods and means protrude interaction between teachers and students and among students, highlight students' subjectivity and enhance effectiveness of ideological and political education.

3.3 "Online- offline", co-construction of teachers and students’ management team

How to exert students' self-management ability in the process of interaction between teachers and students, mutual teaching among students, extend ideological and political education to students' daily management and daily study and life, and cultivate students' ability of correct interpersonal communication from the aspects of study and life, so as to promote students' initiative participation and support smooth progress of educational reform activities is a guarantee for the smooth progress of "three bases, three methods" integrated teaching reform. According to college students' self-management requirements and characteristics of excelling in network communication, ideological and political course group of Sichuan Agricultural University exerts to build "tree-like" teachers and students management team, and develops the "1123N" management system with "subject representatives" as the core, study secretary as the main force that radiates to management at all levels. "1", set up a teaching class learning committee with "subject representatives" as the core to assist teachers in education and teaching activities. Subject representatives are selected based on students’ free will and teachers’ designation to act as teaching assistant of ideological and political course, thus building a tree management team with teachers - subject representatives of large classes –study secretary of each small class -group leaders. "2", set up two main communication channels of public mailbox, QQ group for college students and management groups according to the actual situation in our school, establish two management pillars of "subject representatives" and study secretaries of each class for global control and timely adjustments under the teacher’s command. "3", the learning committee mainly assists in the management of three aspects of teaching activities: the first is to organize students to participate in classroom teaching activities like "micro-history lecture", “one project, one discussion”, "scenario reproduction"; the second is to help organize and manage extracurricular investigation and study activities. The third is to assist in organizing and directing self-evaluation of curricular and extracurricular teaching results as well as guidance and collection of relevant homework. "N" means to establish communication channels such as Microblog, WeChat for different classes under the leadership of subject representatives and study secretaries. By relying on such a management team, effective combination of curricular and extracurricular, in and out of school, online and offline, new media such as WeChat, Microblog is achieved, students' abilities of self-management, self-education and interaction with others are cultivated, and a group of capable student cadres are trained, promoting the effective advancement of “three bases, three methods” integrated teaching.

3.4 Seizing educational opportunities, “enliven” theory study

Ideological and political education emphasizes the cultivation of values and the cultivation of
ideal and faith. General Secretary Xi Jinping requires that in ideological and political education in colleges and universities, we should "persevere in spreading Marxist scientific theory, focus on Marxist theoretical education and lay a scientific ideological foundation for students' lifelong growth" [1]. College students in the age of smart phones have active thinking, dislike rigid theory infusion, value facts, society, self-participation and experience. By what paths and mechanisms to “enliven” theory is the core issue of “three bases, three methods” integrated teaching. We have conducted diversified path explorations in this regard. At the 18th CPC National Congress, CCP proposed to build a well-off society in an all-round way in 2020. With this as an education opportunity for the topic “Construction of socialist harmonious society with Chinese characteristics”, Song Binhan from school of economics and management, Sichuan Agricultural University in Chengdu campus set up a study group. After detailed online and offline information collection and collation, with the interview questions such as “what about current income and living conditions of the difficult households in the old revolutionary base areas? What are the problems and causes? Solutions and suggestions for solving the problems, etc.,” the study group students, led by teachers, went to the old revolutionary base Shimian County which the Red Army passed during the Long March. With the strong support of the local government, students conducted field research on the needy families in the new neighborhoods, and finally wrote research reports and reported the research process and thinking to all students in the classroom, inspiring students' interests and reflections. The results were published in "Shimian Social Science Research" magazine sponsored by Shimian Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences. The questions and suggestions put forward by them were endorsed by Shimian secretary of county committee: "Please send them to responsible comrades of Miancheng Subdistrict Office of the Civil Affairs Bureau for reference to further improve the work and measures”, so the social impact was big.

The year 2016 marked the 110th anniversary of the establishment of Sichuan Agricultural University. Aware of the high coincidence between the 110th anniversary of the school and the modern history of China, we seized this rare opportunity and launched series interview activities of “Sichuan Agricultural University’s stories and Chinese Dream Behind"-"Oral History – Sichuan Agricultural University People’ Dream-chasing Years". The interview allows integration of student learning into development of colleges and universities. By accepting the unique education path of interview, school leadership, old school alumni and the faculty and staff create a strong atmosphere of whole staff education, promoting the construction of good school spirit and academic atmosphere. Zhang Dengmao, a major in agriculture and forestry management, commented it in this way “this process involves our personal participation, embodies our learning and application of basic methods to understand history, represents our learning of and touch in specific historical content, and moreover, carries out joy to well convey the history to more people. This may be the best effect and purpose of learning history, which cannot be made only by reading.” Ideological and political education in colleges and universities should not “proceed blandly”. Grasping the education opportunity to establish a "concentric circle" education pattern with ideological and political course as the main channel that radiates to school education, internet education and social education, so that theory study gains “life” becomes an important link to improve effectiveness of ideological and political education.

4. Conclusion

Education is purposeful and subject to different constraints of histories, cultures, systems and social developments. The United States pursuing "democracy and equality" set "the goal of self-realization" as the first education purpose [6]. The former Soviet Union advocated “cultivation of active builders for communist society” [7]. Ideological and political course in socialist China undoubtedly assumes the important task of systematic Marxist theoretical education among college students, which is the main channel for ideological and political education of college students. In the age of mobile Internet, we need to "change according to circumstances, progress as appropriate and innovate as time requires"[1], explore new ideas and new models for ideological and political teaching that meets the requirements of education in the new era, follows “law of ideological and
political work, law of teaching and educating people and law of student growth" [1]. The "three bases, three methods" integrated teaching is primarily formed in this context. It proceeds from the learning and teaching conditions of major students in agriculture and forestry science, and large class teaching system of Sichuan Agricultural University, “optimizes the teaching principles” of teaching based on aptitude, gaining new insights through reviewing old material, and gradual progress [8]; In its "dialogue" teaching of ideological education, "attention is given to the process of knowledge generation" [9]; it not only provides the audience with opinions and viewpoints, but also lets the audience participate in theory and practical teaching, put forward their point of view, perhaps opposite views or materials, thus bringing the feeling of "fair reasoning", and effectively reducing the audience’s possible resistance [10]. It is for this reason that "three bases, three methods" integrated teaching has gained recognition from peers, and has been used by colleges and universities inside and outside the province, including: Heilongjiang Bayi Agricultural University, Chengdu Normal University and Jiangnan University. It also won first award in 2017 teaching achievement of Sichuan Agricultural University, and has been successively reported and reprinted by Qiushi Network, Sichuan Provincial People's Government Network, Education Herald, China Youth Network, etc. However, since there is no end to learning and no law to teaching, how to further promote and innovate "three bases, three methods" integrated teaching based on changes in the audience and the new requirements of the new era still requires new thinking and new trials.

References


