The Advantages and Pathways of Digital Storytelling in Empowering the Integration of the Party's Innovative Theories into Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities

Yanni Liu*

School of Marxism, Qilu University of Technology (Shandong Academy of Sciences), Jinan 250353, Shandong, China

*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.

Abstract: The Party's innovative theories represent the latest achievements in adapting Marxism to the Chinese context and the modern era, and their integration into ideological and political education is an inevitable requirement and important measure for cultivating new talents of the era. Against the backdrop of the vigorous development of digital technology, digital storytelling has emerged as a significant paradigm for teaching reform and innovation, offering notable advantages in empowering the integration of the Party's innovative theories into ideological and political education, such as enhancing the perceptibility of theories, expanding the reach of theories, strengthening theoretical identification, and promoting personalized internalization of theories. In the practical teaching of ideological and political courses, efforts should be concentrated on four dimensions: improving teachers' digital storytelling teaching abilities, developing high-quality digital storytelling teaching resources, establishing diverse digital storytelling teaching platforms, and improving the digital storytelling teaching support system, to provide systematic support for the integration of the Party's innovative theories into ideological and political education.

Keywords: Digital storytelling; The Party's innovative theories; Advantages; Pathways

1. Introduction

In 2024, the General Secretary issued important instructions on the construction of ideological and political courses in schools, emphasizing that "the construction of ideological and political courses should be advanced in tandem with the arming of the Party's innovative theories" [1]. This assertion provides a fundamental guideline and action plan for integrating the Party's innovative theories into the teaching of ideological and political courses. Meanwhile, against the backdrop of digital technology deeply reshaping the educational ecosystem, the General Secretary proposed that "we should leverage new media and technologies to make our work more

vibrant, promote the high-level integration of the traditional strengths of ideological and political work with information technology, and enhance their sense of the times and appeal" [2]. This discourse profoundly reveals the significant transformations and unprecedented new opportunities that information technology brings to ideological and political work in universities. Some scholars have pointed out that "digital narratology can be fully regarded as the 'third narratology' following classical narratology and post-classical narratology" [3]. In the teaching practice of ideological and political courses, digital narrative, with its unique advantages, has opened up a brand-new practical field for the teaching transformation of the Party's innovative theories and provided a new path that aligns with the development needs of the times and is highly adaptable for in-depth promotion and interpretation of the Party's innovative theories.

2. Advantages of digital narrative in empowering the integration of the Party's innovative theories into ideological and political course teaching

Through concrete scenarios, time-space compression, interactive participation, and data-driven technological approaches, digital narrative provides solid and powerful support for the in-depth embedding and value internalization of the Party's innovative theories in the teaching of ideological and political courses.

2.1. Concrete scenario narratives reduce cognitive load and enhance the perceptibility of theories

Concrete scenario narratives reconstruct the presentation form of theories through technological empowerment, and their effectiveness lies in taking into account the cognitive patterns of young students, thereby reducing cognitive load. Specifically, concrete scenario narratives enhance the perceptibility and acceptability of theories from two dimensions: symbol transformation and scenario construction.

On the one hand, visual presentation aligns with the cognitive preferences of young college students. "It is an undeniable fact that contemporary culture is becoming a visual culture rather than a print culture" [4]. The direct manifestation of this cultural shift in the field of education is the high efficiency of visual information transmission. Concrete scenario narratives construct a communication form that interweaves sound and images, features multi-dimensional interaction, and is visually intuitive through visual symbols such as charts and dynamic infographics, deeply aligning with the cognitive habits of Generation Z, which prioritize images. Visual presentation, to a certain extent, reduces the cognitive cost of information decoding, improves cognitive efficiency, and effectively breaks down the symbolic barriers between theory dissemination and student cognition.

On the other hand, simulated scenarios deepen the understanding of the Party's innovative theories by restoring the context in which knowledge is generated. Concrete scenario narratives utilize VR/AR technologies to virtually reconstruct important meetings, significant events, and key battles in the Party's history, creating simulated historical fields. When students are immersed in virtual historical scenarios, they can gain profound insights into the historical background and inevitability of the formation of the Party's innovative theories through immersive experiences, grasping the scientific nature and practical power of the theories from a historical perspective.

2.2. Transcending time and space in narrative expands dissemination fields and broadens the reach of theories

"Ideological and political courses in colleges and universities should be taught wherever students are" [5].

Relying on digital technology, narrative transcending time and space breaks down physical barriers, creating a dissemination field that is accessible at all times and covers all areas, thereby exponentially expanding the reach of the Party's innovative theories.

Firstly, narrative transcending time and space breaks free from the constraints of physical space on the dissemination scope. Through virtual teaching spaces constructed using technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and the metaverse, this narrative approach enables efficient information transmission without relying on the physical presence of individuals. This shifts theoretical dissemination towards a coexistence and integration of online and offline modes, thereby thoroughly opening up the boundaries of theoretical reach.

Secondly, narrative transcending time and space aligns with the ubiquitous learning behavior characteristics of young people. By leveraging online learning platforms, this narrative approach dissects and embeds the Party's innovative theories, integrating theoretical dissemination into students' daily life scenarios and significantly enhancing the efficiency of reaching them with these theories.

Finally, the viral dissemination characteristics of narrative transcending time and space break through the limitations of linear transmission in traditional teaching. Relying on diverse digital carriers, it constructs a networked dissemination matrix where each contact node can potentially become a new source of dissemination, extending theoretical dissemination into the social and interest circles of young students and ultimately achieving a breakthrough from "niche circles" to "mass fields."

2.3. Interactive and participatory narratives activate emotional resonance and strengthen theoretical acceptance

"Ideological and political course teaching is not merely a vehicle for knowledge transmission but also a core arena for value shaping and ideological guidance" [6]. The realization of this teaching objective is based on the acceptance of teaching content, with emotional resonance serving as the crucial link in the cognitive leap towards value acceptance. "Teachers' enthusiasm for teaching is transmitted to students through classroom interactions, and students' enthusiasm for learning is fed back to teachers through classroom participation" [7]. It can be said that teacher-student interaction is an effective way to stimulate emotions. Interactive narrative participation, mediated by digital technology, fully mobilizes students' willingness to participate, breaks the traditional one-way indoctrination structure of "teacher-student," thereby activating emotional resonance and completing the transformation from cognitive acceptance to emotional identification.

The intrinsic mechanism by which interactive narrative participation effectively enhances college students' emotional identification with the Party's innovative theories lies in the triple laws of emotional primacy, embodied empathy, and co-creation of meaning. Firstly, the emotional primacy effect triggers immediate emotional arousal. Various interactive forms, such as bullet screen interactions, real-time voting, question scrambling, and online group discussions, rapidly activate the emotional center, producing an "emotional lead" effect that lays a positive emotional foundation for theoretical cognition. Secondly, embodied empathy promotes deep emotional projection. In interactive narrative participation, students complete role construction through role-playing in virtual environments or dialogues with virtual digital humans. This embodied participation separates the Party's innovative theories from abstract political discourse and transforms them into value coordinates associated with individual actions, driving the deep generation of emotional resonance. Thirdly, co-creation of meaning deepens emotional identification. The "participatory culture" theory proposed by American communication scholar Henry Jenkins [8] suggests that in interactive narrative participation, students interpret

and creatively express the Party's innovative theories in individual ways through UGC (User-Generated Content) creation, such as micro-videos and interactive scripts. This process of autonomous construction not only endows the theories with individual significance but also contains strong emotional identification.

2.4. Data-driven narratives achieve differential adaptation and promote personalized internalization of theories

American scholar Nicholas Negroponte once predicted the phenomenon of "My Daily Newspaper" [9], implying that with the development of network technology, personalized needs will be met. Digital narratives rely on intelligent algorithms and big data analysis to create portraits and implement precise strategies from the two dimensions of demand identification and supply adaptation, making the internalization process of the Party's innovative theories more in line with individual cognitive patterns.

On the one hand, a precise grasp of individual differences is achieved based on data portraits. The "Zone of Proximal Development" theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky, a renowned psychologist from the former Soviet Union [10], posits that teaching effectiveness hinges on accurately assessing students' existing cognitive levels and their potential for development. Data-driven narratives collect learning trajectory data through online platforms, including learning duration, interaction frequency, homework completion, and test scores, to create precise profiles for each student. Based on these personalized profiles, precise targeted dissemination of the Party's innovative theories can be achieved, enabling teaching interventions to directly address students' cognitive pain points and unmet needs.

On the other hand, the provision of personalized teaching content enhances the permeability of the Party's innovative theories. Data-driven narratives break down the Party's innovative theoretical system into content modules of varying difficulty levels and diverse presentation formats, essentially locating each student's "theoretical cognitive comfort zone" through data profiling. This "demand-driven adaptation" supply model enables each student to gradually deepen their understanding within a cognitive framework tailored to their needs. More importantly, when theoretical content is presented in a manner that aligns with individual acceptance habits, it reduces resistance from psychological defense mechanisms, creating psychological conditions for personalized internalization.

3. Pathways for digital narratives to empower the integration of the Party's innovative theories into ideological and political education

To truly transform digital narratives into teaching effectiveness in ideological and political courses, collaborative efforts must be made across four dimensions: subject capacity, content supply, platform carriers, and institutional guarantees, to achieve high-quality interpretation and in-depth penetration of the Party's innovative theories in ideological and political education.

3.1. Strengthening the subject foundation: Enhancing teachers' digital narrative teaching capabilities

As the primary facilitators of ideological and political education, teachers' digital narrative capabilities are crucial for effectively integrating the Party's innovative theories into the classroom. Firstly, a tiered training system should be established to precisely enhance digital skills. Universities should regularly conduct training on digital technology application capabilities, helping teachers gradually master the use of digital narrative tools and flexibly apply them in teaching practices. For teachers with weak foundations in digital technology,

basic training should focus on mastering the fundamental operations of digital tools. For teachers with a certain level of digital technology proficiency, advanced training should concentrate on instructional design and innovation, guiding them on how to design teaching plans incorporating digital narrative elements. For key teachers, advanced training should encourage exploration of pathways for integrating cutting-edge technologies with theoretical instruction, enabling the Party's innovative theories to be conveyed to students in more novel and effective ways. On the other hand, various forms of exchange activities are organized for teachers to share their experiences and insights in digital narrative teaching. Regular collective lesson preparation sessions are held to meticulously refine and improve teaching designs and plans. Digital narrative teaching demonstration classes are offered, enabling teachers to learn practical teaching methods and techniques from outstanding class examples. Specialized seminars are organized, inviting technology experts and renowned teaching professionals to jointly explore the application pathways of digital technology in ideological and political education courses, enhancing teachers' practical operational capabilities in digital technology. Renowned experts are invited to deliver lectures, sharing the latest research findings and practical experiences in the field of digital narrative teaching, helping teachers broaden their horizons and deepen their understanding and appreciation of digital narrative teaching.

3.2. Optimizing content supply: Developing high-quality digital narrative resources

High-quality digital narrative resources are the foundation for the effective dissemination of the Party's innovative theories. Developing a resource system that adheres to theoretical core principles while resonating with the cognitive styles of young people enables the Party's innovative theories to be integrated into ideological and political education courses in a more vivid and accessible manner. Firstly, a professional team should be assembled to develop a series of digital resources. A professional development team comprising ideological and political scholars, communication scholars, and digital technicians should be formed, with a clear division of labor and collaboration. Ideological and political scholars are responsible for ensuring theoretical direction, communication scholars focus on narrative strategy design, and digital technicians handle multimodal presentation. Core teaching resources such as micro-courses, micro-cases, and micro-simulations should be systematically developed around the core points of the Party's innovative theories. These resources complement each other, maintaining a harmonious balance between political and technical aspects while organically integrating academic rigor with engaging content. Secondly, a mechanism for continuous resource updates should be established. Resources should be updated in real time to keep pace with theoretical developments. After important Party meetings and the release of major policies, corresponding digital resources, such as an infographic, a short video, or a set of interactive questions, should be promptly introduced to break down the latest spirit into youth-friendly keywords. Timely and lively case studies should be supplemented in response to current events to maintain the timeliness and vibrancy of the resources. Thirdly, it encourages teachers and students to jointly create resources and expand resource supply. A resource creation platform is opened to teachers and students, providing standardized creation templates and a shared material library. Guide teachers and students to create works by integrating professional characteristics with life experiences, collect short videos, H5 works, virtual simulation projects, and other creations by teachers and students, and incorporate high-quality, high-standard, outstanding works into the teaching resource library.

3.3. Building a carrier matrix: Constructing a diverse digital narrative teaching platform

The teaching platform is a key carrier for implementing digital narratives. By creating a diverse system of smart classrooms, online learning platforms, and social public platforms, the Party's innovative theories can

be precisely delivered in different contexts. Firstly, upgrade the hardware facilities of smart classrooms. As the main venue for digital teaching, smart classrooms should break through the limitations of traditional multimedia classrooms in terms of hardware configuration. They should be equipped with high-definition projection and curved-screen display systems, touch-screen large displays, and distributed microphones to facilitate teachers in annotating key theoretical points during lectures and responding to student questions submitted via bullet screen comments. Lightweight VR terminals and other devices should also be provided to create an immersive teaching space. Secondly, develop a school-based online learning platform that integrates functions such as a course resource library, interactive community, and learning analysis system to support blended online and offline teaching. Thirdly, leverage the traffic advantages and user base of social platforms to extend the reach of the Party's innovative theories beyond the classroom and into daily life. Actively connect with public platforms such as "Study Strong Nation," "TikTok," and "WeChat" to establish ideological and political education columns, expanding the coverage of the dissemination of the Party's innovative theories. Explore the construction of metaverse teaching platforms, building virtual campuses, revolutionary exhibition halls, and other scenarios to provide students with cross-temporal learning experiences.

3.4. Improving the support system: Establishing a long-term mechanism for digital narrative teaching

A robust support system is crucial for the sustainable development of digital narrative teaching, laying a solid foundation for integrating digital narratives of the Party's innovative theories into ideological and political education courses. Firstly, at the policy level, educational authorities should issue dedicated documents to clarify the strategic position of digital narratives in the construction of ideological and political education courses. Establish construction standards and evaluation indicators, setting scientific quantitative criteria for the political nature, technical compatibility, and data security of digital narrative content. Each university formulates and implements school-based detailed rules in line with national policies, clarifying the division of responsibilities among the Academic Affairs Office, the School of Marxism, the Publicity Department, and the Information Technology Center to avoid passing the buck and ensure the smooth implementation of policies. Second, at the funding level, a special fund for digital ideological and political education is established to support projects such as hardware facility upgrades, resource development, and teacher training. Third, at the technical level, a digital technology service team is established to cover the entire process of construction, operation, and maintenance. Meanwhile, a network security protection mechanism is established to conduct regular security tests and vulnerability repairs, ensuring that platform operations and data management meet ideological security requirements. Fourth, at the evaluation level, a multi-dimensional evaluation system is established, with process evaluation focusing on behavioral trajectory analysis, outcome evaluation focusing on the improvement of comprehensive qualities, and performance evaluation focusing on long-term behavioral transformation, comprehensively measuring the educational effectiveness of digital narrative teaching. Additionally, content review should be strengthened to ensure the political, scientific, and normative nature of teaching resources, creating a safe and healthy development ecosystem for digital narrative teaching.

4. Conclusion

Digital narrative is not only an innovation in technological means but also a reconstruction of educational concepts and communication methods, opening up a new practical path for the Party's innovative theories to be deeply internalized. Through multi-dimensional empowerment featuring concrete situations, transcending time

and space, interactive participation, and data-driven approaches, digital narrative breaks through the symbolic barriers and spatial-temporal limitations of traditional ideological and political course teaching, reshaping the field and form of theoretical dissemination. It demonstrates unique value in stimulating students' emotional resonance, promoting personalized learning, and deepening theoretical identification, becoming an important direction for the reform of ideological and political course teaching and theoretical dissemination in the new era.

Looking ahead, with the deep integration of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and the metaverse into educational practices, digital narrative has even broader development prospects in empowering the integration of the Party's innovative theories into ideological and political course teaching. Universities should further strengthen their collaborative exploration of the inherent laws of digital technology and ideological and political education, continuously innovate narrative methods, enrich narrative content, and optimize narrative scenarios, promoting the integration of the Party's innovative theories into the entire process of ideological and political course teaching in a manner that is more in line with the cognitive habits of young people and meets the development needs of the times. This will guide the broad masses of young people to continuously deepen their understanding of the scientific connotations and practical power of the Party's innovative theories, fulfill the mission of "nurturing talent for the Party and the country," and provide strong support for cultivating a new generation of individuals capable of shouldering the great responsibility of national rejuvenation.

Funding

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

[1] People's Daily, 2024, Xi Jinping Gave Important Instructions on the Construction of Ideological and Political Courses in Schools, Emphasizing the Need to Continuously Open Up a New Situation in Ideological and Political Education in the New Era and Strive to Cultivate More New Era Talents Who Are Trustworthy to the Party, Patriotic, Dedicated, and Capable of Shouldering the Heavy Responsibility of National Rejuvenation, People's Daily, May 12, 2024, (001).

[2] People's Daily, 2016, Xi Jinping Emphasized at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities That Ideological and Political Work Should Be Integrated Throughout the Entire Process of Education and Teaching to Open Up a New Situation in the Development of Higher Education in China, People's Daily, December 9, 2016, (001).

[3] Zhou C, 2025, The "Digital Turn" and Research Approaches of Contemporary Narrative Theory. Journal of Beijing Union University (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition), (3): 110–115 + 124.

[4] Bell D, 1989, The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism [Zhao Y, Pu L, Ren X, Trans.], SDX Joint Publishing Company, Beijing, 156.

[5] Xie M, Zhang X, 2025, Recommendation Algorithm Empowers Ideological and Political Theory Courses

in Colleges and Universities: Theoretical Logic, Practical Dilemmas, and Promotion Paths. Ideological and Theoretical Education Research, 2025(5): 120–128.

[6]   Li Z, Li L, 2025, Exploring Strategies for the Transition from Informatization to Digital Transformation in the Teaching and Education of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Colleges and Universities. Ideological and Theoretical Education Research, 2025(5): 113–119.

[7]   Zhang X, 2025, The Realistic Dilemmas and Future Pathways of Emotional Reciprocity Between Teachers and Students in the Digital Age: A Perspective Based on Goffman's Dramaturgical Theory. E-Education Research, 2025(4): 26–32.

[8]   Jenkins H, 2016, Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture [Zheng X, Trans.], Peking University Press, Beijing.

[9]   Negroponte N, 2017, Being Digital [Hu Y, Fan H, Trans.], Publishing House of Electronics Industry, Beijing, 149.

[10] Vygotsky L, 2004, Selected Works of Lev Vygotsky on Education [Yu Z, Trans.], People's Education Press, Beijing.