

Research on Mechanism Innovation and Practical Paths of Network Ideological and Political Education in the Context of Diversified Student Sources in Higher Vocational Colleges

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Abstract: Currently, the student body in higher vocational colleges presents a diverse picture, and the traditional ideological and political education model is facing the predicament of weakened effectiveness. Although online ideological and political education is regarded as a key solution, most of the practices still remain at the technical tool level and have not yet touched upon the deep transformation of the educational logic. From the perspective of mechanism operation, this paper diagnoses the inherent deficiencies of current online ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges in four dimensions: motivation, operation, collaboration, and guarantee, and constructs an innovative framework with “data intelligence, platform integration, teacher-student symbiosis, and system collaboration” as its pillars. On this basis, it further proposes a transformation path from “technical embedding” to “value symbiosis,” emphasizing that the core of online ideological and political education does not lie in the change of media, but in the deep reconstruction of educational relationships. Empirical research shows that this framework helps to achieve differentiated allocation of educational resources and the steady improvement of educational process efficiency, providing theoretical and practical references for building a higher vocational online ideological and political education system that is in line with the diverse characteristics of the student body.

Keywords: Higher vocational colleges; Diversified student sources; Online ideological and political education; Mechanism innovation; Precision education

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1. Problem statement: Changes in student composition and the paradigm crisis of network-based ideological education

Higher vocational colleges serve as the main platform for cultivating high-quality technical and skilled talents, and their educational quality directly affects the national industrial and talent strategies. Under the impetus of reform in the student admission system, multiple types of students such as graduates from

ordinary high schools, vocational schools, veterans, and employed individuals have jointly constituted the main body of students. These groups exhibit significant heterogeneity in terms of knowledge reserves, cognitive habits, value orientations, and development demands, causing the traditional ideological education model that assumes a single student background and convergent needs to fall into the predicament of “supply-demand mismatch.”

This structural change not only manifests at the student entry stage but also profoundly influences their learning behaviors and ideological dynamics during their studies. For instance, social students with work experience often show little interest in theoretical indoctrination, but have an urgent need to solve real professional ethical dilemmas; while the “00s” high school students are more accustomed to obtaining information through short videos and social media, demanding higher levels of interactivity and participation. This profound transformation in the demand side forces the supply side—our ideological education system—to undergo systematic reformation^[1].

Although the online space has opened up new fields for ideological education, if it is merely regarded as the electronic transplantation of traditional content without fundamentally reconstructing the organizational logic of educational activities, it is equivalent to “new packaging of old wine.” Currently, the online ideological education work in many higher vocational colleges is in a state of “functional suspension”: the platform lacks activity, resources have little in-depth interaction, and the investment shows no effective assessment. The crux lies in that the long-term mechanism supporting the sustainable development of the educational form has not been truly established. The deeper problem is that the existing online ideological education practices often follow a linear logic of “content transfer–activity organization–data statistics,” lacking in-depth concern for and dynamic response to the students’ ideological growth process. Therefore, this study anchors the core issue in “mechanism innovation,” exploring from the perspective of systems theory how to construct a new network ideological education system that can flexibly respond to the diversity of students, effectively stimulate the vitality of education, and integrate internal and external resources, driving the educational model to undergo substantive evolution^[2].

2. Mechanism obstacles: The realistic challenges of network ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges

At present, although the network ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges appears prosperous on the surface, it actually faces deep-seated institutional contradictions. This paradigm crisis is mainly manifested in the practical aspect as deep obstructions in multiple mechanisms. Specifically, it is reflected in the following four aspects.

2.1. The suspension of the motivation mechanism

The suspension of the motivation mechanism is manifested in the lack of internal motivation for continuous participation on both the part of teachers and students. The participation of teachers in network ideological and political education is often regarded as an “extra burden,” lacking systematic training, career development incentives, and workload recognition. Their behaviors mostly remain at the level of mere compliance^[3]. In the current evaluation system, the achievements of network ideological and political work are difficult to quantify and include in teaching assessment and professional title evaluation, resulting in a general lack of willingness to invest by teachers. Students are mostly passive recipients, with the pushed

content deviating from their real growth confusions, shallow interaction, and their activity levels relying on short-term activity stimuli, making it difficult to be sustained. This two-way absence of the motivation mechanism makes it difficult for network ideological and political education to form an endogenous educational vitality.

2.2. The fragmentation of the operation mechanism

Network ideological and political activities present a “campaign-like” feature, with loose connections between online teaching, management, and party and student union activities, making it difficult to form a mutually reinforcing educational chain. The educational synergy is diluted, and the overall effectiveness is greatly reduced. Specifically, the network ideological and political content is “two-faced” with the construction of professional ideological and political education, and the offline theme activities are out of sync with the online dissemination rhythm. There is a lack of an effective closed loop between the online capture of students’ ideological dynamics and the offline intervention.

2.3. The fragmentation of the collaborative mechanism

The departments of student affairs, teaching affairs, publicity, and secondary colleges “each sweep their own doorstep,” with a prominent “data islands” phenomenon. Platform duplication construction and functional overlap are common. Departmental barriers hinder deep collaboration, and the “all-round education” concept becomes a slogan. This problem is particularly prominent in the context of diversified student sources, as the growth needs of different types of students are inherently complex and diverse, and they require cross-departmental information sharing and coordinated responses. However, the existing organizational structure is unable to support such a refined and three-dimensional educational pattern.

2.4. The weakness of the guarantee mechanism

Specialized institutional construction lags behind, and the funding investment has a short-term characteristic. The evaluation system overly focuses on superficial indicators such as “click-through rate” and “post number,” unable to scientifically assess the big changes in students’ ideological concepts. This may lead the work to deviate towards the pursuit of digital achievements. What is more alarming is the lack of a tracking and evaluation mechanism for students’ ideological growth process, making the adjustment of educational intervention lack basis and making it difficult to achieve true “precision ideological and political education.”

3. Framework reconfiguration: Innovative design of network ideological and political education mechanism for diversified student sources

To overcome the aforementioned challenges, this study proposes a mechanism innovation framework centered on the “Four-Dimensional Integration,” promoting the transformation of network ideological and political education from an “administrative management logic” to a “professional education logic.” In response to the obstructions of these four mechanisms, this study constructs an innovative framework based on “data intelligence, platform integration, teacher-student symbiosis, and system collaboration,” aiming to achieve a closed loop from problem diagnosis to system reconfiguration.

3.1. Data intelligence-driven precise supply mechanism

By safely and compliantly integrating multi-dimensional data such as academic performance, consumption, borrowing, online footprints, and psychological assessment, a dynamic “student digital profile” is constructed. Using educational data mining and learning analysis technologies, different student source groups’ cognitive characteristics and development bottlenecks are identified, enabling intelligent matching and personalized push of ideological and political content and forms, and enhancing the affinity and specificity of education. It is important to note that the application of data intelligence must adhere to the principle of “education first, technology for use,” preventing the fall into the trap of technological determinism. With the development of generative artificial intelligence technology, the content generation and dissemination paths will be further optimized, providing stronger technical support for precise supply.

3.2. Platform integration supporting hybrid operation mechanism

Create an “intelligent ideological and political ecological platform” that integrates functions such as course teaching, learning management, interactive community, activity organization, and development evaluation, breaking through physical space and departmental boundaries, promoting the systematic integration and seamless connection of various educational resources, and forming a new educational ecosystem where the platform is the educational environment. In this ecosystem, online is no longer a supplement to offline, but an integrated and mutually empowering organic component that deeply integrates and mutually enhances with offline.

3.3. Teacher-student symbiosis-oriented mutual generation mechanism

Empower teachers to carry out innovations such as micro-lessons, live broadcasts, and online discussions, transforming the online space into a new platform for showcasing professional charm. Activate students’ subjectivity, guiding them to shift from content consumers to co-producers. Through methods such as theme creation, self-media operation, and peer counseling, students can complete self-education and peer influence in practice, and build a “teacher guidance, student construction, equal dialogue, and mutual growth” educational community.

During this process, special attention should be paid to exploring the unique advantages of students from different student source backgrounds. For example, encourage veterans to share family and national sentiments and discipline awareness, guide working students to tell workplace integrity stories, and support secondary vocational students to showcase the ideal of serving the country through skills and patriotism. Through the establishment of a display platform, the voices of each group can be heard and their experiences respected, thus naturally generating more inclusive and inspiring value consensus in the diversified integration, which is precisely the key to the unique value of network ideological and political education in the context of diversified student sources. This deep interaction among multiple entities not only enriches the content form of ideological and political education, but more importantly, nurtures students’ inclusive thinking and community consciousness through mutual understanding and respect.

3.4. System collaboration guaranteeing organizational operation mechanism

Establish a school-level network ideological and political special coordination group, establish a regular consultation, decision-making, and linkage mechanism. Improve cross-departmental data sharing norms, teacher digital literacy improvement plans, and funding guarantee systems. Reform the evaluation system,

establish an assessment model centered on “student growth and improvement,” focusing on the progress in ideological cognition, value judgment, and behavioral performance, providing institutional support for the long-term mechanism operation ^[4].

4. Practical inspection: Path exploration based on a pilot program in a vocational college

To test the feasibility of the theoretical framework, this study selected a vocational college for a one-year pilot program, following the following path.

4.1. Platform integration and data governance

Promote the data integration and identity authentication unification of various business systems such as student management, educational administration and teaching, and logistics services. Build a unified portal, establish school-level data standards and exchange norms, and lay the foundation for cross-scenario data integration and business collaboration ^[5].

4.2. Content reconstruction and differentiated push

Based on students’ digital profiles, combined with the characteristics of engineering and business disciplines, collaborate with professional teachers to develop theme modules such as “Craftsmanship Spirit and Engineering Ethics” and “Market Economy and Integrity Law,” and enhance the attractiveness and acceptance of the content through intelligent recommendations and personalized learning path suggestions ^[6].

4.3. Subject activation and ecological cultivation

Establish the “Network Ideological and Political Teaching Innovation Studio” and gather key teachers to incubate high-quality digital resources. Support student clubs such as “Micro-video Club” and “Network Civilization Communication Club,” provide creative guidance, communication channels, and honor incentives for outstanding online cultural works, and create a favorable atmosphere of joint creation, sharing, and evaluation among teachers and students.

4.4. Process evaluation and effectiveness feedback

Utilize the platform to record the learning trajectory, interaction quality, and original work output throughout the process. Combine the ideological dynamics survey before and after the semester to build a quantitative and qualitative combined “Growth and Value-added Evaluation” model, shifting the evaluation focus from “horizontal comparison” to “vertical development.”

5. Achievements, reflections, and forward-looking challenges

The pilot program has achieved phased results: the participation rate of students in online learning, the depth of interaction, and the quality of content created by teachers have all improved, and the efficiency of departmental collaboration has also increased. At the same time, the practice has exposed deep challenges:

- (1) Issues of data ethics and privacy boundaries: How to protect students’ privacy and prevent data abuse in precise education, and how to clearly define regulatory guidelines urgently need to be addressed.

- (2) Structural bottlenecks in teachers' digital literacy: Teachers' abilities in technology application, data interpretation, and online interaction vary greatly, and systematic training and support are needed.
- (3) Issues of institutionalizing innovative achievements: How to transform effective practices into regular systems to ensure that the mechanism innovation "takes root and takes effect" rather than "ceasing when the person leaves," is a decisive link.

These challenges remind us that mechanism innovation is an evolving process that requires continuous iteration and dynamic adjustment.

6. Conclusion and outlook

The diversification of student sources has become an irreversible norm in higher vocational education. Network ideological and political education must break away from the shallow thinking of technological toolism and build a long-term operating mechanism with inherent resilience and dynamic adaptability. The "four-dimensional integrated" innovation framework proposed in this paper is a systematic solution based on systems thinking to deal with the complexity of student source differences. Future research should focus on the deep integration of technological logic, educational laws, and the goal of comprehensive human development, and ensure that technology always plays the role of an "enabler" in an era of accelerating penetration of artificial intelligence and big data, serving the fundamental purpose of fostering talents capable of taking on the responsibility of national rejuvenation. The ultimate vision is to build a new ideological and political education ecosystem that can cultivate students' uniqueness while seeking consensus in diversity and uniting values through interaction, providing solid support for the cultivation of high-quality technical and skilled talents capable of fulfilling the fundamental purpose of national rejuvenation.

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