

# Challenges and Opportunities for the Development of Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities in the New Media Era

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**Abstract:** The rapid advancement of new media technology has had a great impact on people's lifestyles, and brought opportunities and challenges to the development of ideological and political education in colleges and universities. Ideological and political education in colleges and universities is faced with the challenge of how to grasp the opportunity, ride on the express train of science and technology, and implement the concepts of "all-round education" and "five ideologies and politics."

**Keywords:** New media; Ideological and political education; Colleges and universities; Opportunities; Challenges

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## 1. New media technology and the challenges of ideological and political education in colleges and universities

### 1.1. Challenges in the educational environment

Ideological and political education in colleges and universities is currently facing significant challenges due to the rapid development of new media technology, particularly regarding the educational environment. A conducive educational environment is crucial for stimulating students' enthusiasm for learning and enhancing their learning efficiency<sup>[1]</sup>. Traditionally, students received ideological and political education primarily through teachers, textbooks, newspapers, and magazines. However, with the advent of information technology, students are now inundated with vast amounts of information from various new media sources, such as forums, microblogs, and social media platforms like WeChat. This shift in how students access information means they are often overwhelmed by the sheer volume of data, which can detract from traditional learning methods. During this formative period in their lives, students may find it challenging to navigate the influences of external trends and negative information, which can undermine their understanding of mainstream ideologies. Moreover, educators often struggle to regulate the channels through which students receive information, making

it increasingly difficult to guide their ideological and political education effectively. This situation presents a significant challenge to the goals of ideological and political education in higher education institutions <sup>[2]</sup>.

## **1.2. Challenges in the subject of education**

The first challenge facing the ideological and political education system is the changing landscape of today's students. In an era of economic growth and rapid national development, students, who are among the most frequent users of new media, exhibit a strong sense of individuality and a desire for freedom. They display notable flexibility and openness in their learning preferences. In this "global village" created by the Internet, the younger generation tends to favor—and often relies on—fragmented learning and reading experiences through new media. This approach is not aligned with the traditional methods of ideological and political education in colleges and universities <sup>[3]</sup>. Furthermore, the inclination toward rapid, surface-level learning often results in a wide breadth of reading but a lack of depth in understanding. These shifts in learning habits present new demands for the ideological and political education system in higher education institutions, necessitating a reevaluation of how these programs are structured and delivered.

The second challenge pertains to the role of educators within the educational framework. In traditional education models, teachers occupy a dominant position, serving as the primary source of information and guidance for students. However, with the rapid advancement of information technology, online platforms have emerged as significant channels for students to access information, diminishing the exclusivity of teachers as information providers. The egalitarian nature of the Internet allows both teachers and students equal access to information, leading to a shift in the dynamics of the classroom. As new media continue to develop, the traditional authority of educators is being challenged, resulting in a weakened influence over students. This evolution necessitates a reevaluation of the teacher's role in the educational process, emphasizing the need for adaptability in how educators engage with and guide their students in this new media landscape.

Finally, there is the challenge facing educators themselves. In the age of digital information, educators are also influenced by various trends and undesirable content, which raises the bar for their own ideological literacy. This situation demands a higher level of theoretical understanding and continuous learning on their part. Additionally, the rapid development of new media technology fosters educational diversity in colleges and universities, posing challenges to educators' proficiency in information technology. To effectively navigate this evolving landscape, educators must not only enhance their ideological quality but also improve their technological skills to adapt to the diverse modes of information dissemination and learning. This dual requirement emphasizes the need for educators to be well-equipped both intellectually and technologically to guide their students effectively <sup>[4]</sup>.

## **1.3. Challenges in the way of education**

In the Internet age, traditional educational methods—such as classroom teaching, individual counseling, extracurricular activities, and social practice—are increasingly facing significant challenges, leading to a gradual decline in their effectiveness. Compared to the new media landscape, where students can access information through multiple channels, the conventional teaching model, which places teachers in a dominant role, often results in students passively receiving knowledge in a more limited manner. This traditional, one-way indoctrination approach is becoming outdated; it not only fails to effectively engage students but also does not align with contemporary needs, undermining the goals of ideological education <sup>[5]</sup>. Therefore, it is crucial for educational institutions and personnel to adapt their teaching methods to explore more efficient and diversified educational approaches that meet the demands of the times. Key challenges include effectively

leveraging network information technology to optimize teaching models, planning and distributing various teaching modules, and coordinating online and offline instruction. Successfully integrating these elements into ideological and political education in colleges and universities is essential to meet the evolving educational landscape.

#### **1.4. Challenges in the educational content**

The development of network information technology has transcended geographical limitations and dismantled the barriers to information dissemination previously controlled by traditional media. This shift allows anyone to express their views in the digital realm at any time, effectively transforming the Earth into a “global village.” However, the reduced costs of online communication and the absence of traditional “gatekeepers” have resulted in a saturated information landscape filled with a mix of valuable and undesirable content, including gold worship and hedonism. This overwhelming influx of diverse viewpoints not only affects students as they form their worldviews but also diminishes teachers’ authoritative discourse, posing significant challenges to ideological and political education in colleges and universities. Additionally, this environment can create information asymmetry, where the advantages teachers once held in accessing information are diminished, complicating the educational process further. Moreover, the teaching materials, content, and events found online carry their own cultural, social, and value implications. It becomes essential for ideological and political education to assess whether these materials are aligned with the goals of human education and consistent with educational objectives. Addressing these issues is crucial for the effective implementation of ideological and political education in this new era.

## **2. New media technology and opportunities for ideological and political education in colleges and universities**

### **2.1. Importance of ideological and political education in colleges and universities**

New media offers extensive coverage, a vast amount of information, and high levels of openness, but it is also characterized by a mix of valuable and misleading content of varying quality. Students are among the most frequent users of the Internet, and in today’s world, nations increasingly prioritize cultural development. The rise of online public opinion battles has initiated competition for discourse rights since the inception of new media technology. As a result, cyberspace has emerged as a crucial arena for ideological and political education in colleges and universities, presenting both challenges and opportunities. As the General Secretary has emphasized, establishing a strong ideological foundation is particularly vital in the face of complex and ever-changing circumstances. For young students, who are at a critical stage in their development, it is essential to enhance ideological and political education. This includes engaging with the latest theoretical advancements from the country, where the role of educators is especially significant. It is crucial to equip students with the ability to learn theoretical knowledge effectively and apply Marxist dialectics to analyze online information critically. This guidance helps students cultivate correct values and perspectives, shaping them into high-quality talents that meet contemporary developmental needs. In the realm of new media, the importance of ideological and political education in colleges and universities has reached unprecedented levels, carrying a more challenging responsibility for teaching and nurturing students than ever before <sup>[6]</sup>.

### **2.2. Flexibility and diversity of teaching methods**

The traditional classroom system relies heavily on physical space and textbooks, making it challenging for students to engage with content that piques their interest outside of the classroom. However, the advent of

new media has transformed this model by breaking through the constraints of time and space. With new media technology, both students and teachers can conduct lessons anytime and anywhere, utilizing platforms like WeChat, Tencent Meeting, and QQ Meeting. Students are no longer confined to specific times and places to passively absorb information; instead, they can actively explore topics of interest at their convenience. This flexibility allows them to pose questions to their teachers in real time, fostering a more dynamic and interactive educational experience. Such a flexible and diversified learning environment significantly enhances students' enthusiasm for learning and improves the effectiveness of ideological and political education in colleges and universities. Moreover, new media technology revolutionizes traditional indoctrination methods. Teachers can leverage various educational tools, including videos, educational websites, and student communication platforms, to diversify their teaching strategies. By integrating these resources into the classroom, educators can create an engaging atmosphere that encourages active learning, allowing students to grasp theoretical knowledge in a more enjoyable and stimulating context. This shift not only promotes a more effective learning experience but also aligns better with contemporary educational needs.

### **2.3. Timeliness and innovativeness of teaching content**

The emergence of new media technology has revolutionized information dissemination, enabling faster and more efficient knowledge acquisition, which is reshaping ideological and political education in colleges and universities. Teachers, who once relied on limited traditional resources, can now access vast online information, enriching their knowledge base and updating teaching content to meet the demands of the current era <sup>[7]</sup>. This allows for the incorporation of current events into courses, making teaching more timely and relevant. Additionally, new media tools enable educators to creatively reprocess complex concepts into more visual and engaging formats, enhancing student understanding and interest. This shift from passive learning to more dynamic and interactive methods helps attract students' attention and keeps them more engaged with ideological and political education. By using diverse media platforms and fresh content, educators can ensure the realization of educational goals, maintaining both relevance and effectiveness in this rapidly evolving digital environment.

## **3. Seizing opportunities for ideological and political education in colleges and universities**

### **3.1. Improving the quality of ideological and political education in college and university subjects**

As the primary facilitators of ideological and political education in colleges and universities, educators face unprecedented responsibilities in today's rapidly evolving environment. To meet these challenges, they must consciously enhance both their ideological and technological expertise. Navigating the vast and often complex network of information demands that educators stay updated on current policies and developments, ensuring their teaching remains timely and relevant. A strong theoretical foundation is essential to meet the growing educational and developmental needs of students. Additionally, the rise of new media technology places new demands on teachers' information technology skills <sup>[8]</sup>. Despite shifts in information accessibility, teachers still hold a central role in guiding students through their learning process. To ensure effective education, teachers must integrate diversified teaching methods that incorporate modern technology. Tools such as youth learning platforms, red films, documentaries, and other digital resources offer rich, engaging content that can captivate students' interest. By leveraging these tools, educators can boost student engagement, participation, and emotional connection to the material. This ultimately ensures the quality of ideological and political education,

making it more adaptable to the needs of the modern student.

### **3.2. Ensuring the teaching quality with new media technology**

To modernize the traditional teaching model, transforming abstract theories into more concrete, understandable concepts, and shifting from a rigid classroom environment to a more dynamic and engaging one, it is essential to explore the optimization and upgrading of new media content in ideological and political education. Innovation in new media-based courses becomes a critical focus in this endeavor. In the era of network information explosion, educators in ideological and political education at colleges and universities must adapt to the evolving trends of the time, technology, and environment. They need to proactively integrate new media technologies with classroom teaching, using innovative, engaging, and flexible teaching methods and content to educate contemporary students. By leveraging the strengths of new media, educators can create a learning atmosphere that makes complex achievements and ideas more accessible and appealing to young students. This approach not only enhances students' national pride and critical thinking but also nurtures their patriotism and spirit of striving for success <sup>[9]</sup>. Moreover, the quality of ideological and political education is closely tied to its service function. To achieve meaningful engagement with students, ideological and political education must focus on supporting students' personal development and success. By effectively demonstrating this service-oriented approach, educators can build stronger connections with students, closing the gap between teacher and learner. This, in turn, enhances students' identification with the course content and significantly improves the overall impact of ideological and political education.

### **3.3. Strengthening network regulation**

In addition to guiding and educating students through daily teaching, ideological and political education in colleges and universities must also include a certain level of network supervision. This allows educators to promptly monitor students' thoughts, promoting positive ideas while addressing and mitigating the influence of negative ones. Timely intervention in guiding students and managing undesirable information can help reduce the negative impact on their development. However, there are inherent limitations to the ability of ideological and political education to fully supervise online public opinion. Therefore, the ultimate responsibility for network supervision should rest with society as a whole. From a broader perspective, it is crucial to improve relevant legal systems to ensure that the dissemination of harmful information is regulated by enforceable laws. By doing so, the spread of undesirable content can be curtailed at its source, minimizing its impact on students <sup>[10]</sup>. On a smaller scale, effective monitoring should include the prompt detection of harmful information and lawful action against offenders to uphold the dignity of the law. Moreover, on a societal level, individuals must become familiar with corresponding legal provisions and take personal responsibility for not spreading harmful information. This collective effort can help eliminate the creation of a toxic online environment. Only through the combined participation of society and educational institutions, alongside strengthened network supervision, can we create a positive and healthy cyberspace for students to thrive in.

## **Disclosure statement**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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