

Research on Teaching Strategies for Cultivating Journalism Students' Mainstream Values in the Digital Media Environment: Taking the Short Video Production Course as an Example

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Abstract: Digital media has profoundly transformed the ecology of news production and dissemination, and short videos have become a high-frequency scenario in the practical teaching of journalism majors in colleges and universities. How to systematically embed mainstream values into the entire process of curriculum objectives, content, methods, and evaluation in classrooms driven by technology and traffic logic is the key for colleges and universities to cultivate the social responsibility and professional ethics of journalism talents. Referring to the university-level journalism and cultural textbook system, this paper focuses on the teaching pain points and value deviation risks of the short video production course, constructs a value-oriented curriculum objective, integrated teaching design, project-based evaluation, and collaborative education mechanism, and proposes operable paths, aiming to provide a practical paradigm for the curriculum-based implementation of value education in journalism majors.

Keywords: Short video course; Mainstream values; Journalism education

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1. Introduction

The immediacy, visualization, and algorithmic distribution mechanism of short video platforms make journalism students more susceptible to the influence of traffic orientation, emotional narration, and fragmented expression in learning and practice. Without value discrimination and ethical correction in the classroom, students may deviate from professional norms in content selection, narrative frameworks, and platform interactions. Taking the short video production course as a starting point to synergistically cultivate mainstream values and professional abilities helps achieve the unity of value identification, ability construction, and method training in a real media context^[1].

2. Teaching value of short video courses in the digital media context

2.1. Practical teaching value adapting to the reform of news communication ecology

Technological innovation in digital media, characterized by algorithmic recommendation, mobility, and real-time interaction, has completely subverted the entire process of news product production. From topic selection, investigation, and reporting methods to product form, channel distribution, and final effect evaluation and iteration, it is different from the operation mode of the traditional media era. With the advantages of simple production, situational expression, and social communication, short videos have become the main window for the public to perceive the world, and an indispensable means for mainstream media, various commercial platforms, and party and government publicity departments to conduct news communication and public opinion guidance. Short video accounts of mainstream media such as CCTV News and People's Daily have become important public opinion arenas for building consensus and releasing authoritative voices^[1]. The launch of short video courses in undergraduate journalism education is fundamentally a positive feedback and an accurate match to the current development status of the industry. Integrating short video production and learning into undergraduate journalism education and teaching is a positive response to the media industry's urgent demand for compound talents who are proficient in technology, good at expression, have overall planning capabilities, and are familiar with communication; it also provides students with a simulation platform to contact the real media environment and learn immersively^[2].

2.2. Concrete carrier value for cultivating mainstream values

Compared with the traditional one-way transmission method of ideological and political courses that mainly focus on theoretical explanation and concept teaching, the creation-oriented teaching method of short video courses provides a visualized and actionable starting point for mainstream value cultivation, forming a strong link between "value guidance" and "action experience". The family and country feelings, social responsibility, fairness and justice, integrity, and friendliness advocated by mainstream ideology are no longer abstracted as ideological symbols, but transformed into specific operable elements for students in video creation. In the process of topic selection and conception, they can select materials around hot issues related to national livelihood such as rural revitalization, technological progress, cultural rejuvenation, and social security^[3], synchronizing their creations with national and social development; in the content production stage, it is necessary to embed values into specific story narratives through lens technology, narrative rhythm, and character shaping in the story, for example, explaining the spirit of responsibility by shooting the silent dedication of grassroots workers, conveying cultural confidence through the new interpretation of traditional culture; in the video promotion stage, it is necessary to consider how to use appropriate promotion plans to break the barriers of mainstream value content works and gain resonance in a wider range^[4].

2.3. Integrated improvement value of journalism professional abilities

Short video shooting and production is not just a simple technical work of editing software, but a comprehensive practical training activity integrating core journalism professional abilities and comprehensive quality, supported by the high integration of knowledge and principles from many disciplines such as journalism, communication, narratology, and video language. In terms of professional ability composition, short video production first requires students' news topic selection ability. Faced with the complex real social life, they must be able to discover the news value, social significance, and social topics contained in it, which relies on students' news sensitivity and social observation skills; second is logical construction ability. To form a clear narrative structure within tens of

seconds to a few minutes to ensure accurate information transmission and value communication, it is necessary to have knowledge reserves in news narratology; the third is video expression ability. To use audio-visual elements such as lens language, light and shadow modeling, editing rhythm, and sound effects and soundtracks to make the work content more sensory impact and emotional appeal, it depends on profound audio-visual language accomplishment; finally is communication ability. It is necessary to consider that different media platforms have different communication laws, and different audiences have different favorite communication methods. It is also necessary to timely adjust and optimize their work based on big data analysis of communication effects, which is the specific application of communication theories and methods.

2.4. Cultivation value of media literacy in the digital age

In the digital media environment, facing problems such as information explosion and massive noise, the prevalence of fake news, solidified algorithmic discrimination, and the supremacy of traffic, higher and more comprehensive requirements are put forward for the media literacy of journalists. They not only need skills in information collection, processing, and editing, but more importantly, core literacy such as value judgment, moral awareness, algorithmic awareness, and a sense of responsibility. As producers, students must face a series of issues related to media ethics. Whether the facts are true and reliable, and how to avoid falsehood in reports; how to respect the privacy and wishes of the subjects being filmed without causing infringement; how to remain unshaken in stance without being tempted in the current communication environment; and how to avoid simplistic and one-sided expressions caused by labeling and emotional expressions. These issues will become real challenges in students' practice, helping them establish a clear sense of boundaries and responsibility for media ethics. As participants in the communication link, they can also personally experience the different fates of information content brought by algorithmic recommendation technology, understand what "information cocoons" and "echo chamber effects" are, thereby developing technical literacy to view algorithms critically; through observing the number and content of comments, shares, and discussions generated on real social media platforms after release, they can intuitively see the actual impact of their communication behaviors, learn to perceive deviations in their content orientation and expression loopholes from audience reactions, and cultivate a responsible attitude towards communication results ^[5].

3. Challenges and teaching pain points of short video courses in the digital media context

3.1. Teaching tension between platform logic and professional ethics

At present, we are in a context of an increasingly complex media environment and fierce confrontation of diverse cultures. Especially with the rapid development of new media, information dissemination has become faster and more convenient. Various new media platforms emerge one after another. College students are good at and willing to obtain a lot of information through online media platforms, but facing the mixed online information, college students often cannot distinguish sensitive remarks on the Internet through their own knowledge and experience ^[6]. Platform logic is often traffic-oriented, which easily promotes the dissemination of fragmented and entertaining information, subtly affecting students' cognitive habits. Professional ethics emphasizes rational judgment and value adherence. In teaching, it is necessary to balance the convenience of platform information acquisition and the cultivation of ethical judgment. It is necessary to guide students to make good use of platforms, and also strengthen their awareness of information discrimination and value adherence to avoid being

misled by bad information^[7].

3.2. The obscuration of the complexity of public issues by fragmented narration

The structure of short videos often requires information output in a very short time. This pursuit of “fast-paced”, “highly attractive”, and “emotional high points” content makes it difficult for students to conduct multi-level analysis and demonstration when talking about public issues, thereby obscuring the complex background and social structure logic behind the problems. In the expression of public topics, many students tend to use stereotypes, emotional rendering, or labeling language to attract attention, rather than providing an in-depth understanding through data, surveys, dialogues, and other methods. If journalism professional classrooms cannot provide systematic method training and critical tools, students will solidify their cognitive understanding of superficial expression of public issues^[8]. Curriculum teaching should break the inherent structural limitations of short videos, support students with method training, expression strategies, and structural design to endow them with the ability of “concise but not shallow” expression, and help students establish a balanced concept of content depth and form efficiency through case analysis, strengthening their sense of journalism professional mission when facing complex social issues^[9].

3.3. The weakening of value orientation by classroom evaluation systems

Curriculum evaluation is a weather vane for students’ learning. If the evaluation criteria focus on technical proficiency and communication effects, students will naturally set their curriculum learning goals on obtaining platform traffic or mastering editing skills, while ignoring the value judgment, social impact, and professional ethics behind news works. If there is a lack of clear value evaluation dimensions in the classroom, such as whether the event background is truly restored, whether a fair and just stance is reflected, and whether the rights and interests of communication objects are respected, students will find it difficult to feel the role of value orientation from the evaluation. At the same time, some current courses have problems such as a single evaluation subject, a lack of teacher-student interactive evaluation, and the absence of process evaluation, which cannot form multi-dimensional feedback on value orientation^[10].

4. Integrated teaching strategies for mainstream values with short video production courses as the carrier

4.1. Reconstruct the curriculum objective system with value orientation and achieve three-level alignment

Curriculum design should clearly take mainstream value education as the core in the goal-setting stage, ensuring that teaching tasks not only focus on technical aspects such as students’ news writing, video editing, and communication strategies but also pay attention to their understanding and practice of core news values such as truth, justice, and responsibility. On this basis, decompose the curriculum objectives into three levels: the first level is political identity, value pursuit, and social responsibility at the ideological and political level; the second level is core professional abilities, such as topic planning, logical expression, and media application; the third level is specific operational skills, such as lens application, editing rhythm, and dubbing and soundtrack. Curriculum teaching needs to design task-based learning content and hierarchical assessment standards around these three levels. The arrangement of teaching content, the selection of teaching methods, and the presentation of learning results need to match different goals at different levels^[11].

4.2. Construct a project-based teaching path integrating the four steps of “Topic—Standpoint—Evidence—Expression”

Project-based teaching can embed value orientation into the entire process of short video creation through the setting of phased tasks, promoting students to conduct value judgment and expression training at each stage. The first stage is topic selection. Teachers guide students to select topics from national policies, social hotspots, people's livelihood concerns, cultural inheritance, and other perspectives, requiring them to clarify the social significance and value orientation of the topic. The second stage is standpoint establishment. Students need to clarify the value standpoint expressed in their works from the perspectives of communication ethics and public opinion guidance, form a thematic copy, and submit it for dual review by teachers and students. The third stage is evidence integration. Guide students to build a factual support system through surveys and interviews, literature citations, case analysis, and other means to avoid one-sided and emotional expressions. The fourth stage is expression presentation. Reflect the communication requirements of mainstream values in visual language, narrative logic, and communication strategies^[12].

4.3. Strengthen value discrimination and media ethics literacy with immersive case teaching

To address students' insufficient cognition and thinking stereotypes in value expression, immersive teaching can be carried out by introducing typical cases, extracting media ethics dilemmas from real communication events, and guiding students to conduct role-playing, scenario simulation, and critical thinking training. Teaching cases can include types such as exaggerated and misleading short video titles, dissemination of unverified information, leakage of parties' privacy, and inciting remarks. Teachers organize students to analyze events from different identities, such as news producers, audiences, and platform managers, guiding them to examine the rationality and ethics of media behaviors from multiple standpoints. A “problem tracking” module can also be set up in the course^[13], encouraging students to select a recent news irregularity event for follow-up reporting, analyze its news value conflicts and moral dilemmas, and form a revision report or countermeasure analysis. This case-based practical training helps students obtain judgment standards from scenarios, build an internal perception of media ethics, and improve their moral sensitivity and critical ability when facing complex realities.

4.4. Establish a diversified evaluation mechanism for collaborative education of “Classroom—Platform—Society”

An effective evaluation mechanism should realize the full-process and three-dimensional supervision and guidance of value orientation. The course can establish a trinity evaluation system of “classroom evaluation + platform practice + social feedback”, constructing an evaluation network involving teaching teams, industry mentors, and audience groups. At the classroom evaluation level, teachers set specific scales around the work's value orientation, professional expression, and social impact according to the curriculum standards^[14], conducting quantitative and qualitative evaluations of students' works; at the platform practice level, invite professionals from mainstream media and new media enterprises to participate in reviews, providing guiding evaluations based on indicators such as whether the content conforms to the mainstream public opinion direction and whether it has social responsibility; at the social feedback level, observe the comments, reposts, and discussions of the works on real social platforms after release, comprehensively analyze the public effects triggered by the works, encourage students to write “communication reflection reports”, compare the actual impact with the initial intentions, and

strengthen their sense of responsibility for communication consequences in a real environment^[15].

5. Conclusion

The rise of short video courses provides an ideal platform for integrating technology, expression, and values in journalism teaching. Carrying out mainstream value cultivation in the digital media environment should not only rely on the one-way indoctrination of ideological and political courses but also infiltrate through practical courses throughout the process, promoting value guidance and ability improvement simultaneously. Taking the short video production course as an example, constructing teaching strategies with clear goal orientation, feasible process control, and diversified evaluation mechanisms helps achieve the educational goal of journalism students being “technically proficient and ideologically firm”, providing direction and path support for the cultivation of journalism and communication talents in the new era.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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