

# Ideological and Political Teaching Evaluation of Journalism and Communication Courses in Universities: Values, Dilemmas and Breakthroughs

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**Abstract:** Ideological and political education in courses is an educational concept that integrates value guidance into knowledge imparting and ability cultivation. Teaching evaluation is not only the core driving force for the continuous improvement of teaching quality, but also a key yardstick for measuring teaching effectiveness. Scientific teaching evaluation helps guarantee the quality of ideological and political teaching in courses. At present, in the practice of ideological and political teaching in journalism and communication courses in universities, traditional classroom teaching evaluation has gradually lost effectiveness in terms of evaluation subjects, content, timing and methods. Therefore, it is necessary to actively explore effective evaluation paths that meet the needs of ideological and political teaching in light of the unique attributes of journalism and communication education and course realities.

**Keywords:** Journalism and communication courses; Ideological and political education in courses; Teaching evaluation; Dilemmas and breakthroughs

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## 1. Introduction

As an important discipline in higher education of humanities and social sciences, journalism and communication education is naturally connected with ideological and political education in courses. Both face the fundamental mission of addressing the questions of what kind of people to cultivate, how to cultivate them, and for whom to cultivate them<sup>[1]</sup>. To fulfill this task, the educational function of professional courses as the main channel must be brought into play. The Ministry of Education and the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China clearly pointed out in the “Opinions on Improving the Cultivation Ability of Journalism and Communication Talents in Universities and Implementing the Plan 2.0 for Educating and Cultivating Outstanding Journalism and Communication Talents” that it is essential to “deeply explore the educational elements, connotations and functions of journalism and communication professional courses” and “build a new model of moral education for journalism and communication talents”<sup>[2]</sup>. The Ministry of

Education's "Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities" emphasizes the need to "establish and improve a quality evaluation system and incentive mechanism for the construction of ideological and political education in courses"<sup>[3]</sup>. Journalism and communication education have a distinct ideological nature. The actual quality and effectiveness of its talent training are directly related to the consolidation and construction of the mainstream public opinion position<sup>[4]</sup>. Teaching evaluation is both the core driving force for continuously improving teaching quality and the key yardstick for measuring teaching effectiveness. The "baton" function of teaching evaluation must be highly valued to promote the deep and organic integration of professional courses and ideological and political education. Ideological and political education should be like indispensable "salt" fully dissolved in the "soup" of professional courses, so that journalism and communication courses can convey professional knowledge while possessing ideological depth and value warmth, and improve educational effectiveness.

## **2. Value purport of ideological and political teaching evaluation for journalism and communication courses in universities**

Ideological and political education in courses is an important starting point for universities to fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education in the new era, and teaching evaluation is a key link to guarantee the educational effectiveness of ideological and political education in courses. At present, positive progress has been made in the construction of ideological and political education in journalism and communication courses in universities, but many practical challenges still exist in teaching evaluation. Profoundly grasping the value of teaching evaluation is the premise and foundation for solving evaluation dilemmas and improving educational quality.

### **2.1. An inevitable measure to fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education**

The realization of the goal of fostering virtue through education in universities lies in courses. Ideological and political education in courses aims to integrate value guidance into knowledge imparting and ability cultivation to effectively shape students' values. To this end, the coordination between ideological and political education and various courses should be promoted. In particular, the unique advantages of journalism and communication courses should be fully utilized, with the fundamental goal of cultivating journalism and communication talents with a strong sense of mission in the new era. While meeting students' rigid needs for knowledge exploration, teaching evaluation can satisfy their flexible expectations for spiritual shaping<sup>[5]</sup>. It promotes teaching through evaluation, attaches importance to both the hard ability cultivation of disciplinary knowledge and professional skills and the soft power improvement of ideological realm and humanistic literacy, to truly achieve the educational goal.

### **2.2. Interpreting the student-centered educational concept**

Promoting the subjective development of people is the goal of contemporary educational practice and the value orientation of the reform of university education evaluation<sup>[6]</sup>. As an important aspect of curriculum teaching quality management, teaching evaluation plays an important role in promoting rational teaching design and improving curriculum quality. At present, classrooms are still an important channel for students to systematically acquire knowledge.

The Ministry of Education has issued documents such as the “Notice on Implementing the ‘Double Ten-Thousand Plan’ for the Construction of First-Class Undergraduate Majors” and the “Implementation Opinions on the Construction of First-Class Undergraduate Courses,” all emphasizing the need to improve university curriculum construction, pay close attention to curriculum quality, and vigorously promote the construction of ideological and political education in courses.

The traditional teaching concept is mainly teacher-centered. The reform of teaching mode and evaluation system under the concept of ideological and political education in courses can promote the transformation to learning-centeredness, enable students to enhance their awareness of active learning in curriculum learning, recognize the contribution of professional knowledge to society, and thus improve teaching quality. Therefore, teaching evaluation is not only the practice of national-level educational concepts, but also an urgent need for the connotation construction of journalism and communication courses, which is of great significance for promoting the cultivation of journalism and communication talents.

### **2.3. An important guarantee for improving the quality of ideological and political teaching in courses**

Stake, a scholar in the field of educational evaluation, clearly pointed out that educators use evaluation means to achieve the dual purposes of “proving” and “improving” at the same time. The so-called “proving” refers to the inspection and response to the achievement of teaching objectives; the so-called “improving” reflects the common progress and ability improvement of both teachers and students in the process of teaching, which benefits teachers as well as students.

The essence of ideological and political education evaluation in courses is precisely the “proving” and “improving” of professional courses in fulfilling the fundamental goal of fostering virtue through education. If the classroom teaching evaluation mechanism focuses on the specific practice of integrating moral education elements into professional courses, it will inevitably promote teachers to continuously deepen their cognition and understanding of the connotation of ideological and political education in courses.

Teachers should carefully plan teaching plans, organize classroom implementation carefully, and, based on systematically imparting professional knowledge, be good at organically embedding core content, such as core values, into professional course teaching links, to conduct in-depth value guidance for college students, and effectively achieve the goal of resonance and collaborative education between professional course teaching and ideological and political education.

## **3. Practical dilemmas of ideological and political teaching evaluation for journalism and communication courses in universities**

Compared with general teaching evaluation, ideological and political education evaluation in courses has significant particularity. If the traditional classroom teaching evaluation index system is still adopted, the actual effect of collaborative education will inevitably be weakened. Therefore, it is necessary to grasp the characteristics of current teaching evaluation, and then conduct an in-depth study of the thorny problems faced by journalism and communication courses in the field of ideological and political evaluation.

### **3.1. Separation between evaluation subjects and teaching subjects**

Teaching quality involves students, teachers, educational managers and other aspects. It should be noted that

classroom teaching itself is a two-way interactive process of teaching and learning, and both teachers and students are the most direct participants.

However, traditional university classroom teaching evaluation over-reliance on student teaching evaluation, peer review and supervision expert evaluation places teachers, as teaching subjects, in an objective position, resulting in their loss of initiative in evaluation<sup>[7]</sup>. In the teaching of journalism and communication courses, teachers are the direct implementers of ideological and political education in courses and have the deepest experience in classroom teaching<sup>[8]</sup>. Only by giving play to the role of teachers and students as dual subjects of evaluation and teaching can the goal of fostering virtue through education in ideological and political education in courses be truly promoted.

### **3.2. Overemphasis on the knowledge dimension in evaluation content**

Traditional teaching evaluation mainly focuses on indicators such as the integrity of teaching materials, classroom activity, student attendance, teaching progress achievement and final excellent rate. It overemphasizes the assessment of knowledge imparting, resulting in the separation of teaching and educating people, failing to achieve their organic unity.

The evaluation criteria of journalism and communication courses play a guiding role in how teachers teach. Once the evaluation only focuses on the quality of teaching organization and students' scores, without paying attention to the effect of value education, the educational goal of ideological and political education in courses will be emptied. As a result, teachers are busy coping, learning from each other formally, but have no intention of thinking about how to improve teaching, and ideological and political education in courses becomes a superficial effort.

### **3.3. Overemphasis on summative evaluation in evaluation timing**

In university curriculum evaluation in China, formative evaluation and summative evaluation should be effectively combined, but the latter is obviously overemphasized at this stage. Summative evaluation is mainly conducted at the middle or end of the semester. Although it aims to test teaching effectiveness, it is difficult to improve teaching on time due to a time lag<sup>[9]</sup>.

Taking the end-of-semester teaching evaluation as an example, when teachers receive feedback, they can no longer adjust in the current classroom, and students cannot see the improvement effect. This result-oriented evaluation model fails to fully pay attention to the dynamic evolution characteristics of teaching activities. As an important starting point for fulfilling the fundamental goal of fostering virtue through education, the assessment and evaluation of ideological and political education in courses should avoid falling into the stereotype of rigidity and dogmatism<sup>[10]</sup>.

### **3.4. Overemphasis on “small data” in evaluation methods**

Scientific evaluation relies on multi-dimensional information, and relying only on “small data” such as several lectures or student evaluations once a semester is difficult to form a systematic understanding of the dynamically developing ideological and political teaching in courses.

The current evaluation is mainly based on questionnaires, and “one form for all courses” leads to vague standards, poor disciplinary adaptability and homogeneous results. At the same time, the scientificity of student teaching evaluation is highly questioned. Some students are perfunctory in their participation, resulting in low reliability and validity of teaching evaluation. The phenomenon that students are unwilling

to speak frankly or express their true ideas is particularly prominent<sup>[11]</sup>. Peer experts, teaching management departments and supervision evaluations tend to be specific in affirmation and abstract in negation. Due to the great difficulty in obtaining multi-dimensional data, the evaluation results are often one-sided, and the guiding function that teaching evaluation should have is difficult to be effectively exerted.

#### **4. Breakthrough paths for ideological and political teaching evaluation of journalism and communication courses in universities**

Journalism and communication courses practicing the concept of ideological and political education are of great value for cultivating high-quality journalism and communication talents with firm political stance, excellent ideological quality and good work style<sup>[12]</sup>. As a systematic project, the construction of ideological and political education in courses requires various majors to focus on building a “curriculum chain” to form a strong synergy of collaborative moral education<sup>[13]</sup>, so as to comprehensively promote the in-depth development of ideological and political construction in professional courses.

##### **4.1. Giving play to the role of multiple subjects and promoting accurate implementation of evaluation**

Teaching evaluation is a key link for universities to judge teaching work, deepen teaching reform and improve teaching quality<sup>[14]</sup>. Ideological and political education in courses relies on professional courses to carry out implicit ideological and political education. This subtle educational method increases the difficulty of evaluation. Therefore, it is necessary to give full play to the evaluation function of multiple subjects and promote the gradual transformation of ideological and political teaching evaluation in courses to multi-subject collaboration.

First, ensure the guiding function of peer, expert and supervision evaluation. As guarantors of the teaching process, peers, experts and supervisors can gain more rational insight into the problems existing in ideological and political classroom teaching from an “other” perspective. Second, scientifically use the student teaching evaluation mechanism. Student evaluation should not be simply equated with the whole picture of teaching evaluation. The perfunctory phenomenon in some student teaching evaluations should be faced squarely, and the scientificity of the evaluation should be guaranteed by building a multi-subject evaluation system. Third, establish the leading role of teachers in evaluation and improve the teacher-student self-evaluation mechanism simultaneously.

Teachers and students are at the frontline of classrooms and have the most real experience of teaching. Professional course teachers should continuously improve their professional literacy in evaluation practice, take the initiative to participate in the formulation of evaluation standards, transform frontline experience into promotable theoretical achievements, make the ideological and political characteristics of professional courses more distinct, and thus drive the in-depth development of the overall teaching level.

##### **4.2. Strengthening value evaluation and ensuring the implementation of educational goals**

Strengthen value evaluation to ensure the implementation of educational goals. Education is not simply instilling knowledge; it is necessary to both teach professional courses and provide good guidance on values. In the final analysis, ideological and political education in courses is to cultivate students’ sound personality and integrate knowledge, imparting and value shaping.

Knowledge is the foundation of values. If students do not have a solid professional foundation, value education will become a river without a source or a tree without roots. Taking the chapter “Nature of China’s Journalism Undertakings” in “Introduction to Journalism” as an example, by explaining the principles of media management and the theory of serving the public, students can deepen their understanding of the nature and functions of new mainstream media, comprehend the profound connotation of the people-centered view, and establish lofty professional ideals in journalism.

The implementation of value evaluation can focus on two dimensions: First, to improve the teacher evaluation mechanism. When evaluating teachers’ teaching methods and knowledge teaching level, great importance must be attached to the role of value guidance, guiding teachers to consciously integrate ideological and political elements into all links, such as pre-class preparation, classroom teaching and after-class extension. At the same time, by commending outstanding teachers of ideological and political education in courses who devote themselves to teaching and are deeply loved by students, teachers’ enthusiasm for participating in the construction of ideological and political education in courses will be stimulated. Second, optimize the student evaluation mechanism. It is necessary to examine both professional learning and value implementation. Daily behavior can be included in the evaluation through forms such as “integrity files”, promoting students to think in learning and act in thinking, and truly achieving unity of knowledge and action.

### **4.3. Improving process assessment and promoting detailed evaluation**

Classroom teaching is a complex, systematic project. To improve classroom teaching quality and achieve the effectiveness of ideological and political education in courses, a complete process assessment system must be established to give play to the educational and guiding function of each link of teaching.

This mechanism should follow the stages of teaching: at the initial stage, focus on students’ mastery of basic knowledge; in the middle stage, pay more attention to the integration of knowledge and values; in the later stage, assess students’ ability and the effect of applying theory to practice. On the other hand, the practice orientation should be highlighted to enhance educational effectiveness.

Journalism and communication courses have prominent practicality. To avoid the tendency of emphasizing practice over theory, phased results such as classroom performance (classroom questions, thematic discussions, thematic speeches) and daily assignments (news interviews, report writing) can be included in the process assessment. In line with the specific requirements of the “Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities,” the guiding function of evaluation should be fully exerted to highlight the practical character and professional characteristics of ideological and political education in courses.

### **4.4. Scientific application of big data to realize intelligent teaching evaluation**

Teaching evaluation plays an important guiding role in teaching behavior. However, the traditional evaluation with low frequency, abstraction and homogeneity have limited help in improving the behavior of teachers and students in ideological and political education of journalism and communication courses.

With the advent of the digital-intelligent era, technologies such as digital networks and artificial intelligence empower the establishment of intelligent teaching evaluation. It is necessary to give full play to the advantages of large-volume, authentic and diverse big data, start from the micro-links of teaching, reform the inherent evaluation methods, and realize normalized, accurate and intelligent evaluation.

First, standardize “micro” systems to promote normalized evaluation. Clarify the minimum frequency

requirements of lectures and evaluations for various subjects, such as teachers, students, peer experts and supervisors, to make teaching evaluation rule-based. Second, develop “micro” scales to enhance the pertinence of evaluation. Abandon the simple practice of “one form for all”, and design differentiated evaluation scales based on the classification of the characteristics of journalism and communication majors, so that the evaluation can truly align with course reality and reflect the real situation. Third, establish “micro” platforms to improve the timeliness of evaluation. Conduct real-time teaching evaluation based on mobile terminals, so that students can express their opinions at any time, helping teachers quickly accumulate data and adjust teaching promptly. Fourth, optimize “micro” ecology to improve the evaluation closed loop.

Indicators such as teaching effect, learning status, and student feedback are included in teacher assessment to improve teaching level. In promoting intelligent teaching evaluation, universities should organically integrate digital-intelligent technology and humanistic spirit, and continuously promote the high-quality development of the teaching evaluation system.

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