Research on the Thematic Teaching of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Universities -- Taking "Mao Zedong Thought and the Theoretical System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" Course as An Example

Huofa Luo
School of Marxism in Jiaxing University, China.

Abstract

The transformation of teaching material system to teaching system is the special requirements of ideological and political theory courses in colleges, and thematic teaching is the best mediator of this transformation. Lecturers of ideological and political education should actively participate in this transformation, by continuous exploring the characteristics and methods of thematic teaching. In addition, making choice of knowledge points in no longer dependent on their importance during thematic teaching. Therefore the setting of the targeted thematic should be illustrated on three aspects: the basic curriculum tasks, social issues and students concerns. And the thematic resource package will be the focal point for students to participate in the teaching activity, as well as the focus of assessment of students' abilities.

Keywords

Thematic teaching method; teaching material system; teaching system; thematic topic.

1. Introduction

In July 2015, the central propaganda department and the ministry of education jointly issued "The innovation plan for ideological and political construction system of theory courses in ordinary university", which put forward" thematic teaching". This is also a document about "ideological and political theory courses" since "05 plans" began, which did not happen in any other courses in universities. Most of the series documents put forward suggestions and requirements on reforming teaching contents, improving teaching methods. In December 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping attended the national ideological and political work conference for the first time and delivered an important speech. Ideological and political theory courses in universities have irreplaceable functions for cultivating and promoting the ideological and political quality of college students. They are also the channels to carry out the fundamental task of establishing morality and cultivating people, as well as the main position to spread Marxism and consolidate the dominant position of Marxism ideology, and the core course to cultivate the people who firmly believe in the core value of socialism.

On the other hand, in terms of its literal meaning, thematic teaching lies in the core of "specialization". Monographic teaching is different from the traditional episodic teaching, which analyzes a certain problem through comprehensive application of system theory and social practice. The focus of teaching is on the demonstration of the problem. With the further deepening of the implementation of the "05 program", the special subject of teaching has become more and more important.
2. The Necessity of Thematic Teaching of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Universities

2.1. The Particularity of the Teaching Material System of Ideological and Political Education

The teaching material used in ideological and political theory courses in universities is the national unified textbook compiled under the guidance of "05 program". The biggest characteristic of the textbook is its scientific nature, accuracy and authority. If the teaching just simply repeats the contents of the textbook, the students will say that "there is nothing that cannot be understood in the text, and the information is not unknown, but the problems are still hidden in their hearts". Therefore, an important link of ideological and political theory courses in universities is to transform the teaching material system into the teaching system, and the issue-oriented special teaching should be the best carrier of it.

2.2. 1Particularity of Ideological And Political Courses

From the perspective of the subject system, the ideological and political theory courses in universities involve many subjects such as politics, law, economics, ethics, history, etc. If the teachers are thorough and unfocused, the students will learn only a little bit about the course with little success. Therefore, the ideological and political course teaching must have the key through to the course content condensation.

2.3. Particularity of College Students' Cognitive Stage

From the perspective of knowledge structures or ages, college students are not satisfied with just knowing "what", but also "why". College students' curiosity and thirst for knowledge require ideological and political teachers to have the explanatory power for major theoretical problems and practical problems, which must be an argumentative type with reasonable evidence. Therefore, college students need expert teachers and expert classes. Therefore, we need to start with special topics and make each topic into a quality course through the study of a special topic, and then become the teaching expert of ideological and political courses.

3. Problems Existing in Thematic Teaching of Ideological and Political Courses in Universities

The proposal of thematic teaching has been more than ten years, and it has been implemented in many undergraduate colleges, but the reform of thematic teaching in universities is faced with many problems.

3.1. Teachers Have Little Enthusiasm for Thematic Teaching

The subject of teaching is the teacher, and the implementation of any teaching method needs the approval of the teacher first. However, at present, ideological and political teachers in universities are generally not highly active in the thematic teaching reform. The reasons are as follows. Firstly, many teachers, especially the old ones, are used to lecturing according to the textbook chapters. They think that no system can be more scientific and reasonable than the textbook system. Secondly, the curriculum task of universities is relatively heavy, and the orientation is not obvious. Although the ideological and political department of many universities divides the teaching and research room from the course management, the teachers' teaching is not divided into teaching and research room, so it is difficult to have a dedicated research field without a key teaching course.

3.2. It is Difficult to Grasp Thematic Setting and Thematic Assessment

Project teaching key lies in the choice of teaching materials and the project settings, which is one of the biggest problems of education courses in universities thematic teaching. The
outstanding problems in colleges and universities displayed in the following parts. The first one is based on teachers' professional tend to choose the teaching material. From project quality, this may be a reasonable trade-off basis, but from the course of systematic level, this trade-off is obviously inappropriate, because Special Instruction Programs are still to complete the teaching objectives and tasks, and teachers of education courses in universities basically will take the full course of independence. Secondly, according to the preferences of students to reduce the content of textbooks, systematic and authoritative nature of the choice of textbooks thematic setting should be questioned.

4. The Thematic Research Teaching Practice Exploration Which Focuses on Teaching Content and Starts from the Innovation of Teaching Methods

4.1. Focus on the Key Points and Integrate the Teaching Contents in the Thematic Way

The thematic teaching mode is to plan scientifically and design the teaching content carefully on the basis of in-depth study of the teaching material, and to transform the teaching material system creatively into the teaching system. Thematic teaching has relative independence, but it cannot separate from the textbooks, and it must insist its independence and the curriculum integrity to coordinate the principle. Therefore, the theme setting must highlight the teaching focus, and arrange the teaching content reasonably by focusing on the theme, main line and key of Marxism and combining the hot and difficult issues that students pay attention to. According to the above principles, we integrated the teaching content through four group lesson preparation sessions, and finally designed the course "introduction" into 8 topics, see table 1 for details.

4.2. Focus on the Demands and Deepen Thematic Lectures By Chain of Issues

Practice is the source of theory. The thematic teaching model should not only focus on integrating the teaching content and thematic design, but also focus on students' practical perplexity, and deepen thematic teaching with the chain of problems. In the course of thematic teaching, different teaching methods should be adopted to achieve the teaching objectives. Participatory teaching is an effective method. In the classroom, the degree of student participation is the key to the effect of teaching and learning. Only when students are actively involved can they have real psychological and situational experiences. In the process of teaching, we should realize the transformation from top-down "indoctrination" teaching mode to bottom-up "participatory" discovery mode.

Firstly, each project design in the process of looking for prospective students to doubt and be interested in "reality", only in this way can arouse the students' curiosity, and natural prompted them to take the initiative to learn actively and become a one-way "monologue" theoretical sermon scene for "conversational" interactive teaching lively, so as to promote education courses the appeal and effectiveness of teaching.

Secondly, ideological and political theory course "problem" consciousness should have three fundamental factors which included objective consciousness, value judgment and problem mode. Problems should not only have a guiding role, but also ideological and political courses should make correct value judgments on problems and give students correct value guidance. In the process of solving and exploring problems, students should be guided to think by the basic standpoints, viewpoints and methods of Marxism, and cultivate their awareness and abilities of observing and analyzing problems.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Object and Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&quot;Improve people's livelihood and build a beautiful China&quot; -- building a harmonious society and ecological civilization</td>
<td>The issue of people's livelihood is one of the social issues that the common people and students are most concerned about. Social harmony is one of our goals too. Combining the issues concerning people's livelihood, such as employment, medical care, environment, housing and social security, the topic clarifies the connotation and far-reaching significance of &quot;scientific development concept&quot; and &quot;ecological civilization construction&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>&quot;Strictly governing the party comprehensively and advancing the new great project of party building&quot; -- the core theory of socialist leadership with Chinese characteristics</td>
<td>Combined with the spirit of the 18th plenary session of the sixth plenary session, this topic will focus on analyzing and clarifying the position and status of strict party discipline in the &quot;four comprehensives&quot; strategic layout, and guide students to realize the urgency and importance of the new great project of party building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>&quot;Hello Xiaoping! -- Deng Xiaoping and Deng Xiaoping theory&quot;</td>
<td>By telling the story of Deng Xiaoping, students can experience the background and historical context of the formation of Deng Xiaoping theory, and understand the essence, fundamental task and basic line of the primary stage of socialism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Is democracy a good thing? -- &quot;put power in the cage of the system&quot; (building socialist democracy with Chinese characteristics)</td>
<td>The focus of this topic should be clearly stated that &quot;democracy is specific, relative and historical&quot;, and a democratic model which is suitable for a country's national conditions is a good thing. At the same time, it is emphasized that the development of socialist democracy is inseparable from the construction of socialist rule of law, highlighting the importance of comprehensive rule of law in the four comprehensives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>&quot;Approaching Mao Zedong&quot; -- &quot;from Yan 'and to the world&quot; (Marxism in China and its development)</td>
<td>The scientific connotation of sinicization of marxism and two major theoretical achievements. Combining with the unique red cultural resources of Shanxi (such as the unique red resources of Yan 'an), combining with Mao Zedong's poetry, revolutionary songs and other situational teaching methods. Students can be immersed into Mao Zedong and truly understand the connotation and essence of MAO's thought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The rise of network culture and the reconstruction of cultural leadership -- the construction of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics</td>
<td>Starting from college students' contact with network culture, this topic seeks for its deep influence on contemporary college students, and discusses how to use socialist core value system to guide the development of network culture, so as to establish cultural self-confidence, cultural self-improvement, and reconstruct the cultural leadership of the party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>&quot;Xi Jinping thoughts on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era&quot; -- the latest theoretical achievement in the sinicization of marxism</td>
<td>According to the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the connotation, status and significance of Xi Jinping's thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era are expounded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. Organize Thematic Teaching By Means of The Mobile Internet in A Comprehensive Participatory Approach

From the perspective of teaching philosophy, the monographic research teaching mode should be transformed from the traditional "teacher-oriented" to "law-based". "Student-oriented" refers to students’ growth and development. The traditional participatory teaching method is restricted by the time and scope, so it is difficult to participate fully. Therefore, it is difficult for students to fully express their thoughts, views and opinions. In particular, some students who
are not very good at expression can hardly have the opportunity to show their views and thoughts. The second problem can be solved effectively by using mobile Internet teaching assistant system in the special teaching reform. The combination of thematic teaching and new media and technology, as well as classroom teaching with students’ preferred expressions, greatly improved students’ participation.

According to the survey of students’ feedback to the course, the majority of students believe that ideological and political courses adopt new media and new technology from the actual situation of college students, which is grounded, novel, cool, interesting and nice. Of course, new media technology is only an external form and means, which can really stimulate students’ interest and thinking without careful design and teaching of content.

5. Summary

In short, monographic research teaching can effectively improve students’ interest and enthusiasm in learning, and promote the positive interaction between teaching and learning, team and teaching and scientific research, which is an effective way to promote the reform and innovation of ideological and political theory courses. Of course, there are also some problems in the process of specific operations. Therefore, in the process of thematic teaching, the lecturer should carefully prepare lessons, and pay attention to scientific research and also the guidance of students, so as to truly improve the effect of ideological and political theory course teaching.

Acknowledgements

This paper is one of the results of the project of Zhejiang Education Science Planning in 2014,‘Research on the Teaching Method of Thematic Micro-debate Classroom in Ideological and Political Theory Course in Universities’, No. 2014 SCG406.

References

[1] Opinions of the central committee of the communist party of China and the state council on further strengthening and improving the ideological politics of university students ( No. 16 [2004] Zhongfa.

[2] Opinions of the publicity department of the CPC central committee and the ministry of education on further strengthening and improving ideological and political theory courses in institutions of higher learning ( No. 5 Teaching social administration [2, 8,5].

[3] Innovation plan for the construction system of ideological and political theory courses in universities (No. 2 Teaching social science [2015].

