

Optimization, Reform, and Practice of High School Ideological and Political Education Teaching under the New Curriculum Reform

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Abstract:

With the continuous deepening of the new curriculum reform, the historical mission and disciplinary tasks of high school ideological and political education have become more prominent, which also puts forward higher requirements for the optimization and reform of ideological and political education teaching. Combining with the reform and practice of ideological and political education teaching philosophy and teaching methods in our school, this paper proposes that high school ideological and political education should truly focus on students and start from four aspects: “setting the right direction, delving into research, emphasizing practice, and transforming the teaching mode”. We should carry out a “new revolution” in classroom teaching and create a classroom teaching model that is “student-centered, learning before teaching, in-class training, personalized teaching, cooperative learning, based on quality, and future-oriented”. Practice has proved that the optimization and reform of ideological and political education teaching in our school has achieved good results and has had multiple effects in teaching research, teaching competitions, and talent cultivation.

Keywords:

New Curriculum Reform, High School Ideological And Political Education, Teaching Reform

1. Introduction

The high school stage is a crucial period for students to acquire knowledge and form moral concepts. High school ideological and political teachers and courses play an important role in shaping students' outlook on life, worldviews, and values [1]. They shoulder the core mission of ideological education, which is to guide students' thinking and cultivate and practice socialist core values, promote the creative transformation of Chinese excellent traditional culture, and integrate interdisciplinary moral education. [2] With the continuous deepening of the new curriculum reform, it is important for high school ideological and political teachers to change the problems

in traditional ideological and political teaching, grasp the methods, logic, and values behind ideological and political knowledge, effectively improve the teaching level and effectiveness of the classroom, and achieve subject-based education. Based on this, this article attempts to combine the reform concepts and practices of ideological and political classroom teaching in schools, discuss the optimization strategies for high school ideological and political classroom teaching, and contribute to improving the effectiveness of ideological and political courses and playing a role in educating students.

2. The Heading - A Good Start to The First Lesson

General Secretary Xi Jinping attaches great importance to the “first lesson” in teaching and has personally taught the “first lesson” for six consecutive times, placing the fundamental task of talent cultivation in a more prominent strategic position. [3] The Ministry of Education has also proposed that it is necessary to start the exploration of the reform of ideological and political theory teaching from the “first lesson”. [4] In high school, especially in the first year of high school, the difficulty of ideological and political theory courses has always been high. These difficulties come firstly from the students’ attitude of underestimating the course. The open-book exams in junior high school ideological and political science make many students not pay much attention to the course. Many students think that ideological and political courses are just about “memorizing for higher scores” before or during the exam. There are even many students who still ask the teacher before the exam, “Is the political exam open book?” which leaves the teachers speechless. The second difficulty comes from the fear of difficulty. Some students think that political courses are purely profound theories, large and empty, difficult to learn, and they don't want to learn them. The third difficulty comes from the misleading of parents and society. Some parents, based solely on their subjective understanding of ideological and political courses, and even the guidance of certain so-called experts, tell students before entering high school not to choose ideological and political subjects. The above difficulties and misconceptions indicate that students and society do not truly understand the status and role of high school ideological and political courses. On the contrary, with the implementation of the new curriculum reform and the new college entrance examination system, the importance and attention to ideological and political courses are increasing year by year. In response to these situations, it is particularly important to have a good start to the first lesson.

Therefore, before the start of the first year of high school, schools organize teachers to carefully prepare teaching materials. In the first ideological and political lesson, teachers start from the social reality and students’ personal experiences, discussing the international situation, domestic background, and the importance of ideological and political courses to a person’s growth, explaining the important value and significance of ideological and political courses in nurturing students’ ideological literacy, enriching students’ minds, cultivating students’ patriotism, and guiding students’ life direction. Of course, this is not done to guide students to choose ideological and political subjects, but to “set the right course” and convey correct curriculum awareness to students, cultivate each student’s political literacy and international perspective, and safeguard the comprehensive quality improvement of each student. A high-quality “first lesson” is responsible for each student, the families and society behind each student, and it is also the mission and responsibility of ideological and political educators.

3. In-depth Study - Preparation and Lesson Planning

The new curriculum reform requires teachers to deeply study the curriculum objectives, structure, content, implementation, evaluation, and management. They need to develop teaching philosophies, models, and methods for ideological and political education that are suitable for the needs of their students. [5] Therefore, it is important to conduct in-depth research before the class and prepare well for collective lesson planning and create exquisite lesson plans.

To teach each ideological and political education class well, it is crucial to thoroughly study the curriculum standards, teaching references, textbooks, and students, as well as stay informed about current affairs. However, collective lesson planning is a weak link in our school's ideological and political education department. This is because there are only three ideological and political education teachers for the three grades in the high school department. How can we address this weak collective planning capability? First, we fully utilize the collective strength of the three ideological and political education teachers in each grade. Every week, we set aside a whole afternoon for collective lesson planning, conducting focused discussions on the lesson plans of each teacher, making revisions for each section, and then improving individual lesson plans. Based on this, we create lesson plans. Second, all lesson plans and test papers must not use ready-made materials. We integrate all available teaching resources to create the most exquisite lesson plans, and every class must have a lesson plan. Those without a lesson plan are not allowed to enter the classroom. In addition, the school leaders responsible for teaching also participate in the instructional design of ideological and political education classes. They provide a macroscopic teaching framework of "three guidance, five focuses, and six stages" for the ideological and political education class and review each teacher's lesson plan. "Three guidance" refers to interest guidance, problem guidance, and practice guidance; "five focuses" refer to student-centered, problem-oriented, autonomous direction, cooperative means, and ability goals; "six stages" refer to autonomous exploration, self-presentation, cooperative inquiry, guidance and advice, consolidation and standardization, and transfer and improvement.

To address the weak collective planning capability, we make full use of excellent teaching resources around us. The school strengthens its connection with the district's renowned teacher studios and establishes regular communication mechanisms with the same group of prestigious schools. We frequently attend training sessions, learn, and exchange ideas with these schools to enhance communication. At the same time, we fully leverage the advantages and role of online resources in collective lesson planning and instructional design to enrich the types and content of lesson plans.

4. Emphasizing Practice - Stimulating Interest in Learning

2022 is the first year of the new college entrance examination after the curriculum reform. Based on the Shandong Province ideological and political education test paper this year, it focuses more on testing students' ability to analyze and solve problems. This places higher demands on students' social practice ability and cultivation, urging them to step out of the classroom, integrate into society, internalize knowledge, and externalize it through actions to become true knowledge and abilities. Therefore, the school has established the first ideological and political education club in Linyi City's Lanshan District, called the "Research Society". With the support of the Research Society, the school has also established the Ideological and Political Education

Lecture Hall, allowing students to enhance their interest in ideological and political education through a rich variety of club activities and extensive knowledge.

Starting from the new freshman class this year, the school has been implementing the serialization and systemization of students' social practice. For example, during the National Day holiday in 2022, the school completed two social practice activities. First, the students visited a red education base and completed a social practice report. Second, they watched the movie "Win the Championship" and wrote a reflection afterwards. The school plans to use the holiday breaks in the first and second year of high school to allow students to apply the systematic knowledge from our high school ideological and political education textbook into social life through social practice, transforming it into true knowledge and abilities. This further stimulates students' interest in learning.

5. Mode Transformation - Launching the "New Revolution" in the Classroom

In order to achieve the main task of curriculum reform, which is to change the way students learn according to the advocated learning methods of "autonomy, cooperation, and exploration" in the new curriculum reform, and ultimately achieve the overall goal of school education - cultivating qualified citizens with Chinese soul and international vision who can survive and develop in the future society, the school has created a "student-centered, learning before teaching, in-class training, personalized teaching, cooperative learning, competency-oriented, future-oriented" classroom teaching model "New Revolution" based on the requirements of high school ideological and political education themed activity-based classroom.

5.1. Student-Centered Classroom

Student-centered means that the classroom is primarily for students' learning, not for teachers' instruction; the classroom is for students' experience and performance, not for teachers' demonstration; the classroom is a place for students' independent learning, cooperative learning, questioning, individual performance, experiencing confidence and growth, not a place for teachers to complete "lesson plays". In other words, most of the classroom time should be dedicated to students' independent learning, exploratory learning, and cooperative learning, while minimizing the time teachers spend on collective lectures in the classroom.

The implementation of student-centered strategies faces the greatest obstacle of updating teachers' perception of classroom time. Only by believing that classroom time is primarily for students' learning and communication can we possibly give as much classroom time back to students as possible. Of course, giving classroom time back to students does not mean letting the classroom become a place of *laissez-faire*, but rather conducting it with clear goals through careful classroom teaching design (guided lesson plans) and timely adjustments by the teacher.

5.2. Learning Before Teaching Classroom

Learning before teaching means making students understand a simple but important truth, that is, "knowledge mainly comes from self-study, not from teacher's instruction". In order to achieve the classroom learning methods of "autonomy, cooperation, and exploration" proposed by the new curriculum, it is necessary to first cultivate students' awareness and habits of independent learning and continuously

improve their self-learning abilities. Teachers should try to make students understand that it is natural to study the content related to textbooks and guided lesson plans after self-studying the textbooks according to the preview lesson plan. This is the most significant difference between high school and primary or middle school learning methods. Students should know that the most important homework for middle school students is preview homework, and they should enter the classroom with questions and solve specific problems through learning groups and teacher's assistance in the classroom.

5.3. In-Class Training Classroom

In-class training means that teachers should let students complete the most important exercises in the classroom, instead of assigning too much homework for students to complete outside of class. This is not only to reduce the burden on teachers and students, but also to implement the goals of classroom teaching, fully utilize the learning resources hidden in the difference in learning levels among students, help each student solve individual learning problems, and make each student feel fully cared for in classroom learning and develop their confidence in learning.

5.4. Personalized Teaching Classroom

Personalized teaching is in contrast to collective teaching. It means that under the class teaching system, teachers free up a part of the time originally used for collective teaching and allow students to “learn freely”. Personalized teaching includes the following four aspects: first, during free learning time, teachers and “subject monitors” mainly focus on guiding learning groups or individuals to solve specific learning difficulties, thus achieving the pursuit of personalized teaching under the class teaching system; second, teachers provide guidance on learning strategies and methods based on the actual situation of individual students, helping students find unique learning methods that suit their own characteristics; third, individual guidance also includes emotional communication and psychological counseling between teachers and students; fourth, it aims to cultivate students with personality, independent thinking abilities, and willingness to express unique opinions.

The only choice to achieve personalized teaching is to reform the traditional classroom structure, reduce the time for collective teaching by teachers, and free up most of the classroom time, allowing students to engage in individual learning with unified goals but different progress and depth. Based on individual learning, collaborative learning within and between learning groups can be conducted. Deep learning is a process of whole-person participation and an important path to support students in forming core competencies. In the classroom, students must experience real learning and deep learning through exploration, experience, and performance.

5.5. Cooperative Learning Classroom

Cooperative learning refers to a learning method in which students use the power of learning groups to cooperate and complete learning tasks. Cooperative learning in the classroom includes cooperation between classmates at the same table, cooperation among members of learning groups, cooperation between learning groups, and cooperation between teachers and students. The school pays special attention to the cultivation and utilization of “subject monitors” and vigorously promotes new classroom teaching strategies proposed by the school, such as the “subject monitor

system”, “group leader system”, “group learning system”, and “mutual evaluation of homework system”.

It should be emphasized that cooperative learning must be based on sufficient independent thinking, and the learning management role of learning groups, the individual guidance of subject monitors or the supervision role of group leaders, should be fully utilized to strive to complete the most important classroom feedback within the class. In-class cooperative learning should fully utilize its functions under the guidance and supervision of teachers.

5.6. Competency-Oriented Classroom

The new college entrance examination tests students' necessary knowledge, key abilities, subject literacy, and core values. Therefore, the classroom teaching goals formulated by the school should be multidimensional, three-dimensional, and in line with the core competency orientation, rather than being knowledge-centric. It is necessary to attach importance to knowledge and skills, focus on subject key abilities (observation is the entry, experimentation is the means, thinking is the core, self-study is the method), cultivate students' innovation ability and practical ability through the experience of deep learning, pay attention to emotional communication between teachers and students, guidance of core values, and use motivating methods in the classroom. It is important to guide students to experience the process of how to reach conclusions and transform knowledge into wisdom.

In a harmonious classroom atmosphere, putting emotional communication above information exchange, focusing on the education of cultivating teacher-student emotions and student-student emotions, paying attention to students' learning motivation, guiding the purpose and significance of learning, cultivating students' serious learning attitude, diligent learning habits, and scientific and efficient learning methods.

5.7. Future-Oriented Classroom

In terms of teaching content, due to the complexity and long cycle of the compilation of printed textbooks, it is inevitable that printed textbooks lag behind the times, especially in the subject of ideological and political education. This requires us to be able to use valuable new knowledge and information that meets scientific and socialist core values obtained from newspapers, books, television, and the internet during lesson preparation and supplement them into the classroom teaching content in order to constantly update outdated textbook content.

6. Dispel the Clouds and See the Sun - Joy of Initial Achievement

In recent years, under the careful guidance of experts at the Linyi Municipal and Lanshan District Education Research Office, and with the care of school leaders led by the principal, the school has achieved good results in optimizing and reforming ideological and political education. Significant achievements have been made in teaching research, teaching competitions, and talent cultivation.

In terms of teaching research, several teachers have initiated provincial and municipal-level teaching reform projects and have published a series of research papers, sparking discussions and reflections on the optimization and reform of high school ideological and political education both within and outside the province. In teaching competitions and honors, some teachers have participated in provincial,

municipal, and district-level teaching competitions and have won many honors, including first prizes for teaching achievements, teaching quality awards, and teaching excellence awards. Moreover, some teachers have received multiple awards in activities such as demonstration classes, open classes, excellent lesson evaluations, and “One Teacher, One Excellent Lesson”, achieving full coverage and a rich harvest in teaching competitions and teaching honor awards.

In addition, the school has achieved remarkable results in talent cultivation. Since its establishment, the school’s college entrance examination admission rate for three consecutive years has reached 94.85%, 91.28%, and 95.14% for key universities, and the admission rate for regular universities has maintained 100% for three years in a row. In the first new college entrance examination in 2022, students who chose to study politics achieved an average score of 84, and the percentage of students scoring above 90 reached 41.67%. Currently, students in all three grades of the high school at our school consistently rank among the top in both the Lanshan District and the city-wide examinations.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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