

## Article

# Research on the Integration of Practical Teaching in Introduction Courses under the Background of Inter-School Cooperation

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**Abstract:** The practical teaching of ideological and political courses is an important channel for the integration of the small classroom and the large classroom of society. Currently, there are several issues in the practical teaching of ideological and political courses in universities, such as insufficient course resources, disconnection between theoretical and practical classes, and the inability to cover all students. In the context of inter-school collaboration, the integration of practical teaching for the course "Introduction to Marxist Theory and Socialist Thought" offers a solution to these problems. This approach mainly involves forming an integrated development team, identifying knowledge points suitable for practical teaching in the course, considering the characteristics and resources of each institution, and designing practical teaching plans and course schemes. Ultimately, it aims to form an integrated curriculum that combines resources, teaching teams, teaching processes, and shared outcomes for the practical course of the "Introduction" course.

**Keywords:** introduction courses; practical education; inter-school collaboration

## 1. Introduction

How to organically integrate the small classroom of ideological and political education with the large classroom of society is an important issue we face. The course "Introduction to Marxist Theory and Socialist Thought" (hereinafter referred to as the "Introduction" course) is a required ideological and political theory course in higher education. It contains a vast knowledge system and elaborates in detail the achievements of the first and second leaps of the sinicization and modernization of Marxism. In the context of the new era, a purely "historical theory" approach is difficult to sustain students' long-term interest in learning. Establishing practical courses related to each chapter is a crucial step to improve the effectiveness of the "Introduction" course's teaching [1].

## 2. Practical Teaching Construction and Research Achievements of the "Introduction" Course

All ideological and political theory courses in higher education must strengthen practical components, establish and improve mechanisms for ensuring practical teaching, and explore long-term systems for practical education. Effective practical teaching has become a primary focus in the development of ideological and political courses across universities. Through the efforts of frontline teachers and scholars, practical teaching has gradually become a permanent component of these courses, and related teaching theories, models, content, and operational mechanisms are beginning to take shape. Since the new era, the Party's theoretical innovations have focused on issues such as "how to teach ideological and political courses well" and "how to enhance the role of practical teaching in ideological and political courses", leading to important discussions with significant real-

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world implications. These have provided direction for improving practical teaching in university ideological and political courses. Both frontline teaching staff and academic circles are actively exploring ways to integrate the "small classroom" of ideological and political education into the "large classroom" of society, producing a series of practice-based and academic achievements with distinct contemporary features.

Regarding the definition of practical teaching in ideological and political courses, scholars agree on the main theory and relational aspects, viewing it as a teaching model in which students are the subjects, teachers are the guides, and the theory is connected to practice through practical activities, ultimately achieving unity of knowledge and action. It is noteworthy that, in terms of function, some scholars believe practical teaching in these courses reflects a Marxist approach to practice [2]. Therefore, the standard for assessing practical teaching should not focus solely on whether the teaching location is "in society", but rather on whether the content is "in society", challenging the dichotomy between theoretical teaching and practical teaching.

In terms of teaching content, there are currently two main approaches to what should be taught and learned in practical teaching. One view is that it should include content such as patriotic education, local history education, education on the five historical periods, and moral education, complementing theoretical classes with extracurricular activities. Another view advocates for a closer integration of practical teaching with the ideological and political curriculum. However, in practice, some universities face issues such as a lack of overall structure, weak continuity, and serious homogenization and rigidity of practical activities. Some content is outdated compared to the economic and social development, and the teaching methods are mechanically simple, failing to adapt to contemporary needs. The content often lacks relevance to real life, the structure is insufficiently comprehensive and hierarchical, and there is a failure to balance students' interests with current hot topics. The content should align with the course syllabus, textbooks, and key knowledge points, playing a pivotal role in achieving teaching goals and course objectives. The core issue regarding the content of practical teaching lies in the relationship between ideological courses and practical teaching. Viewing practical teaching merely as a supplementary component or an extracurricular activity is not contradictory; both aspects have produced numerous practical achievements [3]. The current challenge is to translate these achievements into formal curricula, a topic that has attracted considerable attention in academic circles.

In terms of mechanisms and formats, setting fixed credits and hours in curriculum designs is the foundation for constructing practical teaching mechanisms in many universities. Regarding teaching formats, the general approach is to take students out of the classroom, with some universities able to take students off-campus. However, some activities still only involve visits or investigations at a superficial level, which limits student engagement and participation, making the practical teaching somewhat localized and biased. "Although many universities have implemented practical teaching in ideological and political courses, teachers often assign several topics in class, ask students to do research on their own time, and submit a report or reflection. This turns practical teaching into 'hands-off' learning. Some universities do take students on field trips, but they often only select one or two outstanding students from each class to form small teams, leaving the majority of students with no opportunity to participate, turning practical teaching into 'elite practices,' thus failing to achieve its full potential." As the economy and society develop, the effectiveness of simple visits is declining, and the challenge now is how to "find stillness in motion", combining practical teaching with theoretical instruction. This requires integrating professional characteristics and industry demands to form a new mechanism for practical teaching in ideological and political courses that connects education with industry.

Overall, since the implementation of the "05 Plan", the design of practical teaching has become a focal point for frontline teachers and researchers. For example, some scholars argue that the key challenges in implementing practical instruction in ideological and

political education lie in the absence of a clear syllabus, a coherent instructional framework, and standardized teaching requirements. Since the new era, long-standing issues like attention and resource allocation have seen significant improvements, providing a more solid foundation for practical teaching in these courses. Particularly with the rapid development of educational technology, more universities are beginning to implement online practical teaching, such as using VR technology to create immersive and interactive teaching scenarios, allowing students to engage in practical learning without leaving home. After years of effort, practical teaching in ideological and political courses has achieved rich practical and research results [4]. However, the uneven development across universities, insufficient practical resources, and low usage rates require further investigation.

### **3. Problems and Solutions in the Practical Teaching of the "Introduction" Course**

By reviewing relevant construction and research achievements, it can be observed that there are several issues in the current practical teaching of ideological and political courses in universities, such as insufficient course resources, a disconnect between theoretical and practical classrooms, and the inability to cover all students with high-quality practical courses. In the context of inter-school collaboration, integrating practical teaching for the "Introduction" course is a potential solution to these problems.

#### *3.1. Problems in the Practical Teaching of the "Introduction" Course*

The first issue is how to systematically integrate practical teaching into the broader ideological education system. Practical teaching in ideological and political courses can be a part of the larger ideological education framework, but it can also serve as an individual component of each course. Currently, there are limited systematic results for the latter approach. For example, in some universities, the practical teaching activities cannot cover the entire knowledge system and curriculum of the "Introduction" course, offering only superficial engagement. Students often experience repetition and fatigue when learning the content of the "Introduction" course, which highlights the lack of a gradual and spiral progression in the curriculum between pre-university and university levels. The focus has primarily been on knowledge delivery and assessment. The "Introduction" course in university should avoid fragmented, repetitive teaching that leads to students lacking a holistic and systematic understanding of basic theory. Practical teaching and classroom teaching are often treated as separate components, with insufficient interaction and complementarity [5]. In classroom teaching, teachers focus on theoretical knowledge, while in practical teaching, there is a lack of feedback and guidance on students' practical outcomes. As a result, students' issues in practice are not addressed in a timely manner, which hinders their understanding and application of theoretical knowledge.

The second issue is how to ensure high-quality practical teaching can cover all students. Some scholars have observed that some universities, for promotional reasons, concentrate resources on a few experimental classes, creating highlights in certain areas. However, when it comes to widespread implementation, the situation may not be as successful, which is inconsistent with the broad audience of ideological courses. Practical teaching in these courses requires significant investment in resources such as venues, materials, and faculty, which can pose challenges for universities with limited budgets. When schools have limited budgets, they struggle to support large-scale practical teaching activities. Moreover, practical teaching often requires specific venues and facilities, such as social practice bases, mock courts, and laboratories. If a university lacks these resources, it is unable to provide practical teaching opportunities to all students. This creates a barrier to achieving widespread high-quality practical teaching and points to both systemic and resource-related challenges.

Lastly, optimizing and expanding practical teaching resources is another key issue. Practical teaching resources can be divided into on-campus and off-campus resources. In

the past, many universities have mainly focused on expanding off-campus practice bases. While these bases may include some ideological and political elements, their course-related attributes are relatively weak, and they lack close integration with the curriculum. In addition, issues such as capacity constraints and student safety sometimes cause these bases to remain underused after being signed into agreements. On the other hand, on-campus resources like museums, campus history centers, workshops, hospitals, experimental fields, historical sites, and affiliated schools are often underutilized. If cooperation mechanisms could be established to share on-campus resources across universities, it would provide a substantial supplement to the regional universities.

### *3.2. Integration of Practical Teaching in the "Introduction" Course: Construction Ideas*

From the perspective of construction conditions, universities themselves possess rich resources for the practical teaching of ideological and political courses. Influenced by the Soviet model during their establishment and development, many universities have distinct strengths and specialized disciplines, often with deep connections to various industries. This provides excellent resources for the development of practical teaching in ideological and political courses. In recent years, universities have gathered resources from various sectors to establish diverse practice bases for social practice, innovation and employment, volunteer services, socialist education, and labor education. These initiatives have fully utilized the roles of schools, families, and society as educational agents, mobilizing societal resources to enhance educational efforts and guide students to improve their socialization skills. Furthermore, universities have developed ideological and political courses with unique campus features. On-campus resources such as museums, campus history halls, workshops, hospitals, experimental fields, historical sites, and affiliated schools have strong course attributes, making it easier to integrate with the content of the "Introduction" course. Issues like reception and safety are also easier to address.

From the perspective of construction requirements, the practical teaching of ideological and political courses should ensure high-quality coverage for all students. The target audience for these courses is the entire student body, meaning practical teaching should not be limited to a select few students. It should start with a solid mechanism to integrate resources, ensuring that every student can participate. Additionally, practical teaching in ideological courses can be formalized as part of the curriculum. This formalization not only aligns practical teaching with the knowledge system of the "Introduction" course, achieving certain educational goals within the curriculum, but it also ensures that teaching content spans the entire semester and forms an evaluation mechanism.

From the perspective of content construction, the integration of practical teaching for the "Introduction" course primarily involves resource integration. Chinese universities, influenced by the Soviet model, generally possess some specialized disciplines and deep connections with industries, offering valuable resources for practical teaching. In recent years, universities have developed ideological and political courses with unique campus features. However, these resources tend to be fragmented and scattered. Research has shown that, apart from comprehensive top-tier universities, the practical teaching resources of ordinary schools are insufficient to support the entire ideological and political curriculum. Off-campus practice bases signed by universities often lack course attributes and may remain idle after being established. Under the context of inter-school collaboration, universities could benefit from sharing practical teaching resources. This would not only complement each other's strengths in terms of resources but also lay the foundation for building practical teaching that covers the entire knowledge system of the "Introduction" course.

Secondly, team integration in the construction process is crucial. Ideological and political teachers from different universities should collaborate based on a problem-oriented approach, working together to tackle difficulties while learning from each other. This collaborative process also promotes professional growth among educators [6]. The outcomes

of this cooperation represent collective wisdom, making them both representative and scalable. Different universities' teachers bring unique professional strengths and teaching experiences. Through inter-school cooperation, they can share teacher resources, such as inviting excellent instructors for cross-school teaching or organizing teaching seminars. "By establishing networks of renowned teachers, creating collective online lesson preparation systems, and strengthening leadership and demonstration training, the ability of ideological and political teachers to integrate digital resources should be enhanced. Creativity in transforming and utilizing high-quality digital teaching resources available on national and regional education platforms will help share resources and ensure continuous updates. Encouraging teachers and students to create original outstanding online cultural works and actively participate in competitions will improve digital literacy and online civility among educators and students." Teaching cases, course materials, videos, etc., can be developed and shared through inter-school collaboration, enriching the content and forms of practical teaching. Inter-school cooperation can also help establish or utilize existing practice bases, such as businesses, communities, and historical sites related to national history, providing students with more opportunities for practical experiences.

Thirdly, teaching process integration is essential. Currently, some practical teaching activities suffer from the issue of "going out of the classroom but not into the classroom", which creates a disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practice. University resources for practical teaching often have course attributes, facilitating the return to theory during practical activities. Based on overall goals, each university can refine and adjust specific objectives according to its characteristics and the actual needs of students, ensuring that practical teaching is more targeted and effective.

Finally, the sharing of construction outcomes is an inevitable result of integration and embodies the concept of new development. The sharing of construction results will not only improve the practical teaching quality of the "Introduction" course across universities but also benefit students in the region, enabling more students to transition from the small ideological classroom to the larger social classroom.

### *3.3. Pathways for Integrating Practical Teaching in the "Introduction" Course under the Context of Inter-School Collaboration*

The pathways for integrating practical teaching in the "Introduction" course under inter-school collaboration require clear goals and positioning, the establishment of cooperation mechanisms and platforms, the formulation of unified teaching plans and standards, joint practical teaching activities, the strengthening of faculty development and training, the establishment of evaluation and feedback mechanisms, the sharing of cases and experiences, as well as the utilization of new research platforms like virtual teaching workshops. Specifically, the main aspects include the following:

#### *1) Forming an Integrated Team for Practical Teaching*

The first step is to connect ideological and political course teachers from universities within the region to form a team for integrating practical teaching in the "Introduction" course. Through academic networks, educational forums, and teaching research conferences, establish connections with ideological and political course teachers from various universities. Conduct surveys to understand the current status, unique features, and existing issues of practical teaching in the "Introduction" course at different universities.

#### *2) Clarifying the Knowledge System of the "Introduction" Course*

The "Introduction" course covers a vast knowledge system, which includes The contributions of Marxist thought to China's development and modernization. In the teaching design, it is essential to convert the theoretical logic in the textbook into a teaching logic. Within the knowledge system, some content is suited for classroom lectures, while other parts are more appropriate for practical teaching. To construct integrated practical teaching content, the knowledge system of the "Introduction" course needs to be reorganized to highlight knowledge points suitable for practice. The design of the practical course

should be based on these knowledge points, ensuring that the practical teaching is integrated with the entire course and academic term, paving the way for the transformation into a structured practical course.

### 3) Designing Practical Teaching Based on University Characteristics and Resources

Once the key practical knowledge points are identified, the next step is to develop practical teaching designs. This should consider each university's unique strengths in disciplines and industry connections. Based on full communication and learning between the course team members and faculty from partner universities, the practical teaching designs should be written, fully leveraging each university's resources and unique ideological political courses. The goal is to create practical teaching components that are closely linked to the knowledge system of the "Introduction" course, ensuring an organic integration between classroom learning and practical experience.

### 4) Inviting Experts for Guidance and Refining the Teaching Plan

After the practical teaching designs are completed, experts within the team should be invited to guide the designs. Scholars from the field can provide valuable feedback and revisions. The final result, based on actual conditions at different universities and academic requirements like credits and hours, should include a comprehensive practical teaching outline, lesson plan, and evaluation mechanism. This will culminate in the creation of the practical teaching curriculum plan.

### 5) Pilot Testing the Practical Course

Once the teaching designs and curriculum plans are complete, select a number of classes for trial implementation. During the pilot phase, real-time feedback from both teachers and students should be collected through classroom observations and surveys. Any issues identified during this phase should be addressed and refined. The final results will include a research paper on the project as well as a compilation of teaching cases.

## 4. Conclusion

The integration of practical teaching in the "Introduction" course under the context of inter-school collaboration is an important exploration of reform and innovation in ideological and political theory courses in universities in the new era. By integrating resources from multiple universities, innovating teaching models, and building collaborative mechanisms, the integration of practical teaching provides a new pathway for enhancing the effectiveness, relevance, and appeal of the course. In the future, with the deepening of inter-school cooperation and the widespread application of digital technologies, the integration of practical teaching in the "Introduction" course needs further optimization of resource-sharing platforms, improvement of evaluation systems, and strengthening of faculty training. This will better achieve the organic unity of theoretical teaching and practical education. It requires the joint participation and collaborative efforts of universities, teachers, students, and society to ensure that the "Introduction" course plays a greater role in moral education and the cultivation of talent.

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