

Path Research on the Synergistic Effect of Ideological and Political Education and Professional Education in *Physiological Psychology*

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Abstract

The deep integration of ideological and political education with professional education constitutes the core pathway for higher education institutions to fulfill their fundamental mission of moral cultivation and talent development. As a foundational core course for Applied Psychology majors, Physiological Psychology embodies distinctive interdisciplinary, practice-oriented, and health-service attributes—making it a natural and effective vehicle for achieving the organic integration of value guidance, knowledge transmission, and competency development. Addressing current pedagogical challenges—including the disjunction between moral and intellectual education, the rigidity of conventional teaching methodologies, and the inadequacy of existing educational assessment frameworks—this paper proposes a synergistic education model structured around “one central thread, two supporting platforms, three progressive stages, and four-dimensional evaluation.” Specifically, the model: (1) reconstructs curriculum content to foster symbiosis between disciplinary knowledge and value orientation; (2) integrates learning–practice–application resources to diversify and enrich pedagogical carriers; (3) innovates an interactive teaching paradigm centered on “three integrations and three promotions”; and (4) establishes a multi-dimensional, process-oriented evaluation system to strengthen formative guidance and holistic development. Through this integrated approach, the model successfully advances the concurrent enhancement of students’ professional core competencies and ideological-political literacy.

Keywords

Physiological psychology; ideological and political courses; professional education; synergistic education.

1. Introduction

The synchronized resonance between ideological and political education integrated into all courses and specialized education constitutes the core pathway for universities in the new era to fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. Curriculum-based ideological and political education infuses specialized education with value-oriented essence, while specialized education supplies practical carriers for curriculum-based ideological and political education[1]. Only through their in-depth integration can the organic unification of knowledge transmission, competency cultivation and value guidance be realized. Within the overarching framework of comprehensive ideological-political education, psychological education stands as an indispensable component of ideological, political and moral education[2]. Its integrated development with curriculum-based ideological and political education not only responds to the contemporary demands of advancing the Healthy China

Initiative and developing the social psychological service system, but also emerges as a pivotal focal point for cultivating talents majoring in psychology.

Physiological Psychology serves as a core compulsory foundational course for students majoring in Applied Psychology. As an interdisciplinary frontier discipline integrating psychology, neuroscience, information science and other subjects, it centers on uncovering the physiological mechanisms underlying psychological phenomena[3]. It acts as a critical hub bridging theoretical interpretation and practical implementation of psychology, while also offering crucial scientific support for the prevention and treatment of various psychological and mental disorders. Characterized by interdisciplinarity, practice orientation and strong practical applicability, this course functions as a natural carrier for the in-depth integration of curriculum-based ideological and political education and specialized psychological education. Furthermore, its teaching quality directly determines students' construction of professional knowledge, formation of scientific thinking, and improvement of practical capabilities.

Against this backdrop, grounded in our university's educational mission of "cultivating application-oriented talents with solid theoretical foundations and strong practical innovation capabilities", this paper targets the disciplinary characteristics of the Applied Psychology major featuring interdisciplinary integration and practice orientation. Taking the course Physiological Psychology as a practical vehicle, it explores implementation approaches for collaborative education through the integration of curriculum-based ideological and political education and specialized professional education. This research intends to offer practical support for improving the educational quality of psychology major courses and cultivating high-caliber talents that meet the demands of the times.

2. Dilemmas in Collaborative Education of Curriculum-based Ideological-political Education and Professional Education in Physiological Psychology

2.1. Disconnection Between Moral Education and Intellectual Education

Professional education is dedicated to constructing students' knowledge system and instrumental rationality, whereas ideological and political education focuses on shaping students' value system and value rationality. The coordination of the two can ultimately maximize the educational values of moral education and intellectual education[4]. At present, the integration of curriculum-based ideological-political education and professional education in the Physiological Psychology course suffers from an obvious "two separate skins" problem. On the one hand, professional teaching overemphasizes knowledge transmission and regards curriculum-based ideological-political education as an extra task. Teachers merely embed ideological-political elements such as scientific spirit and national sentiment into classroom lectures superficially, without profound connection and organic integration with specialized teaching content. On the other hand, ideological-political contents are disconnected from the development of professional practice. Contemporary themes including collaborative spirit in interdisciplinary research and ethics of science and technology are insufficiently covered, which fails to arouse students' emotional resonance and value recognition.

2.2. Reliance on Traditional Teaching Methods and Insufficient Implementation of Interactive Educational Practice

The curriculum teaching methods lack innovative breakthroughs and remain dominated by one-way knowledge delivery by instructors. In light of the disciplinary characteristics of physiological psychology, suitable interactive and experiential teaching activities such as scenario simulation and case seminars have not been designed. Meanwhile, carriers for ideological and political education are relatively scarce, with ideological elements mostly

infiltrated superficially through classroom lectures only. Such elements fail to be organically embedded into professional teaching practices including experimental operations, problem analysis and team collaboration. As a result, students stay in a passive receptive state and cannot actively perceive, deepen their understanding and form recognition of ideological-political connotations through practical activities.

2.3. Imperfect Educational Effect Evaluation System with Inadequate Guiding and Incentive Functions

A scientific evaluation system serves as a critical guarantee for the outcomes of collaborative education. The existing evaluation system for educational effects in Physiological Psychology has the following drawbacks:

- (1) Limited evaluation dimensions. The evaluation overemphasizes students' mastery of professional knowledge, while lacking effective indicators to assess students' value literacy.
- (2) Fixed evaluator groups. Although the course adopts a combination of formative and summative assessment, evaluation is still dominated by instructors. Multiple feedback channels including student self-assessment, peer assessment, as well as feedback from practice institutions and service recipients are absent, which ignores students' principal status in education.
- (3) Insufficient application of evaluation results. Evaluation outcomes fail to be effectively linked to students' comprehensive quality assessment, career development and employment guidance. Therefore, the guiding and incentive functions of evaluation cannot be fully exerted, resulting in students' insufficient attention to the cultivation of value literacy.

3. Pathways for Collaborative Education Integrating Curriculum-based Ideological-political Education and Professional Education in Physiological Psychology

To address the dilemmas of collaborative education in integrating curriculum-based ideological-political education and professional education within the Physiological Psychology course, this paper develops a collaborative education model featuring "one guiding main line, two integrated platforms, three progressive stages, and four evaluation dimensions" based on the course's interdisciplinary, practice-oriented and application-driven disciplinary characteristics, so as to advance the in-depth integration and synchronized resonance of curriculum-based ideological-political education and professional education.

3.1. One Guiding Main Line: Restructuring Curriculum Content to Realize the Coexistence of Knowledge and Values

To tackle the lack of organic integration between moral education and intellectual education, the curriculum content is restructured under the guidance of an ideological-political main line to achieve the coexistence and integration of knowledge transmission and value guidance. Centered on the ideological-political main line of Physiological Psychology — "Master scientific theories to protect mental health and refine professional skills; Explore physiological mechanisms to cultivate moral integrity and compassionate hearts", this study breaks the barriers of the original knowledge framework. Following the logical sequence from physiology to psychology and from basic theories to practical applications, the curriculum content is reorganized into four modules: physiological foundations, mind-body interaction, fundamental practical skills, and practical application. These four modules are precisely integrated with four core ideological-political elements: pursuing truth through empirical research, harmony between body and mind, standardized professional practice, and holistic human health.

Meanwhile, categorized case databases are established, covering original scientific research, clinical practice, professional norms, and social services. Typical cases serve as a bridge to organically connect curriculum-based ideological-political education with professional education, striving to cultivate high-caliber application-oriented talents for psychological services who “grasp physiological mechanisms, understand psychological laws, master proficient skills, and uphold compassionate morality”.

3.2. Integration of Two Platforms: Integrating Learning, Training and Practical Resources to Diversify Carriers for Ideological-Political Education

To resolve the scarcity of ideological-political education carriers and fragmented teaching resources, this research integrates two types of platforms—online-offline platforms and on-campus-off-campus platforms—to construct a full-chain education system of learning-training-practice featuring pre-class online learning, offline seminars, on-campus verification and off-campus field practice. The system provides resource support for the coordinated improvement of students’ professional competencies and value literacy, and diversifies the carriers for the integration of professional and ideological-political education.

(1) Learning and Improvement Platform: Hybrid online-offline empowerment. Online, relying on the China University MOOC platform, interdisciplinary micro-lecture columns are set up to push case materials and seminar topics embedded with ideological-political elements, enabling students to preview specialized knowledge and receive initial ideological-political enlightenment. Offline, case seminars and ethical scenario simulation training are carried out to deepen teaching concerning physiological mechanisms of psychological phenomena and expand relevant ideological-political connotations.

(2) Practical Training Platform: On-campus and off-campus linkage for quality improvement. On campus, interdisciplinary simulated experimental programs are developed based on physiological psychology laboratories and medical experimental centers. Standard operating procedures and immersive training scenarios not only improve students’ interdisciplinary operational capabilities but also integrate standardized vocational education imperceptibly. Off campus, practical bases are jointly built with community health service centers and elderly care institutions to carry out real-scene practices including medical screening and psychological services, translating value objectives into concrete service behaviors.

3.3. Three Progressive Stages: Integrating Cases, Practitioners and Optimized Services to Strengthen Interactive Education

To address the overreliance on traditional teaching methods dominated by one-way lecturing, this study adheres to the student-centered philosophy and constructs a “Three Integrations and Three Promotions” teaching model that integrates knowledge into cases to boost comprehension, embeds competence into practice to advance proficiency, and incorporates values into services to facilitate internalization. This model runs through three sequential phases: pre-class, in-class and post-class.

(1) Pre-class: Integrate knowledge into cases to boost comprehension. Driven by case analysis and problem-oriented learning, typical cases supported by clinical evidence and scientific research are carefully selected. Students analyze cases from an evidence-based perspective, while hierarchical question chains are designed to strengthen their awareness of pursuing truth and lay the groundwork for ideological and political cognition.

(2) In-class: Embed competence into practice to advance proficiency. Centered on hands-on training and collaborative inquiry, students are divided into groups to engage in practical activities such as data collection, psychological assessment and scheme design. Meanwhile, seminars focusing on professional ethics and social values are held. Students polish their

professional skills through practical operations and clarify value orientations via teamwork, thereby achieving simultaneous improvement of professional capabilities and value literacy.

(3) Post-class: Incorporate values into services to facilitate internalization. Social services and reflective retrospection are adopted as approaches to advance the internalization of service values. Relying on practical training bases, targeted services are provided for diverse groups. Students abide by professional literacy standards including confidentiality, empathy and ethical norms, take full account of service recipients' physical conditions, psychological needs and social support systems, and implement the three-dimensional health concept covering physiology, psychology and society.

3.4. Four-Dimensional Evaluation: Establishing a Diversified Evaluation System to Give Play to the Guiding Function of Assessment

To tackle the defects of the imperfect educational effect evaluation system and its insufficient guiding effects, this research abandons the traditional evaluation model that prioritizes final results over learning processes, and constructs a diversified evaluation system covering four dimensions: knowledge, competence, values and practice.

In the knowledge dimension, the focus falls on students' mastery of basic theories of physiological psychology and their ability to integrate interdisciplinary knowledge. Theoretical examinations and after-class assignments are adopted to assess how well students grasp specialized knowledge.

In the competence dimension, emphasis is placed on practical operational skills and innovative thinking. Assessment tools including experimental design proposals, practical operational performance and project reports are used to evaluate students' innovative design capacity and problem-solving abilities.

In the value dimension, evaluation centers on professional ethics and social responsibility. Practice reflection papers, ethical performance scoring and in-class discussion presentations are combined to comprehensively assess students' value literacy such as academic integrity, professional conduct and service awareness.

In the practice dimension, the core indicator is the actual outcomes of social services. Evaluations from practice institutions, feedback from service recipients and the transformation of practical achievements are utilized to examine students' capacity and effectiveness in translating professional knowledge into social services.

Furthermore, multi-subject evaluation approaches are integrated, including instructor assessment, student self-assessment, peer assessment, evaluations from practice institutions and feedback from service recipients. An all-round, multi-perspective evaluation mechanism is thereby established to guarantee the comprehensiveness and objectivity of evaluation results, and fully exert the guiding and incentive functions of assessment.

4. Outcomes of Teaching Reform

After years of teaching reform and practice, remarkable achievements have been made in the construction of the Physiological Psychology course.

In terms of curriculum quality, the course's core instructors participated in compiling Physiological Psychology, a textbook listed in the 12th Five-Year Plan and 13th Five-Year Plan issued by the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, which lays a solid foundation for the professionalism and standardization of teaching content. The course was recognized as a Shandong Provincial First-Class Online-Offline Blended Course and an Excellent Community Education Curriculum Resource of Shandong Province in 2024, and was approved as a Provincial Model Course for Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education in 2025, marking continuous improvement in curriculum construction. Relevant teaching achievements

won the Second and Third Prizes of Binzhou Outstanding Social Science Achievements, which demonstrates the practical effectiveness of integrating teaching and scientific research.

The teaching effectiveness has won unanimous recognition from students, faculty and industry experts. Students commented that the course features “fascinating content” with “extensive and in-depth extensions closely linked to professional knowledge”. Industry experts also delivered full affirmation, noting that “instructors demonstrate outstanding performance and proficient command of teaching content” and that “the classroom attaches importance to interactive guidance and realizes implicit infiltration of ideological-political elements”. Such feedback proves that the curriculum has formed a mature teaching model and distinctive educational characteristics.

Second, in talent cultivation, students’ innovative practical capabilities have been markedly enhanced, with a total of 24 innovation and entrepreneurship projects declared in the past five years. Adhering to the philosophy of promoting learning through competitions and empowering students via hands-on training, the course deeply integrates the cultivation of ideological and political literacy into professional skill training. Under faculty guidance, students have achieved outstanding results in various professional competitions: they have won 4 national-level awards and 12 provincial-level awards in key contests including the National Teaching Innovation Competition for University Students’ Psychological Counseling Courses, the National Forum on Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Undergraduates Majoring in Psychology, and the Shandong Provincial Competition of Applied Psychological Skills for University Students.

Award-winning works center on three core orientations: popular science communication of mental health, innovative practice of psychological education and teaching, and development and application of applied psychological cases. These works fully reflect students’ practical competency in applying professional knowledge of physiological psychology, while profoundly conveying the ideological-political philosophy of caring for mental health and serving the general public, thus realizing coordinated improvement in students’ core professional competencies and ideological-political literacy.

Finally, in terms of social radiating influence, the outcomes of curriculum reform benefit not only teachers and students of this university, but also exert positive spillover effects on other universities and social learners. On the Zhihuishu Online Education Platform, 19 universities have incorporated this course into their elective systems, and learners from another 75 institutions have enrolled in the course. On China University MOOC, the total number of social learners has exceeded 15,000, with an overall course rating of 4.8 out of 5. The course has received extensive praise from learners for its high-quality teaching content and comprehensive teaching services. Furthermore, the course has been selected for featured display in the psychology MOOC section of the Xuexi Qiangguo Platform, further expanding its social coverage and influence. It has made vital contributions to popularizing mental health knowledge and improving the mental health literacy of the whole population.

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