

Exploration of the Path of Legal Education from the Perspective of the Integration of Ideological and Political Courses in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Schools

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Abstract: With the in-depth advancement of the integration of ideological and political education in primary, secondary and tertiary schools, related research has gradually shifted from the construction of a macro system to the analysis of micro elements and typical case studies. Although significant progress has been made in legal education in ideological and political courses, there are still many challenges: the structural shortage of professional legal teachers, the obvious differences in legal literacy among teachers, and the uneven development of legal education at different educational stages need to be addressed urgently. Based on an empirical investigation of the current situation of legal education in ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools, this study comprehensively employs literature research methods and social survey analysis methods to propose optimization paths such as cross-grade collaborative lesson preparation mechanism, professional small-class training system, teacher self-study plan and multi-subject collaborative education model from the dimensions of teacher team building, teaching model innovation and teaching resource integration. The aim is to provide theoretical references and practical solutions for promoting the high-quality development of legal education in the context of integration.

Keywords: Integration of ideological and political education in primary, secondary and tertiary schools; legal education; teacher training

In recent years, with the proposal and in-depth development of the integrated construction of ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools, scholars and educators have actively conducted theoretical research and practical exploration on the integrated legal education of ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools, promoting the effective play of the key role of ideological and political courses in moral education and improving the overall educational effect. However, most of the current research mainly focuses on the macro framework of the integration of ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools, with few studies focusing on legal education in the context of the integration of ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools. In fact, the rule of law education for teenagers is a fundamental task in the comprehensive rule of law. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, major arrangements have been made for comprehensively advancing law-based governance. The integrated promotion of legal education in ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools has become an urgent requirement for development in the new era.

I. The current situation of legal education in ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools

1.1 The current situation of legal education in ideological and political courses at the university stage

At the university level, only students majoring in law-related fields can systematically learn legal knowledge. Students majoring in other non-law fields mainly learn legal knowledge from the university's public basic course "Ideological and Moral Education and Rule of Law", excluding the legal major elective courses offered by individual institutions. However, in the textbook "Ideological and Moral Education and Rule of Law" (2023 edition), only Chapter 6 is related to law, and there is more content on legal principles and less on the application of law. Due to the personal professional quality of teachers and their emphasis on legal education, the teaching effect of professional content varies in the teaching process. The design and operation of case studies and practical activities are also rather scattered and casual. Most of the legal content is taught in ideological and political classes following the progress of the teaching materials. Other more prominent issues, such as cyber security, information fraud and other related education, are handled by counselors, class teachers, department heads or other departments. The frequent reports of college students being embroiled in pyramid schemes, cyber security cases, and telecom fraud cases in recent years all reflect the lack of awareness of law and security among college students.

1.2 The current situation of legal education in ideological and political courses at the secondary school stage

Secondary education is further divided into junior high school and senior high school. The ideological and political textbook used in junior high school is "Morality and Rule of Law". Take the People's Education Edition as an example. All the textbooks contain content related to the rule of law, especially the eighth grade lower semester, which is about the constitution, citizens' rights and obligations, and the spirit of the rule of law. High school textbooks consist of four compulsory and three optional compulsory books on Ideological and Political education. The content related to law is mainly concentrated in compulsory Book 3 and optional compulsory Book 2, which respectively introduce the Communist Party of China, comprehensive rule of law, civil rights and

obligations, family and marriage, etc. It is obvious that the content of the rule of law education in high school is already very rich, but the teaching of the rule of law course cannot cover every student. On the one hand, due to the pressure of the college entrance examination, the phenomenon of some political classes being occupied and transferred to other courses still exists. On the other hand, due to the “3+1+2” model of the college entrance examination reform, political classes will be taught in a class rotation system, and a considerable number of students will have no political classes at all, further reducing the opportunity to receive legal education. According to the authoritative judicial big data released by the Supreme People’s Court of the People’s Republic of China in 2018, junior high school students have become a high-risk group for juvenile delinquency, accounting for as high as 68.08%, while senior high school students account for 6.1%. Therefore, attaching importance to and improving the level of legal education for middle school students is of great significance for preventing juvenile delinquency.

1.3 The current situation of legal education in ideological and political courses at the primary school stage

In the “Morality and Rule of Law” textbook for primary education published by the People’s Education Press, the content of the Constitution, citizens, and laws only appears in the sixth grade. Due to the students’ age and cognitive level, teachers tend to focus more on explaining more understandable moral norms, rules, etc., and rarely mention legal professional content, and it is not easy to explain it thoroughly. But with the development of the information age, especially the popularity of the Internet and the widespread use of mobile phones by students, primary school students have more opportunities and channels to participate in social activities than before, especially through online games, mobile phone software and other means to participate in social groups and online community activities, and the resulting economic security, legal disputes and other situations have to be taken seriously. This fully demonstrates that there is still a large educational vacuum between the development of legal education in primary school and the growth and life of students.

II. Problems with the integration of legal education in ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools

2.1 There is a lack of innovation in teaching models and the teaching effect needs to be improved

At present, legal education in ideological and political courses still follows the traditional classroom teaching model. Teachers’ teaching of legal education is still mainly theoretical lectures based on textbooks. Experiential learning such as visits, lectures, and thematic activities is scarce. There are few practical courses that are fixed as regular teaching content and there is a lack of necessary evaluation of teaching effectiveness. In terms of teaching content, some legal provisions are relatively dull and not closely related to students’ actual situation, and the teaching methods are monotonous, which leads to poor teaching effect. The evaluation of the effect of legal education in ideological and political courses is mostly based on the summary evaluation of written tests, lacking the examination of practical hands-on ability, organizational ability, etc. Therefore, there is still much room for innovation, reform and improvement in the effect of legal education in ideological and political courses throughout the entire process from design to implementation to evaluation.

2.2 The legal literacy of teachers is uneven, and the integrated teaching ability of legal education is insufficient

Most of the ideological and political teachers who teach legal education in schools graduated from ideological and political education, law, political science, and education. There are few legal professionals who are willing to be hired as professional legal teachers in schools. There are also problems of poor legal foundation and low legal literacy to varying degrees among the teachers. For instance, there is a lack of professional knowledge in understanding legal logic, interpreting legal provisions, analyzing legal events, and interpreting hot issues, and insufficient guidance on the practical application of law. As a result, students fail to truly understand the legal logic and cause-and-effect relationship behind events, and thus fail to acquire effective cognition of legal knowledge, which greatly reduces the effectiveness of legal education. In addition, if teachers fail to grasp the course content and the depth of teaching that connect each stage in the teaching process, it will lead to problems such as repetitive teaching content and unclear levels, and the integrated ability of ideological and political course teachers in legal education also needs to be improved.

2.3 The utilization of teaching resources is insufficient and not systematic

Since the concept of “integration of ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary education” was proposed, the state has promoted the construction of teaching materials, teaching systems and digital network resource platforms from top to bottom, and built the national smart education platform and several batches of national-level excellent courses. However, in terms of usage, these high-quality teaching resources have not been systematically introduced into front-line classrooms. Due to different teaching materials, insufficient preparation by teachers, or the inability of teaching evaluation and other links to correspond with teachers’ own courses, the referenced course content is not systematic or cannot be used at all. As a result, a large number of high-quality course resources have failed to play an effective role. The development and utilization of substantive teaching resources available for legal education, such as school resources, social resources, community resources, and other legal industry resources, are far from sufficient and need to be further explored and developed.

2.4 Teaching evaluation fails to reflect students’ true legal literacy

At present, the teaching evaluation system in most schools is still mainly based on the results of academic tests. However, the single-dimensional performance evaluation is too limited and fails to reflect students’ practical abilities in specific applications, as well as their psychological tendencies in specific legal events. There may even be cases where students have good test papers but commit illegal acts in reality. Therefore, this evaluation method fails to fully reflect students’ true legal literacy. The cultivation and development of legal literacy is a long process, and the lagging nature of the evaluation methods will inevitably lead to a mismatch in improvement and motivation with the developmental evaluation based on continuous observation, recording and reflection of students’ learning process, resulting in a deficiency in the diagnostic and guiding functions of legal education

evaluation at different educational stages. Therefore, the establishment of a relatively detailed and process-oriented integrated evaluation system for legal education is an urgent issue to be explored.

III. The path to building an integrated legal education system for ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools

3.1 To enhance the legal literacy of ideological and political education teachers in all aspects

3.1.1 To regularly organize teachers to prepare lessons collectively across different educational stages

Regularly organize teaching and research exchanges among teachers at all educational stages of primary, secondary and tertiary education. Frequent discussions can gradually lead problems from the surface to the depth, effectively dealing with various problems that arise in the daily teaching process. On the basis of the original integrated collective lesson preparation arrangement for ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools, separate collective lesson preparation for legal education can be organized, and all primary, secondary and tertiary schools in the region can be grouped. Regular collective lesson preparation meetings across educational stages within the groups can be organized, and institutions that have the conditions to share teaching resources can be expanded to regular online collective lesson preparation exchanges and discussions. To fully enhance the integrated teaching ability of teachers at all educational stages.

3.1.2 To conduct small-class training for specialized courses in a targeted manner

Conduct targeted training for ideological and political course teachers to enhance their legal literacy, especially the legal issues that are more concentrated and typical among students of different age groups, and the key issues that are closely related to teachers' teaching, such as basic legal theory and practical application solutions. In addition, the region or the school itself can organize training courses suitable for the improvement of the legal teaching ability of ideological and political course teachers in the school. They should study in a small scope and in a deep level with the goal of practical application in teaching, so that teachers can truly improve their ability to apply the law and thus have more confidence to teach the legal course well.

3.1.3 To encourage teachers to take legal courses on their own

Teachers are encouraged to take legal professional courses on their own according to their circumstances, to study in accordance with the requirements for legal industry qualifications, and to fill the gaps in basic legal knowledge. Schools may support and encourage teachers to obtain judicial professional qualification certificates and link them to professional title evaluation, "dual-qualified" recognition or other teacher development and continuing education mechanisms to stimulate teachers' enthusiasm for learning and improve their ability to teach the rule of law.

3.2 To innovate teaching models and build a diversified education model

3.2.1 Teachers of ideological and political courses work in collaboration with counselors, class teachers and vice principals for rule of law

Integrate legal education into the all-staff, all-process and all-round education system of the school, build a diversified legal education model, and strengthen and extend the legal education effect of ideological and political

courses in the school. Strengthen the coordination and cooperation among ideological and political course teachers, counselors, class advisors and other members. For example, ideological and political course teachers conduct theoretical teaching and practical course guidance in the main teaching position, class advisors organize social practice activities through class meetings or class activities, and counselors go deep into student communities to track students' psychological dynamics, living conditions and other information. By taking advantage of different identities and teaching scenarios, we can design educational links in a task, expanded content, multi-level and all-round way, seamlessly integrate the content of legal education from theoretical learning to practical application, and jointly promote the realization of the overall goal of legal education at different levels.

3.2.2 To collaborate with social institutions such as the community to expand teaching resources

Continue to organize and carry out various types of legal-themed education and social practice activities, make some of these activities regular, and designate them as fixed links in the legal education of ideological and political courses. Conduct in-depth cooperation and practical activity design with off-campus community organizations, judicial institutions, public security organs and other departments. Continue to invest patience and energy in exploring and tapping into the resources and practical methods of communities and social institutions. Design more in-depth practical courses based on different student subjects and enrich the levels and sense of participation of activities, etc. Through the accumulation of experience from each practical teaching activity, continuously improve and enhance the teaching effect, perfect the exploration of the social level of legal education, and find more convenient and long-term effective ways to promote the consolidation and improvement of the effect of legal education on campus.

3.2.3 To attach importance to the influence of family legal education

Attach great importance to the influence of family education, implement home visit systems, home-school communication systems, parent committees and other systems in various forms according to different educational stages, and actively explore other means of maintaining contact between schools and parents through Internet communities and community building. It is still necessary for higher school grades to actively carry out activities such as "Parent Visit Day", "Parent Tour Day", "Family Education Sharing and Exchange Meeting", to proactively grasp the situation of students' family education and to predict and respond to students' legal actions in a timely manner.

3.3 To fully explore and utilize teaching resources such as textbooks, teachers and courses to expand the influence of legal education

3.3.1 To encourage teachers to develop school-based loose-leaf teaching materials

Collect and organize legal teaching materials other than textbooks at any time, and study and organize school-based loose-page teaching materials that are in line with the situation of students in the region and the school. For example, based on the timeliness and particularity of current hot topics, provide positive guidance to students in a timely manner and explain the legal issues reflected. The teaching process can be case-based and used together with the loose-leaf textbook as a model for legal education, and developed into a more distinctive

legal education resource of our school, which not only reflects the characteristics of our school but also plays a better role in the legal education process of ideological and political courses, improving teaching efficiency and quality.

3.3.2 To explore high-quality teaching resources and introduce the mechanism of mobile guest lecturers

Continue to promote the regularity, standardization and scale of activities such as “legal lectures in schools” and make them part of regular teaching. By making use of the integrated ideological and political education platform for primary, secondary and tertiary education, we will further explore high-quality teaching resources and use them in conjunction with school-based courses to encourage professional practitioners, renowned teachers and outstanding legal education teachers to take the initiative and develop more excellent courses. In terms of the mechanism, legal or law enforcement professionals will be included in part-time recruitment positions in the form of guest lecturers, off-campus counselors, and advisors of the rule of law teaching and research section, and a fixed hourly fee will be paid to attract professionals to officially enter the campuses of all educational stages and be able to conduct regular and routine teaching and research work.

3.3.3 To make effective use of the integrated platform for ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools

In the process of education and teaching, actively guide students of higher grades to create artistic works related to the rule of law, such as films, stories, animations, paintings, posters, etc., and promote excellent materials as teaching resources. Through the cross-grade exchange and discussion platform for the integration of ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools, such works can be borrowed and displayed. By making full use of online resources, offline exchanges, centralized exhibitions and other means, such materials can be introduced into the classroom as vivid teaching cases to expand the influence of excellent works and better improve the quality and efficiency of the integration of ideological and political courses in primary, secondary and tertiary schools.

3.4 To actively explore multi-faceted and comprehensive evaluation methods

In the era of big data, various evaluation data of each student’s learning and growth process can be obtained through technological means, such as outstanding performance and effect in participating in legal education activities, the process of participating in legal events, psychological tendencies during the legal education process, etc., including the results of students’ daily psychological assessment scales. These data can be classified by subjects who have close contact with students, such as ideological and political course teachers, class advisors, and counselors, to make daily records or centralized evaluations. They can be finely collected and summarized using databases or evaluation systems, and individual electronic files of students can be established and synchronized to the archives of each educational stage, effectively helping to make each stage of education more targeted and coherent.

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