

Practical Approaches to Life Education for University Students under the Background of "Great Ideological and Political Education"

Hongzhi Chen, Yameng Zhang

Yulin Normal University, Yulin, 537000, China

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Abstract: In the new era, university students need to possess correct values and a healthy psychological state. The significance of life education for university students lies in guiding them to establish correct views on life and civic consciousness, enabling them to develop healthy lifestyles, positive psychological qualities, and a strong sense of social responsibility. Ideological and political education is highly compatible with life education for university students. The integration of ideological and political education elements into life education for university students includes the design and selection of teaching content, innovation and practice in educational methods, the construction and optimization of the educational environment, and the reform and deepening of educational evaluations.

1. Introduction

Mr. Cai Yuanpei once stated, "A university is a place for studying profound knowledge." [1] University students are the main body of "university-goers." They are the most dynamic and spirited group, endowed with strong creativity and pioneering spirit. They are the backbone for promoting the development and prosperity of new ideas and cultures, scientific and technological innovations, and social progress. In the new era, university students need to possess correct values and a healthy psychological state. In the name of youth, they carry forward their aspirations, shoulder the responsibilities of the era, and achieve the unity of individual and overall development, ensuring "every member of society can freely develop and utilize all his capabilities and strengths." [2] To some extent, the life ideals, quality, and value of university students determine the future and fate of the nation and ethnicity.

As early as 2007, the "Eleventh Five-Year Plan for National Educational Development" explicitly called for "strengthening students' psychological health education and cherishing life education." [3] In 2010, the Ministry of Education's "National Medium and Long-Term Education Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010-2020)" emphasized the importance of "safety education, life education, national defense education, and sustainable development education" [4], placing life education on the same level of importance as national defense education for the first time. In 2021, the Ministry of Education and other departments issued opinions on comprehensively strengthening and improving school health and health education in the new era, proposing a high-quality health

education system. This system integrates health education with the five educational aspects of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor, prioritizing moral education and incorporating health education throughout the educational, teaching, and student management services. It includes conducting life and familial education, enhancing students' respect for and appreciation of life." [5] As society develops, the growth environment for university students has changed, presenting new characteristics in their physical and mental development. Integrating ideological and political education elements into university students' life education holds significant contemporary relevance and profound historical significance.

2. The Significance and Need for Life Education among University Students

Life is the sole carrier of all intelligence, strength, and beautiful emotions. In a certain sense, the life ideals, life quality, and life values of university students determine the future and fate of the nation and ethnicity. In recent years, university students have faced numerous psychological stresses and challenges amid the intertwining changes of real and virtual environments. Increased discomfort due to mental burnout and frequent occurrences of irrational behavior within the student population highlight issues of life being undervalued or disregarded.

2.1. The Significance of Life Education for University Students

Life education for university students holds significant importance. The greatest challenges in life involve the pursuit of life values and the exploration of the meaning of existence. University students are at a crucial stage of physical and psychological development, and their lifestyle choices have significant impacts on their future health and happiness. Life education aims to foster healthy and positive learning and living styles among students, helping them develop good habits, improve physical health, prevent and address common health issues, and enhance their quality of life. Furthermore, life education encourages students to cherish life and explore and discover the beauty in the psychological traits that help them understand their emotional and psychological needs. It equips them to handle setbacks and difficulties, cultivate a positive mindset, enhance psychological resilience and adaptability, and establish correct life values. Life education also aims to nurture a sense of social responsibility and civic awareness among students, promoting harmonious relationships between life and self, life and nature, and life and society. It teaches students to care for themselves, improve their personalities, enhance their quality of life, understand the value and meaning of life, actively engage with social issues, and participate in community service activities. By doing so, they contribute to society while achieving personal development, becoming new-era individuals capable of shouldering the responsibilities of national rejuvenation.

2.2. The Need for Life Education among University Students

In 2021, the Office of the Ministry of Education issued a notice on "Strengthening the Management of Student Psychological Health," emphasizing the importance of arranging diverse forms of life education and education on handling setbacks.[6] In 2023, the Ministry of Education and seventeen other departments released the "Comprehensive Action Plan to Strengthen and Improve Student Psychological Health in the New Era (2023-2025)," which clearly states the need to "implement the fundamental task of fostering character and virtue by adhering to a health-first educational philosophy." [7] Understanding the needs for life education among university students is crucial for designing and implementing educational activities. According to the characteristics of university students, the needs for life education primarily include health management and self-adjustment, psychological health education, and the holistic development of individuals and society.

3. Alignment of Ideological and Political Education with College Students' Life Education

The integration of ideological and political education with life education for college students is highly synergistic. Ideological and political education is defined as "a social practice activity that, using specific ideological concepts, political viewpoints, and moral norms, exerts a purposeful, planned, and organized influence on its members, shaping their thoughts and morals to meet the needs of a certain society or class." [8] Life education for college students involves "purposefully, plannedly, and organizedly cultivating life awareness, survival skills, and elevating life values among the student population, guiding them to understand, protect, cherish, and appreciate life, explore the meaning of life, and ultimately fully demonstrate their life values." [9] There exists an intrinsic connection and mutual enhancement between ideological and political education and life education for college students. Ideological and political education is a crucial pathway for fostering correct political ideologies and moral values in students, while life education promotes a positive attitude towards life and value concepts.

Firstly, ideological and political education is an integral component of life education for college students. It aims to cultivate correct ideological and value concepts, which significantly influence students' perspectives on life and values. Therefore, ideological and political education serves as the foundation and premise for life education. Secondly, ideological and political education enhances the effectiveness of life education. It guides students in correctly handling difficulties and setbacks in life, establishing proper life and value perspectives, enabling them to actively address various issues in life, and strengthening their mental and physical well-being. Lastly, ideological and political education provides theoretical support and guidance for life education. Incorporating the content and methods of ideological and political education into life education for college students enhances their ideological and political literacy as well as their life skills. Ideological and political education involves numerous social science theories and methods, which are vitally instructive for the implementation of life education. By utilizing the theories and methods of ideological and political education, life education can be more effectively implemented and its educational impact enhanced.

In summary, under the comprehensive advancement of the "major ideological and political courses," the theoretical knowledge, value concepts, and spiritual pursuits of ideological and political education are integrated into various courses, subtly influencing the students' ideological awareness and behavior. [10] This integration ensures that ideological and political education and life education for college students work together to synergistically educate.

4. Integration Pathways of Ideological and Political Education Elements in University Students' Life Education

There is a close relationship between ideological and political education and university students' life education. The integration of ideological and political education into life education for university students can be approached through teaching content, educational methods, the educational environment, and evaluation. Specifically, this integration can be realized through the design and selection of teaching content, innovation and practice in educational methods, construction and optimization of the educational environment, and reform and deepening of educational evaluation—collectively referred to as the "four-in-one" integration pathway. In detail, we should embed the theories and practices of ideological and political education into the teaching content of life education for university students. By innovating and practicing educational methods, elements of ideological and political education can be incorporated throughout the entire process of life education. At the same time, optimizing the educational environment can create a positive and upward learning atmosphere. Finally, establishing a scientific educational evaluation system allows for a comprehensive assessment of the outcomes of both ideological and political education and life

education of university students. From the Perspective of Designing and Selecting Teaching Content: Specifically, by selecting appropriate content and materials related to ideological and political education, such as knowledge about perspectives on life, values, and morals, students can be guided to correctly address life's challenges and develop proper life perspectives and values. From the Perspective of Innovating and Practicing Educational Methods: By introducing diverse educational methods such as case studies, discussion-based teaching, practical activities, and immersive experiences, students can be actively engaged in life education, enhancing their practical and innovative skills. From the Perspective of Constructing and Optimizing the Educational Environment: By creating a positive, united, and supportive educational environment, students are provided with favorable conditions for learning and living, fostering the right perspectives on life and values. From the Perspective of Reforming and Deepening Educational Evaluation: Educational evaluation is crucial for guiding the direction of educational development and acts as a "baton" in this process. A scientific educational evaluation system should be established not only to focus on the academic outcomes of students but also to promote the fundamental task of moral education, paying attention to the complete development of university students and comprehensively assessing their results in ideological and political education as well as life education.

5. Specific Measures for Integrating Ideological and Political Education Elements into College Students' Life Education

To better promote the organic integration of ideological and political education with life education among college students, specific measures are implemented to enhance the effectiveness and feasibility of life education practices.

5.1. Curriculum Design and Selection

The design and selection of teaching content are critical for integrating ideological and political education elements into life education for college students. Properly designed and selected teaching content can better guide students to think about and explore key themes in life education, nurturing their comprehensive qualities and humanistic spirit. When designing the curriculum, it's important to balance political relevance, contemporaneity, scientific basis, and diversity. Core themes of life education for college students include foundational knowledge of psychological health, college adaptation, emotional management, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, life dignity, the meaning of life, and social responsibility. These themes guide students to reflect deeply, fostering their humanistic care and sense of social responsibility. Diverse teaching content and engaging educational scenarios are created to meet the varied learning needs and interests of students. The selection of content should emphasize the integration of excellent traditional culture with modern values to enhance students' cultural confidence and innovative thinking. The cultivation of interdisciplinary and comprehensive qualities is prioritized to enhance the practical effectiveness of curriculum-based ideological and political education, improving students' overall abilities and innovative spirit. The combination of theory and practice is emphasized to allow students to experience the essence of life, understand its meaning, and explore its value in the classroom practices of life education.

5.2. Educational Methods: Innovation and Practice

The innovation and practical application of educational methods are effective means of integrating ideological and political education elements into life education for college students. Innovative educational methods and practical activities can stimulate students' interest in learning and proactive

engagement, enhancing the educational impact of the curriculum. The organic integration of explicit and implicit education focuses on diverse teaching methods, such as research-based learning, scenario simulation, immersive experiences, group activities, and hands-on practice, all designed to stimulate students' learning interest and initiative. Heuristic teaching methods are used to encourage students to think and explore independently, developing their innovative thinking and problem-solving skills. With a focus on "developmental" education, students are guided from learning theoretical knowledge to engaging in various practical activities, fostering correct values and a healthy psychological state.

5.3. Building and Optimizing the Educational Environment

The construction and optimization of the educational environment are critical to integrating ideological and political education elements into university students' life education. On one hand, constructing an educational environment involves strengthening campus culture, enriching it, fostering a university spirit, practicing socialist core values, and cultivating students' cultural literacy and humanistic spirit. It also involves integrating educational resources both inside and outside the campus, enhancing collaborative education among schools, governments, and enterprises, increasing work vitality, promoting innovation, and expanding coverage to provide students with broad learning and growth opportunities. This approach aims to improve outreach capabilities and meet their individual development needs. Moreover, strengthening the academic ethos and improving teachers' political and ideological literacy and teaching capabilities ensure high-quality educational services for students. On the other hand, optimizing the educational environment includes enhancing the cultural education function to nourish students' minds and cultivate their character. This involves improving the learning environment by creating beautiful spaces and comfortable facilities, providing good learning conditions, supporting psychological health by integrating moral and psychological education, establishing a comprehensive psychological support system, enhancing humanitarian care and psychological counseling, focusing on students' psychological health needs, fostering a positive and healthy mindset, and promoting their holistic psychological and moral development. Additionally, supporting student organizations by integrating various practical resources, supporting participation in diverse groups, strengthening project management, offering a rich array of activities, and embedding ideological and political education into all activities help enhance students' practical skills and cultivate their national spirit, promoting their overall development.

5.4. Education Evaluation: Reform and Deepening

The reform and deepening of educational evaluation are intrinsic drivers for incorporating ideological and political education elements into university students' life education. The core goal of educational evaluation reform is to enhance the quality of education and the comprehensive development of students, with ideological and political education playing a crucial role in cultivating correct worldviews, life views, and values among students. This integration not only helps students form correct values in learning, living, and socializing but also enhances their positive character, improves their ideological and moral literacy, and increases their life aspirations and potential for development, promoting their comprehensive growth. Therefore, reforming and deepening educational evaluation focuses on students' learning outcomes and emphasizes the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, assessing the entire growth process of students, and comprehensively evaluating their ideological, political, and life education outcomes. The reform could guide students to actively engage in ideological and political activities by setting assessment indicators, such as participation, learning outcomes, and social responsibility. It could also encourage the integration of ideological and political education with life education to cultivate their life views and values. Finally, by providing diverse learning opportunities and platforms and promoting

curriculum reform aimed at "course-based ideological and political education," it optimizes course offerings and promotes comprehensive development in ideological and political education for students. Life education for university students needs to occur across various disciplines, with ideological and political education being a significant part.

6. Conclusion

Ideological and political education elements hold a significant position and role in the implementation process of life education for university students. Thus, in the context of the "big ideological and political classes," the integration of ideological and political education with life education becomes even more crucial. In the new era, it is imperative to prioritize moral education, foster virtue, integrate the contents and requirements of life education for new-era university students into the moral education goals of course-based ideological and political education, and explore effective pathways for incorporating ideological and political education into life education, expanding its content, methods, environment, and evaluation.

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