The Inherent Mechanism and Implementation Pathways of Collaborative Education between Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education and Ideological and Political Theory Courses

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Abstract: *In the pursuit of efficiency in knowledge transmission, modern education often faces the challenge of structural separation from the process of value cultivation, which hinders the holistic achievement of educational objectives. To deepen the understanding of education's integrative function, this study aims to systematically explore the inherent mechanism and systemic pathways for collaborative education between subject-based curricula and specialized value education courses. This research first analyzes the ontological connection between the two at a theoretical level, arguing that knowledge systems inherently contain value attributes, thereby establishing a theoretical foundation for collaboration. Furthermore, it elucidates the deep-seated operational mechanism of collaborative education from three dimensions: value consensus, cognitive construction, and field integration. This reveals key processes such as isomorphic and complementary goal-setting, the mutual embedding of knowledge and values, and the coupling of micro-contexts with macro-ecosystems. Building on this analysis, the paper proposes systematic implementation pathways aimed at synergistic effects, including content reconstruction based on knowledge genealogy, methodological cross-learning that promotes dialogue between teaching paradigms, and evaluation coordination that emphasizes holistic educational outcomes. This study constructs a comprehensive analytical framework that progresses from theoretical groundwork and mechanism analysis to pathway design. It provides both theoretical foundations and practical references for transcending the mere addition of courses and achieving the deep integration of knowledge transmission and value guidance.*

Keywords: *Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education; Ideological and Political Theory Courses; Collaborative Education; Inherent Mechanism; Implementation Pathways.*

Introduction

The fundamental purpose of education lies in promoting the holistic development of individuals, which intrinsically requires the processes of knowledge acquisition, competency cultivation, and value formation to constitute an organically unified progression. However, in educational practice, a phenomenon often exists where specialized courses tasked with systematic value guidance and various subject-based courses centered on disciplinary knowledge transmission remain distant in their objectives, fragmented in their content, and divergent in their methodologies. This leads to the fragmentation of value guidance and the dilution of educational efficacy. To resolve this dilemma, it is imperative to delve into the theoretical underpinnings of how and why these two types of courses can achieve effective collaboration. This inquiry is not only a practical imperative for enhancing the quality of talent cultivation but also a theoretical necessity for re-examining the fundamental principles of education. The significance and necessity of this study reside in its aim to systematically construct a theoretical framework for collaborative education, meticulously elucidate its inherent operational mechanism, and design actionable systemic pathways. Thereby, it seeks to provide crucial theoretical support and practical guidance for bridging the divide between knowledge-based education and value-based education, and for constructing a new, integrated paradigm for holistic education.

1. Theoretical Construction and Conceptual Clarification of Collaborative Education

1.1 Analysis of the Ontological Connection Between Curricula and Ideological-Political Education

The fundamental task of education lies in the holistic development of individuals, where knowledge transmission and value cultivation constitute two inseparable aspects of this process. From the perspective of the sociology of knowledge, the disciplinary knowledge system carried by any curriculum is not a value-neutral collection of purely objective information. Rather, it inherently contains specific epistemological paradigms, methodological orientations, and ethical implications. The processes of discovering, organizing, and transmitting disciplinary knowledge intrinsically reflect humanity's pursuit of ultimate values such as truth, goodness, and beauty. Therefore, it naturally possesses the potential attributes for value education. This potential forms the ontological foundation that enables curricula to transcend mere skills training and to participate in the construction of an individual's value system.

Within the academic context, ideological-political education can be understood as a specialized educational activity aimed at fostering the development of an individual's value rationality and the construction of a meaningful world. Its core concern lies in guiding individuals to form a stable framework for value judgment and the capacity for meaning interpretation. The connection between curriculum and ideological-political education at the ontological level is not an external, mechanical grafting but an inevitable linkage based on their shared essence of "education as guidance." Both act upon the cognitive subject's process of meaning understanding, differing primarily in their dimensions of action and degree of explicitness. The curriculum typically employs concrete disciplinary concepts and logical systems as its explicit vehicle, whereas value guidance often permeates implicitly through the selection, interpretation, and application of knowledge. It is precisely this deep-seated common origin that provides the theoretical possibility for the intrinsic integration of their educational objectives.

1.2 The Elemental Structure and Functional Orientation of the Collaborative Education System

The collaborative education system is a dynamic organic whole formed through the appropriate coupling of multiple heterogeneous elements. Its core structural elements primarily include: the specialized content system serving as the core resource for value guidance; the implicit value carriers distributed across various disciplinary curricula; the community of educators and learners as the interactive agents; and the specific teaching contexts and institutional environments that host these interactions. These elements do not exist in isolation. The specialized content system provides the guarantee for the systematicity and depth of value guidance, while the implicit value carriers embedded within disciplinary curricula offer a concrete and contextualized field for understanding. The interaction between educators and learners constitutes the key mechanism for activating these elements, and the institutional environment defines the rules and boundaries governing their interactions[1].

The system exhibits dual functional characteristics of integration and complementarity in its orientation. The integrative function manifests itself in consolidating value education elements, which might otherwise be dispersed across different curriculum modules, into a coherent network of meaning directed toward common educational objectives, thereby overcoming the fragmentation and randomness of value guidance. The complementary function is reflected in the mutual support and enhancement among different elements. Specialized in-depth analysis and concrete experiences within disciplinary contexts supplement each other, while the universality of theoretical exposition and the particularity of case analysis mutually validate one another, collectively constructing a multidimensional educational space. The overall function of the system exceeds the mere sum of its individual components, and its effectiveness depends on the closeness of the coupling relationships among the elements and the efficacy of the interactive mechanisms.

1.3 The Logic of Integrating Knowledge Transmission and Value Guidance

The integration of knowledge transmission and value guidance follows an inherent logic that progresses from cognitive construction to meaning generation. The very process of knowledge acquisition is an activity of cognitive construction in which the subject assimilates or accommodates external information based on existing cognitive schemata. In this process, the individual not only gains a descriptive understanding of the objective world but also unconsciously adopts or reconstructs the value presuppositions, thinking paradigms, and cultural stances embedded within the knowledge

system. The scientific spirit of rigorous truth-seeking, the humanistic concern for the fate of humanity, and the aesthetic orientation towards symmetry and harmony, all of which are inherent in disciplinary knowledge, subtly shape the learner's affective attitudes and value orientations during cognitive construction.

The deeper logic of integration lies in the fact that effective value guidance must be premised on solid cognitive understanding, while profound knowledge internalization often requires value-based identification as both its driving force and ultimate destination. Value identification can endow knowledge acquisition with a sense of purpose and direction, thereby stimulating deeper learning engagement. Conversely, a thorough understanding of the world's complexity provides a rational foundation and reflective capacity for value judgment, making the establishment of values more stable and self-aware. The two are unified in higher-order thinking activities. For example, critical thinking involves both scrutinizing the reliability of knowledge and reflecting on value premises; creative thinking entails not only novel combinations of knowledge but also embodies the pursuit of values towards a better future. Therefore, the essence of integration is to realize the dialectical unity of truth and goodness within the deep structure of cognitive activity, rendering the educational process a unified progression of both knowledge advancement and character development.

2. Multidimensional Interpretation of the Inherent Mechanism of Collaborative Education

2.1 Value Consensus: The Isomorphic and Complementary Mechanisms of Educational Objectives

The holistic development of individuals, as the essential goal of education, intrinsically demands the organic unity of knowledge acquisition, competency cultivation, and value formation. Although specialized courses and various disciplinary courses differ in their surface-level content and form, their deep structures of educational objectives are isomorphic, both oriented towards cultivating individuals with a rational spirit, social consciousness, and sound character. Specialized courses are dedicated to constructing a systematic and conscious framework of value and meaning, while disciplinary courses, through the historical context, methodological implications, and ethical dimensions inherent in their knowledge systems, implicitly shape cognitive patterns and value perceptions that align with this framework. This isomorphism of objectives ensures an inherent consistency in the direction of education.

The complementary mechanism is rooted in the functional heterogeneity of the two types of courses in achieving isomorphic objectives. Specialized courses focus on the systematic clarification and critical reflection of values, with their function characterized by foundational and explicit features. In contrast, the value guidance within disciplinary courses is more contextual and diffuse, embedding abstract principles into specific knowledge contexts and problem scenarios, thereby providing concrete embodiment. The two form a relationship of mutual verification and support between universal principles and specific cases, as well as between theoretical speculation and contextual experience. Isomorphism establishes the unity of the system, while complementarity provides diversity in its realization. Together, they shape the stable yet dynamic value core of the collaborative education system[2].

2.2 Cognitive Construction: The Mechanism of Mutual Embedding Between Disciplinary Knowledge and Value Elements

The mutual embedding of disciplinary knowledge and value elements stems from the holistic nature of cognitive activity. Knowledge always exists within specific conceptual networks, theoretical paradigms, and cultural contexts. Its core concepts, principles, and methods inherently presuppose or imply particular understandings of the world and human nature, which naturally carry value-laden significance. For instance, the reverence for objectivity inherently contains the virtue of truth-seeking, while the recognition of complexity is linked to dialectical thinking. Value elements are not external to knowledge but constitute an integral part of its internal structure, with both being interdependent at the deep level of cognition.

The process of mutual embedding directly drives the learner's cognitive construction. When learners engage with disciplinary knowledge, their cognitive schemas simultaneously process both factual information and implicit value presuppositions. Effective instructional guidance can render implicit values explicit, prompting learners to actively contemplate value-laden questions such as "why" and "how should one act," while exploring questions of "what is" and "how to." This elevates knowledge

acquisition to an intellectual activity of meaning exploration and value discernment. Disciplinary knowledge provides the empirical foundation and logical constraints for value-based reflection, while value-based reflection imbues the application of knowledge with a sense of direction and responsibility. This achieves the dialectical unity and mutual enhancement of factual judgment and value judgment within the cognitive process.

2.3 Field Integration: The Coupling Effect of Teaching Contexts and the Educational Ecosystem

Teaching effectiveness relies on specific classroom contexts, while the depth and durability of holistic education depend on a broader academic and cultural ecosystem. The micro-level teaching context, encompassing the interactive atmosphere, topic design, and discourse practices, constitutes the immediate field where value guidance occurs. Specialized courses and disciplinary courses each shape distinct modes of meaning generation: the former emphasizes rational speculation, while the latter focuses on value considerations within problem-solving. Collaborative education requires these discrete contexts to establish conscious connections and mutual references. This is achieved by citing analytical frameworks or integrating empirical cases, thereby realizing the integration and interconnectedness of micro-level fields.

The deeper logic of field integration lies in the coupling between teaching contexts and the macro-level educational ecosystem. The macro ecosystem is constituted by academic paradigms, disciplinary traditions, institutional cultures, and socio-cultural psychology, providing the contextual norms and resources for all teaching situations. The effectiveness of a teaching context depends on its ability to activate and concretize the positive value resources from the macro ecosystem—such as the scientific spirit of truth-seeking and the humanistic tradition of care—within the immediate teaching interactions. Simultaneously, the convergence of numerous positive teaching contexts can, in turn, nourish and optimize the macro ecosystem, forming a virtuous cycle. The mechanism of field integration in collaborative education precisely involves meticulously designing contexts to construct channels connecting individual experiences with macro-level value resources. This creates an integrated educational space where micro-level interactions and macro-level culture are nested within and nourish each other.

3. Systemic Implementation Pathways for Synergistic Effects

3.1 Content Reconstruction: Connecting Value Logic Based on Knowledge Genealogy

The core of content-level synergy lies in transcending the mere transmission of surface-level disciplinary information and shifting towards the deep exploration and systematic integration of its inherent value implications. This requires a process of deconstruction and reinterpretation of existing curricular knowledge genealogies. The pathway is not one of mechanically embedding external elements but of following the generative logic and structural context of knowledge itself to reveal the value propositions embedded within. For instance, in natural science courses, one can trace the evolutionary history of key theories to demonstrate the spirit of truth-seeking, the courage to doubt, and the ethics of collaboration inherent within them. In humanities courses, the focus can be on the multiple interpretations of canonical texts or core issues, presenting the perennial debates concerning justice, dignity, tradition, and change contained therein. This reconstruction aims to delineate a "chain of meaning" that runs parallel to and interweaves with the "chain of facts" in knowledge, thereby making value logic an intrinsic perspective and necessary component for understanding the deep structure of knowledge[3].

To achieve this kind of integration, it is necessary to establish a cross-curricular "value-issue mapping" framework. This framework aims to identify core value issues that recur or are interrelated across different disciplinary knowledge systems, such as "the tension between reason and emotion," "the relationship between the individual and the community," and "the ethical boundaries of technological progress." By linking relevant knowledge points scattered across various courses under this shared map of issues, originally isolated disciplinary content forms networked connections at the level of meaning. Learners are thus able to encounter and deepen their understanding of the same set of complex value issues repeatedly in different contexts, thereby constructing a cognitive network of meaning that possesses both disciplinary specificity and overall coherence. This integration of value logic based on the inherent context of knowledge ensures the depth and academic rigor of collaborative education, preventing the arbitrariness and superficiality of value guidance.

3.2 Methodological Cross-Learning: Dialogue and Creative Transformation of Teaching Paradigms

The stimulation of synergistic effects relies on facilitating a shift from isolation to dialogue, and ultimately to creative transformation, between the teaching paradigms of specialized courses and disciplinary courses. Specialized courses typically employ methods such as theoretical deduction, normative analysis, and critical debate, which excel in clarifying, systematizing, and reflectively constructing values. In contrast, disciplinary courses more frequently utilize methods like case inquiry, experimental verification, project-based learning, and scenario simulation, focusing on applying knowledge and developing solutions within specific, authentic, or simulated problem contexts. The essence of methodological cross-learning lies in fostering mutual observation and appropriation between these two methodological traditions, thereby forming more inclusive and effective hybrid teaching strategies.

This creative transformation manifests in the organic integration of value-discrimination components into the teaching of disciplinary courses. For example, introducing ethical matrix analysis into engineering case discussions, incorporating social responsibility dimensions into business simulation decision-making, or applying critical value theory tools in the interpretation of literary works. This is not merely adding an extra discussion step but internalizing value reflection as a necessary component of the problem-solving methodology. Correspondingly, the teaching of specialized courses can also learn from the embodied and contextualized strategies of disciplinary courses. By designing complex moral dilemma scenarios, analyzing real historical decision-making cases, or simulating decision-making processes for social issues, the learning of value theory becomes closely connected to the concrete world of experience. The outcome of this paradigm dialogue is the emergence of a new type of teaching practice. This practice can guide learners to simultaneously engage in factual judgment, technical feasibility analysis, and value trade-offs when addressing complex cognitive tasks, thereby cultivating their integrated thinking ability to cope with the complexities of the real world[4].

3.3 Evaluation Synergy: Holistic Observation and Feedback on Educational Outcomes

An effective collaborative education system must be accompanied by a matching evaluation mechanism. The key lies in shifting the focus from assessing isolated knowledge points to the holistic and developmental observation of educational outcomes. Traditional evaluations often prioritize quantifiable knowledge mastery and skill application, whereas dimensions such as values and thinking dispositions, due to their implicit and long-term nature, are difficult to measure directly. Synergistic evaluation requires the design of a multidimensional observation indicator system. This system should be capable of capturing comprehensive changes in learners' cognition, affect, and behavioral tendencies. These include, but are not limited to: the clarity of value discernment and logical coherence demonstrated when analyzing complex issues; the sense of responsibility and ethical sensitivity exhibited during teamwork or project work; and the capacity for value integration and depth of understanding toward others' perspectives shown in interdisciplinary discussions. Evaluation methods need to combine various qualitative approaches, such as analysis-based assignments, situational response reports, learning portfolios, and structured observation records[5].

The synergy of evaluation is more profoundly reflected in its feedback function. The purpose of evaluation is not only assessment but also to promote the continuous improvement of the teaching system and the development of learners. The data and insights gained from holistic observation should form a closed-loop feedback system. This system can reveal to curriculum designers the actual effectiveness and blind spots in connecting value logic, indicate to instructors the results and areas needing adjustment in methodological transformation, and provide learners with formative feedback regarding the process of constructing their own world of meaning. This feedback emphasizes growth over judgment, focuses on the process rather than solely on outcomes, and strives to stimulate learners' metacognitive abilities, fostering their self-awareness of the developmental stages and characteristics of their own value cognition. Through evaluation synergy, the educational process transforms from a unidirectional imposition into a dynamic, generative system based on evidence, continuous reflection, and collective participation. This ensures that the inherent mechanisms of collaborative education can be effectively activated and continuously optimized in practice[6].

Conclusion

This study, through systematic theoretical construction, mechanism explication, and pathway design, demonstrates the necessity and feasibility of collaborative education between subject-based curricula and specialized value education courses. The research indicates that the synergy between the two is not an external, mechanical linkage but is rooted in the inherent demands of educational ontology, cognitive laws, and the ecological field. Value consensus ensures fundamental alignment in the direction of education; cognitive mutual embedding reveals the integrated process of knowledge acquisition and value formation; and field coupling provides the practical ground for collaboration. To realize this synergistic effect, it is necessary to achieve a deep integration of the inherent value logic within knowledge at the content level, promote the creative transformation of different teaching paradigms at the methodological level, and establish a holistic observation and feedback system at the evaluation level. The establishment of this analytical framework provides a new theoretical perspective and practical tools for understanding and promoting the deep integration of educational systems. Future research can build upon this foundation to further explore specific models of collaboration across different disciplinary types, mechanisms for developing teachers' collaborative teaching competencies, and the construction of new forms of collaborative education within digital learning environments. This will enable the continued deepening and expansion of the theoretical and practical frontiers of holistic education.

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