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Coordinating the Development of Foreign Language Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education and Global Competence Cultivation

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Abstract

Curriculum-based ideological and political education is a key practice for constructing a comprehensive ideological and political education framework, embodying the mission of "taking charge of one's own teaching area and fulfilling one's educational responsibility". Institutions of higher learning, as venues for advanced academic research, must continuously cultivate patriotic talents with an international vision and effectively address the fundamental educational questions of "who to cultivate, how to cultivate them, and for whom to cultivate them", which drives educational reform and development to new heights. Against the backdrop of comprehensively advancing China's modernization drive, steadily promoting the Belt and Road Initiative, and fostering a global community with a shared future for mankind since the 21st century, cultivating college students' global competence carries equally strategic significance. The Outline for Building a Strong Education Country (2024–2035), the first national action plan centered on advancing socialist modernization, provides top-level institutional design for the integrated development of education, science and technology, and talent training, serving as a strategic underpinning for advancing Chinese-style modernization. Drawing on the instructive guidelines of the Outline concerning curriculum-based ideological and political education and global governance, this paper constructs a collaborative advancement mechanism linking educational modernization, the development of a strong education country, and the realization of Chinese-style modernization. It explores new approaches to talent training, empowers the reserve of high-caliber talents for the new era, boosts the development of a strong education country, and fosters a positive interactive cycle between educational modernization and national rejuvenation.

Keywords

The Outline for Building a Strong Education Country; Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education; Global Competence

1. Introduction

General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized from a strategic perspective in his report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China that "A strong country must first have strong education, and Chinese-style modernization is underpinned by educational modernization". From the perspective of implementing the strategy of invigorating China through science and education and reinforcing the talent support for modernization, he issued special arrangements for "delivering education that satisfies the people". The Outline for Building a Strong Education Country (2024–2035) is a programmatic document on education development issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council for the new journey of the new era, and a targeted response to the times to deliver education that satisfies the people. The Outline specifies the general requirements for building a strong education country: fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, nurturing well-rounded socialist builders and successors with sound moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor education, and accelerating the development of a socialist education system with Chinese characteristics boasting robust ideological and political leadership, outstanding talent competitiveness and extensive international influence. This signals that all educational authorities at all levels must, on the one hand, deepen ideological and political education and integrate it into all academic disciplines; on the other hand, prioritize enhancing talent competitiveness by cultivating global competence to strengthen students' adaptability to international contexts and capacity to resolve international disputes. The ultimate goal is to secure China's discourse power in global affairs amid globalization and complete the closed loop of national rejuvenation. Nevertheless, China's higher education still faces institutional and training program deficiencies. Valuable insights for integrating ideological and political education and global competence cultivation can be drawn from the Outline.

2. Connotations and Internal Logical Links Between Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education and Global Competence

2.1. Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education

Curriculum-based ideological and political education is an integrated educational philosophy that establishes a full-staff, whole-process, all-curriculum education framework, aligns all disciplines with ideological and political theory courses to generate collaborative educational effects, and takes "fostering virtue through education" as the fundamental task of education. Rooted in Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, it aims to comprehensively improve the quality of talent training, strengthen students' recognition of core socialist values through educational and teaching reforms, and realize coordinated progress in knowledge acquisition, capacity building and value shaping. It bears

far-reaching significance for cultivating well-rounded socialist builders and successors.

The concept of curriculum-based ideological and political education was first proposed and piloted by the Shanghai Municipal Education Commission in 2014. In 2016, at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Institutions of Higher Education, General Secretary Xi Jinping clearly stated that "All courses should align with ideological and political theory courses to form synergistic effects". Since then, this concept has been formally incorporated into national educational policy frameworks, marking its transformation from local experimental practice to a national strategic initiative, and becoming a core philosophy and innovative pathway for universities to fulfill the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and shaping the soul of education.

In the new era, it is urgent to break free from the discourse shackles of Western centrism and uphold a distinct discourse stance rooted in socialism with Chinese characteristics. This goal cannot be achieved solely through the single model of traditional ideological and political theory courses. Instead, we must systematically build a comprehensive ideological and political education framework where all disciplines work in tandem, fully unlocking the educational potential of every course. All academic disciplines in higher education in the new era must adhere to the fundamental mission of fostering virtue through education. Drawing on the unique discourse resources embedded in curriculum-based ideological and political education, they can effectively interpret China's development practices, accurately disseminate Chinese values, and faithfully fulfill the historical mission of talent cultivation entrusted by the Party and the country.

2.2. Global Competence

The theoretical origins of the concept of global competence trace back to the "global perspective" theory put forward by Robert Hanvey in the 1970s. Hanvey advocated cultivating students' global awareness, covering perspective consciousness, awareness of global conditions, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices. Lambert further stressed that global competence is not a single-dimensional capability, but an integrated combination of knowledge, empathy, cultural identity, foreign language proficiency and task execution capacity.

In terms of core connotation, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines global competence as the capacity of individuals to examine and understand local, global and cross-cultural issues; recognize and respect diverse viewpoints and worldviews; engage in respectful, productive interactions with people from multicultural backgrounds; and take responsible actions to advance collective well-being and sustainable development. Centered on macro global issues, this definition follows a logical thread from problem

identification to problem solving, guiding individuals to expand their cognition from self-awareness to global awareness and ultimately contribute actively to the shared wellbeing of humanity.

Despite varying focal points, definitions of global competence across sectors share high consistency, all emphasizing openness, multi-dimensionality, globality, cross-cultural communication and the vision of a global community with a shared future for mankind. They aim to cultivate students' ability to stand on the international stage and address global challenges with a global vision. This capacity not only helps students adapt to an increasingly diverse and internationalized social environment, but also lays a solid foundation for them to shoulder the arduous mission of national rejuvenation.

2.3. Internal Links Between Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education and Global Competence

Curriculum-based ideological and political education and global competence share highly aligned core philosophies, both centering on value-oriented global literacy, jointly addressing the fundamental educational question of "what kind of talents to cultivate", and serving the strategic demands of talent training for the new era. Their relationship can be described as that of a "root" and "wings":

1) Curriculum-based ideological and political education serves as the root, anchoring value coordinates and guaranteeing the political stance and cultural identity of talents.
2) Global competence acts as the wings, broadening global vision and practical capacity to enable talents to perform effectively on the world stage.

Integrated together, they shape a new generation of talents who "cherish their motherland while embracing the world". These talents are steadfast practitioners of the Chinese path and active contributors to the shared progress of humanity. Such integration is not only an inevitable innovation in education, but also a profound talent support for China's participation in global governance and provision of global public goods. Only through an in-depth understanding of one's own national history and culture can individuals engage in global dialogue effectively and secure China's international discourse power.

3. Current Dilemmas Facing Higher Education

3.1. Dilemmas in Advancing Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education

In 2020, the Ministry of Education issued the Guidelines for Advancing Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education in Institutions of Higher Education, which clearly emphasized that universities should take faculty as the main force, curriculum development as the main battlefield, and classroom teaching as the main channel to urge all universities, all teachers and all courses to fulfill

educational responsibilities. The Guidelines seek to unify explicit and implicit education, build collaborative educational effects, and form a full-staff, whole-process, all-round three-dimensional education framework. Nevertheless, multiple challenges persist in universities' ideological and political education development: an imperfect educational system, weak anchoring of ideological and political objectives, insufficient teaching innovation, and ineffective collaborative mechanisms.

Looking back on the development of ideological and political theory courses in universities, national curriculum standards have long set clear, specific educational objectives. The core problem, however, lies beyond dedicated ideological and political courses: most academic curriculum systems and course objectives fail to embed moral education requirements. Many faculty hold biased perceptions, believing ideological and political education is the sole responsibility of ideological and political theory teachers and student counselors. There is a lack of effective coordination between university functional departments, academic schools, and functional departments and schools. In practice, teaching methods remain monotonous, and educators fail to fully explore intersections between ideological and political education and professional knowledge.

3.2. Dilemmas in Cultivating Global Competence

Globalization is both a historical category and an evolving concept. Strategically, a strong education country underpins Chinese-style modernization. As hubs for advanced academic research, universities are vital sources of innovative talent for the nation. Yet China's higher education practice suffers from prominent shortcomings, falling far short of ideal educational models.

Since the expansion of higher education enrollment in 1999, university student numbers have surged while training quality has declined. Statistics show higher education enrollment rates have exceeded 50% since the 21st century, with the national college admission rate reaching 92.86% in 2021, and China hosting the world's largest population of higher education students. Limited teaching resources cannot meet the demands of this massive student body.

From an external perspective, society demands interdisciplinary talents with international vision, yet university training programs prioritize immediate employment outcomes. Internally, teaching content overemphasizes instrumental value while neglecting humanistic connotations; teaching remains dominated by lecture-based delivery; assessment is exam-driven and ignores students' internalization of values; outdated teaching facilities and under-qualified faculty hinder development, failing to accommodate students' personalized growth and innovative thinking. Furthermore, excessively specialized academic divisions restrict students' holistic development starting from college application. University curricula neglect interdisciplinary integration, and narrow, siloed academic training

produces overly specialized, rigid, even one-sided talents.

4. Inspirations from the Outline for Advancing Ideological and Political Education and Global Competence Cultivation

4.1. Dual-Drive Mechanism: Strategic Alignment of the "Root (Soul)" and "Wings" at the Policy Level

For the first time at the national strategic level, the Outline sets dual development goals of "strengthening ideological and political leadership" and "expanding international influence", providing top-level support for the coordinated development of curriculum-based ideological and political education and global competence cultivation. The Outline states: "We must properly balance rooting education in China's national conditions and drawing on international experience, and comprehensively build an ideological and political education system that consolidates foundational values and shapes students' souls".

This requires coordinated advancement of ideological and political education and global competence cultivation in building a strong education country:

1) Ideological and political leadership mandates integrating ideological and political education into all disciplinary, teaching, textbook and management systems, resolving the disconnect between professional courses and ideological and political theory courses, and laying a solid political foundation for global competence cultivation.
2) The Outline advances China's participation in global education governance and improves opening-up strategies, incorporating global competence as a core indicator of talent training. It requires universities to nurture talents capable of shaping international rules, echoing the "collective well-being action" dimension of global competence.

Theoretically, the Outline elevates curriculum-based ideological and political education to a "soul-shaping foundational project" and global competence to a "strategic capability". It bridges the historical divide between the two, correcting the misconception of "valuing technical skills over value guidance" in international education.

4.2. Integrated Thinking: Constructing Implementation Pathways for Synergizing Ideological and Political Education and Global Competence

4.2.1. Restructuring Curriculum Systems: Shifting from One-Way Indoctrination to Two-Way Integration

To advance the development of ideological and political teaching materials, universities should select and introduce high-quality cutting-edge disciplinary textbooks at the higher education level. The vision of a global community with a shared future should be embedded into all disciplines. For example, climate change courses can integrate China's "dual carbon" governance solutions, unifying

professional knowledge instruction with global responsibility education. This cultivates the "patriotism and cultural confidence" core literacy of curriculum-based ideological and political education, while assessing global competence capacities including global issue analysis and innovative action-taking.

In an increasingly globalized world, students inevitably interact with peoples and cultures worldwide, requiring standardized conduct to maintain a positive national image. Therefore, universities must strengthen moral and ideological education to ensure students hold correct ideological stances before engaging in international activities. Amid interconnected economic and digital networks, China must secure independent control over core technologies. Meanwhile, intellectual education takes on new meaning: leveraging scientific and technological innovation to resolve domestic development challenges and address global bottlenecks. Diverse comprehensive literacy training is an essential pathway to cultivate global competence.

4.2.2. Building Faculty Capacity: Expanding from Local Experience to Global Vision

Teachers are the primary practitioners of teaching and education, the pioneers of nurturing talent, and the cultivators of skilled professionals. Imbalanced faculty structures impede educational development. While university instructors possess deep expertise in their fields, they often lack cross-disciplinary research experience, face generational gaps between senior and junior faculty, and have limited opportunities for interdisciplinary exchange. Rapid knowledge iteration across many fields leaves some instructors outdated in their teaching content, unable to meet the demands of value-guided education and globalization. Universities therefore urgently need to build diversified faculty teams.

On one hand, universities can recruit forward-thinking educators through talent introduction policies to inject fresh vitality into education. Cross-university collaboration should be encouraged to facilitate academic exchange between new and senior teachers, as well as instructors across disciplines, sharing cutting-edge research ideas to help students develop a global worldview. Beyond self-directed professional development, teachers should integrate global competence cultivation into daily teaching, adopting diverse pedagogy including collaborative learning, example-based teaching and experimental learning to avoid monotonous lectures. Teachers should shift their instructional role, transferring classroom agency to students and creating more opportunities for independent research, group collaboration and public presentation to cultivate student leadership awareness.

On the other hand, universities must establish collaborative education mechanisms uniting ideological and political theory teachers, professional instructors and student counselors to consolidate ideological and political education synergy. Diversified incentive policies should be introduced to encourage all faculty to

develop and optimize courses, with academicians and national-level distinguished teaching masters taking the lead to strengthen value guidance and educational accountability. Modular platforms including ideological and political education seminars, academic salons, special research projects and innovation studios should be established to facilitate regular experience sharing at the university and school levels, promoting mutual learning and coordinated development among faculty.

4.2.3. Upgrading Practical Platforms: Transitioning from Virtual Scenarios to Real-World Contexts

China's comprehensive national strength has enabled universities to shift student practical training from virtual simulated environments to real international contexts, a core trend in global education reform. The Outline supports the construction of international joint research laboratories, allowing students to practice dispute resolution capabilities through Belt and Road science and technology cooperation, firm political identity, cultivate patriotism and assume social responsibility in international settings. It also backs the development of international STEM education institutes, enabling students to build innovative capacity through interdisciplinary integration.

Artificial intelligence in education and STEM education have drawn widespread global attention. China should leverage its advantageous resources in these fields to advance its academic outcomes and practical experience to the rest of the world. Additionally, global competence emphasizes integrated "discipline + English" training, especially for science and engineering students, who are expected to draw global disciplinary insights and apply their expertise to resolve international challenges.

For non-English majors, training pathways should integrate arts and sciences to expand cultural literacy, global vision and global responsibility. For English majors, training should extend to multi-disciplinary learning, framing language as a tool to cultivate interdisciplinary interests. Through online-offline hybrid teaching models, universities should expand practical opportunities, hosting international conferences and online global classrooms, and providing overseas internships for students.

5. Conclusion

The Outline establishes a timeline covering short-term and long-term goals, outlining a closed-loop talent training process spanning value guidance, capacity building and global contribution. Its short-term focus resolves core educational questions: curriculum-based ideological and political education defines the political orientation of talent training, fundamentally answering the institutional question of "for whom to cultivate talents"; global competence cultivation shapes cross-cultural practical capacity, offering concrete methodologies to address "how to cultivate

talents".

Its long-term strategic vision advances coordinated progress between educational modernization and Chinese-style modernization. Through connotative development of higher education to support national modernization, and the practical translation of the vision of a global community with a shared future, China can provide standardized Chinese solutions for global governance. This temporal logic fully validates the opening assertion of the Outline that "a strong education country serves as the strategic precursor to building a great modern socialist country.

When curriculum-based ideological and political education consolidates the root of talent, and global competence extends their capacity to act globally, China's higher education can nurture a new generation of strategic talents who hold firm Chinese identities and possess global vision. As Western education grapples with value nihilism and distorted skill training, the integrated training paradigm guided by the Outline demonstrates that genuine educational modernization combines refined technical rationality with unwavering cultural foundations. This paradigm not only serves as a strategic fulcrum for national rejuvenation, but also stands as an educational manifesto for building a global community with a shared future for mankind.

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