

Research on the Collaborative Education of College Counselors, Ideological and Political Theory Teachers, and Professional Course Teachers from the Perspective of “Three-wide Education”

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Abstract: In the new era, the educational work in colleges and universities is facing new challenges and opportunities. The concept of “Three-wide Education” provides important theoretical guidance and practical paths for the education work in colleges and universities. This paper takes the research on the collaborative education of college counselors, ideological and political course teachers, and professional course teachers from the perspective of “Three-wide Education” as the entry point to explore the construction of a trinity collaborative education mechanism to enhance the effectiveness of education. The research of this paper aims to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the collaborative education of college counselors, ideological and political course teachers, and professional course teachers, and contribute to improving the level of education work in colleges and universities.

Keywords: “Three-wide Education”; College counselors; Ideological and political course teachers; Professional course teachers; Collaborative education

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1. Introduction

With the continuous deepening of higher education reform in China, cultivating socialist builders and successors with comprehensive development in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education has become a crucial mission for universities. The “Three-wide Education” concept-encompassing whole-staff education, whole-process education, and all-round education, emphasizes the collective participation of all university staff. It integrates educational efforts throughout students’ entire academic journey from enrollment to graduation,

extending to academic studies, daily life, ideological development, and other domains to construct a holistic educational ecosystem. Currently, the pilot reform of Three-wide Education is at a critical stage of nationwide implementation, institutional deepening, and quality enhancement ^[1]. Extensive research reveals persistent limitations in educational agents, content design, and institutional mechanisms within the Three-wide Education framework ^[2]. Challenges such as misaligned objectives among stakeholders, insufficient motivation, and fragmented coordination hinder the formation of synergistic educational forces. Since its inception, this concept has been tasked with consolidating university-wide resources, spanning students' entire growth trajectory, and covering all aspects of campus life to fulfill the fundamental mandate of fostering virtue through education ^[3]. Within this system, university counselors, ideological and political education teachers, and discipline-specific faculty members assume distinct yet interconnected roles: counselors monitor ideological dynamics, political educators deliver theoretical instruction, and discipline faculty cultivate professional competencies, collectively forming a collaborative education network. However, systemic discrepancies persist between talent cultivation and other institutional priorities such as teaching and research. Imbalances manifest as overemphasis on knowledge transmission over character development, research over teaching, and intellectual training over moral cultivation ^[4]. Current deficiencies in effectively integrating these three forces underscore the urgency to clarify role boundaries, optimize collaboration mechanisms, and strengthen synergies in ideological-political guidance, academic mentoring, and life coaching. Addressing these challenges is essential for holistically enhancing student development, representing a pressing practical imperative in contemporary higher education.

2. The theoretical background of the concept of “Three-wide Education”

2.1. Definition of “Three-wide Education”

The Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in Higher Education Under New Circumstances issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council explicitly advocates the “Three-wide Education” framework-whole-staff education, whole-process education, and all-round education, as a guiding principle for talent cultivation ^[5]. Recognized as a cornerstone of ideological-political education in the new era, this framework seeks to establish an integrated mechanism engaging all stakeholders across all stages and dimensions. Whole-staff education mandates that all educational agents, administrators, faculty, and support staff assume collaborative responsibilities through differentiated functional capacities ^[6]. Whole-process education emphasizes continuous ideological guidance spanning students' academic journey from enrollment to graduation, extending into their professional trajectories. All-round education transcends classroom instruction to encompass intellectual, psychological, ethical, and lifestyle development, ensuring comprehensive student formation. Notably, all-round education serves as both an expansion and safeguard for the whole-staff and whole-process dimensions ^[7].

2.2. The core content of “Three-wide Education”

As an integral component of China's educational policy, the “Three-wide Education” framework centers on fostering virtue through education as its fundamental mission. It requires universities to balance knowledge acquisition and skill development with moral cultivation, guiding students to establish scientifically grounded worldviews, life philosophies, and value systems. To operationalize this vision, institutions must construct multi-tiered collaborative mechanisms that shift education from isolated efforts (“single-combat mode”) to

systemic synergy (“joint-operations mode”). This involves forging an educational consortium integrating counselors, ideological-political educators, and discipline-specific faculty, collectively advancing students’ holistic development.

2.3. The relationship between “Three-wide Education” and higher education in colleges and universities

Universities, as primary incubators of talent, bear the critical responsibility of nurturing youth for the new era. Traditional classroom-centric models increasingly prove inadequate amid societal evolution and pedagogical reforms. The Three-Wide Education framework addresses this gap by redefining education as a systemic endeavor transcending disciplinary boundaries. It positions ideological-political education not as isolated courses but as a pervasive force synergized through counselor-student interactions, ideological instruction, and disciplinary mentorship. Such integration enables systematic enhancement of students’ political literacy while catalyzing holistic competency development, critical for cultivating well-rounded professionals equipped to meet 21st-century challenges.

3. The role of college counselors in the “Three-wide Education”

3.1. The role positioning of counselors

College counselors are the intermediate bridges for the exchange of opinions and communication of viewpoints among the school management, teaching staff, and students’ families. Therefore, college counselors play an active role in the “Three-wide Education” work ^[8]. They are not only responsible for the daily affairs management and ideological and political education of students, but also undertake multiple tasks such as mental health counseling and academic planning guidance. Through close daily contact with students, counselors can deeply understand the ideological trends and psychological states of students and provide personalized educational guidance in a timely manner. In addition, counselors also promote the ideological growth and all-around development of students through regular heart-to-heart communication and organization of campus activities, and play an important role in students’ study, life, and maintenance of mental health.

3.2. The role of counselors in ideological and political education

College counselors, as the “front line” of students’ ideological and political education, play a key role in ideological guidance. Although the role of counselors has been constantly adjusted in recent years, their core responsibility of ideological and political education has never changed. Through frequent daily contact, they grasp the ideological trends of students in a timely manner and help students solve the ideological confusion and psychological problems encountered in the growth process in a targeted manner. In addition, counselors actively organize activities such as theme class meetings and the construction of the party and the league to enhance students’ political quality and sense of social responsibility. At the same time, they closely collaborate with ideological and political course teachers and professional course teachers to guide students to truly transform ideological and political theoretical knowledge into actions and achieve the unity of knowledge and action.

3.3. The responsibilities of counselors in the daily management of students

Another important responsibility of counselors is the daily management of students, which includes the management of students’ attendance, dormitory management, and the implementation of the reward

and punishment system. Through the handling of these specific affairs, counselors not only ensure the implementation of the school's rules and regulations but also can discover problems and carry out targeted education in their daily interactions with students. As the group most closely related to students in colleges and universities, every word and deed of college counselors will have a profound impact on students^[9]. Although the daily management work seems cumbersome, it is an important platform for students' ideological education. Through these management works, counselors can better grasp the dynamics of students and discover and solve students' ideological problems in a timely manner.

4. The contribution of ideological and political course teachers in the “Three-wide Education”

4.1. The roles and responsibilities of ideological and political theory teachers

Ideological and political education teachers serve as the main force in higher education's ideological and political work, playing an indispensable role within the “Three-wide Education” framework. By teaching Marxist theory, the president of the CCP's Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and socialist core values, they guide students to establish correct political stances and deepen their awareness of responsibilities to the nation, society, and individuals. Beyond imparting theoretical knowledge, these educators emphasize integrating classroom teaching with social practice, encouraging students to apply theories to real-world contexts. This approach fosters the cultivation of scientifically grounded worldviews, life philosophies, and value systems through experiential learning, positioning them as pivotal mentors in students' ideological growth and architects of their ethical frameworks.

4.2. The role of ideological and political courses in ideological and political education in colleges and universities

The theory of the subject of ideological and political education holds that both educators and students are the subjects of ideological and political education^[10]. Ideological and political courses in colleges and universities are important channels for carrying out ideological and political education and play a fundamental role in the ideological growth of college students. Through systematic study of the basic principles of Marxism, national history, national conditions, and the current situation of social development, students can enhance their identification with the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, improve their ideological and political quality, and sense of social responsibility. In teaching, ideological and political course teachers not only impart theoretical knowledge, but also pay more attention to guiding students to think and discuss in depth by combining social hotspots and current affairs issues, closely combine theory with practice, and organize social practice activities, allowing students to deepen theoretical understanding in personal experience, clarify their own historical mission, and lay a solid ideological foundation for serving the society and contributing to the country.

4.3. The collaborative work of ideological and political course teachers and counselors

College counselors and ideological and political course teachers undertake different but complementary important functions in students' ideological and political education. Through daily management and close contact with students, counselors can grasp students' ideological trends in a timely manner; ideological and political course teachers provide theoretical guidance for students through systematic classroom teaching.

However, in actual work, there is often a certain degree of separation between ideological and political courses and daily ideological and political education work ^[11]. To maximize the educational effect, the two should establish a close collaboration mechanism and achieve information sharing through regular communication. Counselors promptly provide feedback on students' ideological problems to ideological and political course teachers, and ideological and political course teachers then provide targeted theoretical guidance, thereby integrating ideological and political education both inside and outside the classroom and truly achieving the goal of educating all students throughout the entire process and in all aspects.

5. The function of professional course teachers in the “Three-wide Education”

5.1. The educational responsibilities of professional course teachers

Professional course teachers are important guides for the career development of college students. Their responsibilities not only lie in imparting professional knowledge and skills, but also include cultivating students' professional spirit and professional ethics. Under the background of “Three-wide Education”, professional course teachers are not only disseminators of academic knowledge, but also should become important participants in ideological and political education. In their daily teaching and research guidance, through words and deeds, they imperceptibly influence students' ideological concepts and behavioral norms, integrate elements of ideological and political education into the professional teaching process, guide students to achieve the integration of professional skills and social responsibility, and cultivate professional talents with a sense of responsibility.

5.2. The integration of professional education and ideological and political education

With the promotion of the concept of “Three-wide Education”, the deep integration of professional education and ideological and political education has become an important trend in the teaching reform of colleges and universities. Under the traditional teaching mode, ideological and political education and professional education were separated from each other with loose connections. However, the “curriculum ideology and politics” mode emphasizes the integration of the two. Professional course teachers closely combine disciplinary knowledge with national development and social needs, enabling students to enhance their sense of social responsibility and mission awareness while mastering professional skills. For example, engineering professional teachers guide students to reflect on technological development and social responsibility by discussing engineering ethics; economics professional teachers, by combining economic policy analysis, strengthen students' understanding of national policies and economic development, thereby achieving the coordinated progress of ideological and political education and professional education.

5.3. The interaction between professional course teachers and ideological and political course teachers, as well as counselors

From the connotation of the “Three-wide Education”, “Whole-Staff Education” first requires all groups of teachers and students in the university to participate in the educational work. “Whole-Process Education” also requires the implementation of education in all academic periods for college students. “All-Round Education” further demands the implementation of education in all aspects of college students ^[12]. In the “Three-wide Education” system, the collaborative cooperation among professional course teachers, ideological and political course teachers, and counselors is of vital importance to the educational work in colleges and universities. They

respectively undertake different but complementary responsibilities: Professional course teachers cultivate students' values imperceptibly through the teaching of disciplinary knowledge. Ideological and political course teachers provide systematic ideological and political theory education. Counselors, through daily management and guidance, help students transform the learned theories into practical actions. To effectively exert the collaborative education function of the three, colleges and universities should establish a perfect communication mechanism, hold regular exchange meetings, and timely share students' ideological trends and learning conditions; enhance the professional ability of counselors, build a communication bridge for all counselors to participate in, and break through the "last mile" of the "Three-wide Education" work ^[13]. Meanwhile, in major campus activities or social practices, all three parties should be encouraged to participate and cooperate jointly.

6. Mechanism building for tripartite collaborative education

6.1. The importance of collaborative education

In modern higher education systems, collaborative education transcends the responsibility of isolated departments or individuals, it requires the collective participation of all campus units, faculty categories, and administrative personnel. While counselors, ideological-political educators, and discipline-specific faculty have distinct roles in student development, their objectives align: to cultivate well-rounded, high-caliber talent through the integration of ideological-political education and disciplinary instruction. Thus, establishing an effective collaborative education mechanism is imperative.

6.2. The design of the collaborative education mechanism

To achieve efficient synergy among counselors, ideological-political educators, and discipline-specific faculty, institutions must structurally design and refine their systems. Institutional mechanisms serve as a robust guarantee for implementing the Three-wide Education framework with precision and granularity ^[14]. Firstly, schools need to clarify the job responsibilities of the three and the specific requirements for collaborative education to ensure that the work goals and tasks of all parties are consistent. Secondly, a regular communication and feedback mechanism among the three should be established. Through communication and interaction, problems existing in students' ideological and political and academic development can be discovered in a timely manner, and solutions can be discussed jointly. In addition, schools should also encourage the three to cooperate with each other in specific work, such as jointly designing course modules that combine ideological and political education and professional education, or jointly carrying out social practice activities, etc.

6.3. The evaluation of the effect of collaborative education

The effect of collaborative education is not only reflected in students' academic achievements, but also in the improvement of their ideological and political literacy, sense of social responsibility, and comprehensive quality. Therefore, schools should establish corresponding evaluation systems to assess and provide feedback on the collaborative work of counselors, ideological and political course teachers, and professional course teachers. Through the evaluation of students' ideological and political level, academic progress, and social practice performance, schools can timely adjust and optimize the mechanism of collaborative education to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability.

7. Conclusion and prospect

“Three-wide Education” is a key approach for universities to achieve moral education and cultivate talents in the new era, and an important guarantee for improving the quality of talent cultivation^[15]. With the in-depth advancement of higher education reform, the collaborative mechanism of “Three-wide Education” will play an increasingly important role in university education in the future. The core value of the new-era “Three-wide Education” philosophy lies in cultivating a pervasive institutional awareness of “education by everyone, education at all times, and education in all contexts”^[16]. The deep integration among college counselors, teachers of ideological and political courses, and teachers of specialized courses will directly determine the quality of students’ ideological and political literacy and professional development. To continuously optimize the effectiveness of collaborative education, universities should, through institutional arrangements, clarify role positioning and responsibility boundaries, and construct a regular communication and exchange mechanism to ensure efficient collaboration among the three. Meanwhile, universities should also actively utilize modern technological means such as big data and artificial intelligence to establish intelligent student information analysis and sharing platforms, grasp students’ ideological trends and academic conditions in real time, and provide precise guidance and intervention, thereby improving the efficiency of collaborative education. Furthermore, universities should further improve the teacher evaluation and incentive mechanism, pay special attention to the ideological and political education ability of counselors and professional course teachers, enhance teachers’ educational quality through special training and curriculum construction; actively promote diversified and in-depth social practice activities, guide students to deepen the understanding and application of ideological and political theories in practice, and effectively enhance the pertinence and effectiveness of education.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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