

Microfilm-Based Teaching Innovation in University Ideological and Political Courses

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Abstract: Driven by the popularity of short video platforms and artificial intelligence, the traditional group PPT presentation method in university ideological and political education has been reduced to a mere formality. Guided by the concept of situational teaching, this paper proposes a targeted pedagogical reform for these courses, which replaces the conventional PowerPoint-based teaching mode with student-independent micro-film creation. In this reformed teaching mode, college students independently create and exhibit short films focusing on social ethics, institutional regulations, national security and other hot topics combined with current events. The immersive role-playing and situational creation involved in this teaching reform can help students better grasp professional theoretical concepts. Combined with frontline practical teaching practice, this paper systematically elaborates the whole implementation process of the micro-film teaching reform, evaluates its practical teaching effects and existing problems in classroom application, and proposes targeted improvement plans. Based on the above investigation, this paper concludes that micro-film teaching will likely be able to arouse college students' interest in learning and promote learning outcomes.

Keywords: Micro-Film; University Ideological and Political Courses; Teaching Reform; Situational Teaching; Practical Teaching;

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1. Introduction

At present, due to the rapid development of technology and changes in the traits of college students, the educational environment in higher education institutions is also undergoing changes. With the spread of short-video applications and generative artificial intelligence, college students are collecting data and learning in a different way. Being the students of the digital age, they are regularly exposed to various fast-paced visual materials and frequently use artificial intelligence tools in their studies. In the ideological and political courses of universities, which aim to nurture the ethical qualities, social responsibility and value concepts of college students, the traditional teaching mode is no longer suitable for the needs of college students and thus requires significant changes in teaching methods (Chai & Sha, 2015a).

In the past, the main way of conducting practical instruction in universities has been demonstrations supported by PowerPoint. In recent years, the teaching effect of this has been decreasing (Sha and Chai, 2017). Because it is easy to obtain data from the web and generative AI can produce all-round presentation content with little manual operation, the educational value of such tasks has decreased. Collaborative projects have become very popular now; they are carried out by one person or a small group with the help of online design tools, and the other team members only read aloud what has been prepared

without adding any new ideas or emotions. This will harm the primary goal of ideological and political education, that is to say, college students will not be able to think about it proactively, internalize values, and learn how to think analytically.

To solve the problems of teaching mentioned above, this paper puts forward a new teaching idea that replaces the old PowerPoint-slideshow mode with student-led micro-film creation in college ideological and political education. Micro-film instruction is a form of contextualised and experiential learning that has college students actively think, write, act, film and create short films based on the main content of the course, such as public virtue, legal awareness and national safety. Becoming an active participant and storyteller, college students can use their skills in digital media to give new life to the application instructions. Rather than merely quoting general theories, teachers should turn them into stories or characters that college students can feel with emotion and experience in a play; thus, the learning of this knowledge will be more likely to be retained naturally through school activities and media literacy (Chai & Sha, 2015b). Based on the actual observations made by university instructors in the classroom, this paper will present representative cases and real situations of college students' participation in class.

2. Theoretical Foundation and Reform Orientation

The foundation of adding micro-film creation to the ideological and political education of higher education is situation-pedagogy. It has been gaining some attention recently in educational psychology, and now situative pedagogy believes that knowledge is not an independent concept to be transmitted from teachers to college students. In fact, learning is in a setting, so it can be carried out well in real life where there are strong emotional and social connotations. Thus, information is considered to be in the form of continuous communication among college students and their environment in a certain "community of practice", and gradually, college students move from the margins of participation to full participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). When college students are exposed to abstract ideas in the form of tangible, realistic situations, they can be more actively involved in their thoughts and learn and use this knowledge better. This system can be regarded as a combination of emotion and reason; that is to say, when we are emotionally moved by sincere feelings, we can better think rationally, and these emotions can inspire people to uphold moral values.

Situational Pedagogy is in line with the main goals of ideological and political education at the university level. Ideological and political education is not a technology or science that emphasizes the training of skills and factual knowledge; instead, it seeks to shape people's moral ideas, ethical systems and the ideology of a united people. The final goal of such a curriculum is not to have college students learn the content of the law code and moral regulations, but rather to be inspired by these values and carry them in their lives. The old teaching methods are not conducive to the internalisation of values and often put forward external requirements. Nowadays, in current academic research, it is believed that genuine learning should be based on situated cognition; that is to say, general ideas of society and culture need to be directly linked with students' practical culture (Brown et al., 1989). Situational teaching, on the other hand, has college students experience such an ideal in a situation and be guided to feel and reflect on it. In a fictional world with rules and culture, students learn what is right and wrong through their own feelings by choosing to follow those rules.

Micro-films can be made to serve as a good type of situation teaching in the current university environment. These short films are not just technical tasks; they are collective narrative activities that require the construction of an entire small society from scratch by the participants. In order to produce a good micro-film, one should choose an interesting social or ethical problem, develop rich characters, write realistic dialogues that show different opinions, and create scenes full of life's conflicts. Therefore, college students will need to learn about character education. When a learner is to take on the role of a neighbourhood activist, a young lawyer or someone with a moral problem, they are no longer passive readers of the textbook. They need to be able to adopt the mindset, emotional state and moral responsibility of such a role temporarily. Therefore, the theories has been brought closer to the students' daily lives and concrete forms have been given to abstract scholarly ideas through engagement.

The first goal of the new teaching model is to overcome the old habit of formalisation in traditional practice and arouse the initiative of college students. The main goal of the learner in the traditional system is generally to follow instructions, finish the required work to pass the test, and not truly be interested in the primary content of the discipline (Chai & Sha,

2015a). The micro-film project is to change people's reasons for doing homework and change the type of homework. As filmmaking is based on cooperation, communication and is highly public, it can meet the modern students' need for self-expression, narrative construction and electronic social validation. Therefore, the direction of the reform is to make students the main subject of the academic environment. The teacher is no longer only a "one-way transmitter" but also needs to be an intellectual guide, organizer and counselor. First and foremost, it is necessary to build an active teaching environment that can turn new ideas about life into artistic performances and have them absorbed by the public.

3. Predicaments of Traditional Practical Teaching

To better feel the urgency of micro-film instructional transformation, one needs to be more meticulous and discover the deep-seated problems in the traditional practical teaching system for university ideological and political courses. For more than ten years, the typical way to obtain the practical credits in the academic syllabus has been collaborative presentations with PowerPoint slides. Although this way was first to foster the collective spirit and independent exploration and oral communication skills of college students, it has largely failed to achieve its goal in actual classroom teaching many times over. With the widespread use of advanced artificial intelligence software and various AI tools today, it is now very easy to create both written works and graphic works. Therefore, the teaching effect of such problems has gradually decreased; they are just an outline without actual student thinking or educational value. In recent years, the historical method has shown a trend of utilitarianism and has been very rigid in its coordination; it also fails to spark the interest of college students in learning. (Sha & Chai, 2017)

A serious problem with the old slide-sharing model is that there are too many minor tasks to be completed, and college students may not be motivated to think for themselves. When grouped to do a group presentation on issues such as social ethics and legal awareness, many young people nowadays use generative artificial intelligence tools to organise the content, gather relevant case materials, and write the speech. Slideshow software can then change the above text into a good presentation with a single click. Therefore, the actual planning stage of the applied project does not need much mental effort, does not need to be discussed among the team members, and is not related to the academic content. The simplicity of creation has removed the need for deep mastery, and as a result, these talks are only shallow aggregations of web tropes and conventional truisms. Therefore, there will be a certain kind of instructional rigidity, and the detailed steps of normative integration will be reduced to a formal confirmation of compliance (Chai & Sha, 2015a).

Therefore, this smooth preparation seems stiff and uninspired in class; neither do the teachers nor the college students find it interesting. During the actual laboratory class, it is often observed that college students stand behind the teacher's desk, look at the screen or their mobile phones, and fail to pay attention to what is being presented; then they recite the material immediately. Since the information has not been genuinely absorbed or integrated by the learners themselves, there is a lack of tonal variation, emotional expression and an organic sense in the presentation. This can be called mechanical recitation, and the learner's function is only to produce sound according to the digital intelligence text processor. There is no independence in thinking or in one's own ideas. The main purpose of the teacher is not to convey an idea or convince the other teachers, but rather just to use up the scheduled time slots and meet the basic requirements listed in the evaluation indicators.

The mechanical display is very bad for the general environment of the classroom and makes the college students feel bored and alienated, thus reducing their willingness to cooperate. As one group reads their slides at the front of the class, the other students in the college are idle and do not participate. Since most of the displayed data is duplicated and not very newsworthy, the audience loses interest quickly. The students' studies are in complete disarray, and most of them have started playing games or other unrelated activities. Due to the passive teaching mode, college students may be more interested in life in the virtual world to avoid actual socialisation and be replaced by corporate algorithms (Selwyn, 2016). When teachers try to stimulate students to speak more, there is often complete silence; these college students have not grasped what has been explained and are unable to answer because they do not understand the concepts. If there is no communication, there will be a strong sense of alienation, and the lecture hall will be unable to motivate college students to engage in learning and growth (Xie & Zhang, 2016).

4. Implementation Process of Micro-film Teaching Reform

The five stages of the operational sequence can be divided into five distinct, linear stages, and the aim is to guide college students to advance gradually from abstract ideas to refined film production and critical thinking, making full use of the established, multi-semester system of institutions that has been refined over many years of excellent teaching experience (Chai & Jiang, 2024).

Phase one will be in the first two weeks of the school year, and only then will we construct the basic system of the initiative. The teacher will present the micro-film task as the main part of the practical assessment in the module. College students will form a regular art group and choose one film director and a lead writer. At this early stage, the teacher will introduce all the allowed thematic boundaries for us. Instead of having completely free subjects, these ventures should be firmly based on practical themes in line with the program curriculum, such as daily life and civic ethics, regional legal disputes, ecological ethics, modern national defense awareness, etc. Thus, the following imaginative activities will continue to be based on ideological and political study.

The middle stage is to realise the abstract in reality and art. Since most college students have been exposed to a large number of videos but do not understand the production process, the teacher has set aside some class time for media education. Review the excellent micro-films of college students from the previous session or the national competition. The teacher will have the college students deeply explore such films and observe how subtle social values are contained in the plot construction without explicit moral preaching; thus, it can be shown that the basic strategy of socialisation has been transformed into artistic expression (Chai & Sha, 2015b). There will be basic technical instructions available, and there will also be free, simple handheld video editing software.

The third stage is a time for dynamic creation, and the intelligent lecture hall in the school will be utilised for lively group brainstorming. At that time, the old linear seats will be turned into collaboration centres. All the groups of college students have been using the interactive display to draft scripts, organise character development and create storyboards. For example, in terms of legal awareness, college students should think about how the main character would behave reasonably in a contract dispute or if their rights have been infringed upon. The process of collective digital construction is in line with the advanced model of multimedia education around the world, so learner-oriented interactive tools can help college students better grasp the background information instead of simply memorising it (Mayer, 2014). A good study environment may inspire the college students to study independently among their peers and apply what they have learned in school to their lives (Chen, 2025).

Finally, continuous teaching guidance and excellent supervision will be provided, and at this time, the teacher will act as a scriptwriter and educator. Before the start of any ensemble shooting, it must be submitted to the director and the director's studio that a detailed shooting plan and storyboard have been developed. It is hoped that the two problems mentioned above will be avoided, otherwise, either the plot will be completely disconnected from teaching, or it will be too didactic and monotonous in its presentation of knowledge. The teacher will review all of the students' works and give them specific feedback on changes in characters, plot logic, etc., to ensure that any moral and disciplinary education presented in films is the result of natural development within the plot and not an artificial addition.

The end stage is the peak of the study; it will take place during the last time of the term and will be in the style of a classroom film. All the teams' micro-films will be played on the main screen for all the college students to watch what their classmates have made. First of all, there will be a quick projection followed by an immediate speech and some thoughts. The creation group will have the college students talk about their own experiences and explain why they chose certain narrative endings and what practical knowledge they have gained in their roles. The audience will have a good reaction and will be able to ask some questions about the characters. After watching a movie, the teacher will give a general summary; the reasons for the art and design in the film will also be explained in light of the whole module, thus helping to achieve the educational goals in an open and happy way.

5. Practical Effects and Existing Problems

Micro-film instructional innovation has brought about many positive changes in the educational environment, and at the same time, some organisational and conducting problems have arisen that need to be dealt with. By examining the qualitative attributes of the main lecture hall, it is possible to determine the significant teaching achievements and practical problems teachers face in using this mode of teaching. A large amount of multi-year institutional data from this area covers hundreds of thousands of people and countless electronic productions; it can be verified that it is structurally sound (Chai & Jiang, 2024).

The first and most fundamental effect of the reform of micro-films is the revival of the learning environment. By the time of the final screening, we are not tired from watching for a long time; rather, we are in a state of deep focus. As shown in the visual material, there are their own classmates and recognisable places at school or in the neighbourhood; therefore, the college students are very interested in it. The humour, drama and sentiment of the movies created by learners can also cause people to laugh out loud spontaneously, gasp in surprise, or applaud. Strong emotions can help to break down the mental division between learners and the subject matter, create a good environment for the long-term absorption of values, and thus reduce the passivity and physical withdrawal that have been observed in the traditional mode of teaching (Xie & Zhang, 2016).

They are students but also participate in these projects and achieve good learning results on their own. To create and present a character reasonably, college students need to have experienced a kind of change in their own world that cannot be achieved through traditional textbook learning. For example, a student who is to play the role of a moral businessman facing financial difficulties should feel both the pressure of money and the need for good behaviour. It needs to study the mental problems of principled choice-making and show how deep the teaching effect is on basic situated cognition theories (Brown et al., 1989).

According to the first fieldwork, it was found that students are now more able to grasp abstract ideas after the following evaluation. They speak of ideals such as social justice, the public interest and the rule of law, but these are not only what is written in textbooks; rather, they are deeply ingrained values that have given students the power to act in life and work. Considering that modern multimedia technology is flexible, we can use time-travel dialogues and fictional characters to have college students experience the continuous development of history and ethics in a personal way (Chen, 2025). By setting pedagogical goals for the creation of imaginative films, college students' learning will no longer be based on reading and observation; instead, through practical application, they will be able to participate in the transformation of signs and texts at a higher level and thus meet the basic need of human cognition for participation in a dynamic collective process (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Although there have been some good results, the change in function is relatively large, and the teacher now has to take on much more responsibility and administrative work. To supervise the many large sections of a micro-film project is to take a considerable amount of time and organisation. As for the evaluation of ordinary slide decks, it can usually be carried out during the regular school year; however, many elaborate scripts and all sorts of comments still need to be addressed in the evenings. In recent years, the weight has been particularly high, and with an increase in the number of college students, instructors in practical courses have had to carry out more all-encompassing evaluations and guidance (Boud & Molloy, 2013).

The first reasons at the level of the learner are a lack of time and unstable technical skills. Fundamentally, a micro-film project is very difficult to realise and takes a long time to write a script, choose a shooting location, film, and so on. Considering that college students have a large number of difficult studies in all parts of life, finding time for group movie-making may become another source of stress for them. College students are good consumers of electronic media, but their technical skills in professional narrative construction are unevenly distributed and may sometimes hinder their desire for art. Finally, there is a problem of fixed and schematic creative logic among the college students. Having been exposed to test-driven secondary school for many years, many university and college students have difficulty working with complete freedom in creation and tend to produce weak, predictable plots that are close to simple moral fables. The old idea of shallowness has been defeated to some extent.

6. Conclusion

Embedding student-directed micro-film production in the ideological and political curriculum at the university is a new

development in modern applied instruction. To give new life to the old and change the static and rigid way of presenting PPT materials, situation-based teaching methods can be used in media education. Composition, acting and performance can be used to create original works with deep thoughts on society. Although it has increased the work of teachers, it also hopes to improve the learning environment and inspire college students to study on their own initiative and with deep thought. With the development of generative artificial intelligence, text production will be further automatised; therefore, there is an urgent need for high-context, genuine multimedia instructional environments at all levels of higher education (Mayer, 2014). Given changes in the digital behaviour of college students, continuous adjustments will be made to this micro-film framework; if we continue to strive for the purpose of cultivating the ethical qualities of the new generation, college educators can make ideological education in practice an innovative development of the digital age.

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