



Exploration of Ideological and Political Teaching Practice in Microeconomics Courses

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Abstract: How to organically integrate professional courses with ideological and political education is a question that every professional course teacher needs to consider. Microeconomics is a fundamental course that students majoring in economics and management must master, and it plays an important role in the teaching plan. However, this course has a lot of content, abstract and complex theories, and students generally feel that the course is difficult to learn. The implementation of ideological and political education courses faces problems such as limited class hours and the emergence of various negative socio-economic phenomena. This article combines the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China with the curriculum objectives, combines course difficulties with student interests, and combines moral education with problem-solving; Putting students at the center, organically integrating what they need to learn, what they want to learn, and what they find difficult to learn, in order to achieve the ideological and political goals of cultivating morality and talent in the curriculum unconsciously.

Keywords: Microeconomics, Course Ideology and Politics, Student Centered, Teaching Practice

1 Introduction

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China that we must provide satisfactory education for the people.

We must fully implement the Party's education policy and carry out the fundamental task of cultivating virtue and nurturing people. What we need to cultivate are people with morality, intelligence, sports, virtues, and labor ability, who are well-rounded socialist builders and successors. We need to accelerate the construction of a high-quality education system, develop quality education, and promote educational equity(2022). The 20th National Congress report not only points out the direction for educators, but also puts forward new requirements for how to run education well. As a professional course teacher in a regular university, I need to think about how to implement the spirit of the 20th National Congress report into my work. In the daily teaching process, I need to combine professional teaching with the talent training goal of the CPC to help college students establish correct values.

2 Microeconomics Course and Existing Problems

2.1 Microeconomics course

Microeconomics is a fundamental course that students majoring in economics and management must master, and it plays an important role in the teaching plan. The effectiveness of this course will directly affect the mastery of many professional courses (such as macroeconomics, international trade, financial management, production and operation management, strategic management, finance, etc.), which is related to the improvement of students' overall quality (Ye Yun, 2024). Through the study of this course, students will master the basic theories of microeconomics and the fundamental analytical methods of modern economics (such as supply and demand analysis, marginal analysis, equilibrium analysis, etc.), and be able to analyze the problems that arise in real economic life from the basic theories and methods of microeconomics, laying a solid theoretical foundation for further learning and research in the future. If democracy can govern the country and science can strengthen the country, then the economy can make the country prosperous. Economics is a discipline that aims to benefit the nation and its people (Department of Higher

Education of the Ministry of Education, 2000). In the study of microeconomics courses, great emphasis is placed on the combination of theory and practice, enabling students to apply the economic theories they have learned to analyze problems encountered in real life.

2.2 Problems in Microeconomics Course

Through a survey of previous students, it was found that microeconomics is one of the courses that university students generally consider difficult. The main problems in teaching and learning this course are as follows.

2.2.1. The course content is quite extensive

Microeconomics courses have a wide range of content and involve a large number of concepts and terminology. As a fundamental course, many professional terms may need to be used in subsequent professional courses. If enough knowledge points cannot be covered, it will cause new difficulties for the subsequent professional course learning. In the current information environment, college students have become accustomed to obtaining fragmented information through their mobile phones, and often feel intimidated by hundreds of pages of textbooks, unwilling to spend time reading continuously. Therefore, it is difficult to master a large amount of professional knowledge with limited classroom learning time alone.

2.2.2. Economic theories are relatively abstract

Economics is to look at the essence through phenomena and find regularities from complex economic phenomena. The process of establishing analytical models in economics is to discard other information and focus on the relationships between target variables, thereby transforming exogenous variables into endogenous variables. However, overly abstract theoretical models are beneficial for analyzing economic laws more clearly and distinctly, but also make university students feel too abstract and difficult to understand. For example, students often find it difficult to understand issues such as general equilibrium theory, short-term equilibrium, and long-term equilibrium. If one cannot understand the fundamental economic theories, it is difficult to comprehend the class nature behind these theories and how to apply them to explain real economic phenomena.

2.2.3. Students have uneven foundations

In recent years, with the increase of students from vocational colleges to undergraduate programs, private undergraduate universities have begun to recruit a large

number of college graduates to continue their undergraduate studies. Due to the favorable employment situation and low difficulty in further education, economics and management majors have become popular majors for vocational college students to upgrade from college to university. A large number of students majoring in liberal arts have applied across majors. And in these students' two-year undergraduate courses, microeconomics is an important foundational course (Song Jingyang et al., 2023). So, in the same class, there may be some students who have already studied economics principles courses during their college years, while others have not studied related basic courses, such as mathematics courses. The uneven foundation of students leads to high difficulty in teaching and learning. The introductory course of microeconomics is advanced mathematics, which is even more difficult for many students with poor mathematical foundations to learn. For many students, many theories of microeconomics, especially those involving mathematical models, have become difficult to understand. The survey found that the primary reason why students find microeconomics difficult is due to poor mathematical foundations, and they instinctively feel scared when they see mathematical models.

2.3 Problems of ideological and political education in the curriculum

Since the concept of curriculum ideological and political education was proposed in 2014, frontline teachers have been continuously striving to practice the concept of curriculum ideological and political education, and striving to achieve the goal of cultivating students' moral character. However, it is not easy to effectively integrate ideological and political education into professional courses.

2.3.1. Professional course hours are limited

It is not an easy task to complete the teaching of knowledge and skills required for professional courses within a limited time, while also achieving the teaching objectives of ideological and political education in the courses. Therefore, this not only requires teachers to effectively integrate professional knowledge with the goal of cultivating moral character in the classroom, but also requires students to be able to integrate and apply what they have learned outside of the classroom. For both teachers and students, it is a huge challenge.

2.3.2. Students have great employment pressure and care

more about their job prospects than their ideals

Course ideological and political education aims to cultivate correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values (referred to as the three outlooks) among university students. When university students graduate and enter society as socialist builders, these three views will affect their choices and judgments about work and life. However, the increasingly difficult issue of employment for university students has not only attracted the attention of the whole society, but also put enormous pressure on university students. The enormous employment pressure is not only a driving force for university students to study hard, but also an important factor that distorts their values.

2.3.3. In the information era, various negative information has a significant impact on university students

Cultivating correct values is not an easy task, and it takes a long time to form and stabilize. However, it is easy to undermine the formation of the Three Values, as just one negative case is enough to completely destroy people's Three Values. For example, the Peng Yu case in Nanjing directly made "whether to help elderly people on the roadside when they are falling" a social problem. In the information age, 99 good things may not necessarily attract people's attention, but one bad thing can quickly become a social hot topic and continuously lower the overall moral level of society. After all, destruction is easier than construction. Of course, this also indicates that integrating ideological and political education into the teaching process is urgent.

3 Findings: Exploration of student-centered curriculum ideological and political teaching

The student-centered teaching philosophy means that students are the center of teaching and the main participants in teaching. Student centered curriculum teaching mainly

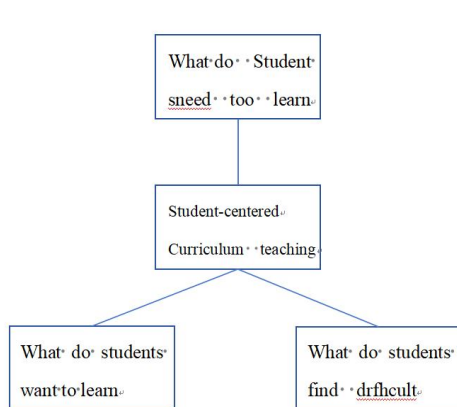


Figure 1 A student-centered curriculum teaching model

addresses three issues: what students need to learn, what students want to learn, and what students find difficult. As shown in Figure 1.

Based on the above model, student-centered curriculum ideological and political education is the organic integration of the three problems that need to be solved, combined with teaching objectives and socio-economic phenomena, as shown in Figure 2.

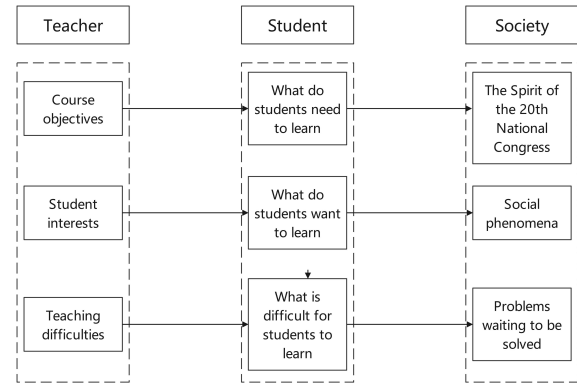


Figure 2 Student centered teaching integration

3.1 Integrating the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China with curriculum objectives

3.1.1. Guide students to know the essence through phenomena

Economics is the study of choice. When making a choice, there will inevitably be criteria for selection, whether based on efficiency or fairness, it is from a human perspective, choosing behaviors that are beneficial to some people. In Western countries, the criterion for selection is favorable to capital, so we will find that capitalist countries in the West always make choices that are favorable to capital and beneficial to the interests of capitalists and elite ruling classes. However, the CPC has repeatedly stressed that we should not forget our original intention and keep our mission in mind. Through continuous efforts, we have realized the millennium dream of a moderately prosperous society, won the largest battle against poverty in human history, and solved the problem of absolute poverty historically. The essence lies in the fact that the CPC truly adheres to the supremacy of the people, stands firmly on the people's position, grasps the people's aspirations, respects the people's creativity, and concentrates the people's wisdom. Microeconomics courses provide students with tools and methods to see the essence through phenomena, while ideological and political courses guide students on how to use these tools and methods to

understand the essence of the world.

3.1.2. To help students recognize the class nature of Western economics

Western economics is essentially an economics that defends and serves the interests of the bourgeoisie(孙旦, 2023). However, many economists view economics as a neutral economic theory and avoid discussing its class nature. The rigorous theoretical system also makes it easy for people to mistakenly believe that economists always analyze and solve problems from an objective standpoint. For example, in the distribution theory of production factors, when output is fixed, capital and labor, as different production factors, should receive their respective deserved returns. Even if capital receives more returns, it is due to the scarcity of factors or marginal output. However, Marx's theory of surplus value tells us that capital obtains profits by exploiting the surplus value of laborers. Western economics transfers the fact that capitalists possess capital and exploit laborers into a division of labor and cooperation between two production factors through the input and return of different factors. By virtualizing capitalists and emphasizing the equal importance of labor and capital, people's attention to the exploitative nature of the bourgeoisie has been diverted. And our country is a socialist country led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants, with people's democratic dictatorship. All state power belongs to the people. In the information era, various economic phenomena are diverse and complex. However, when we return to the attribute of class, many problems become clear, and college students are more likely to understand what kind of values they need.

3.1.3. Help students establish correct values

Microeconomics provides a wealth of tools and methods for analyzing economic phenomena. The tool itself is objective, but how to use the tool and what kind of conclusion to draw depends on the subjective value judgment of the person using the tool. This is also the reason why economics can be divided into empirical economics and normative economics. Microeconomics is the study of theories about the role of markets, price theory, allocation of scarce resources, and income distribution. All human economic activities are aimed at satisfying their desires and the demands for various products and services arising from these desires. Due to the infinite desires of humans and the limited resources, scarcity arises. Due to the scarcity of

resources, there arises the so-called choice problem of how to utilize scarce resources to produce suitable goods to meet people's needs. And these choice questions, in summary, are about what to produce, how to produce, for whom to produce, when to produce, where to produce, and why to produce. Studying microeconomics is to analyze and solve problems encountered in real life through the application of economic theories. In the process of analyzing and solving problems, there will be many choices that are related to values. Studying microeconomics is the process of helping students determine their values (Wei Heng, 2022). The socialist core values of "prosperity, democracy, civilization, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendliness" provide standards for people's choices, but these concepts do not automatically become students' values. They need continuous guidance and repeated education to become students' own values.

3.2 Combining socio-economic phenomena with student interests

Every generation of university students has its own characteristics. Nowadays, university students prefer to showcase themselves rather than being taught. So, in order to enable university students to participate in the teaching process, it is necessary to provide them with opportunities to perform.

3.2.1. Combining with current hot topics to arouse students' interest.

In the information era, no matter where hot topics occur, they will soon become well-known to everyone. University students are full of curiosity about society and maintain a high level of passion for hot topics (Feng Chao, 2022). Behind all phenomena, there are certain economic laws, and through appropriate guidance, university students can transform passive learning into active exploration. For example, in the previous incident where male celebrity Li Yifeng violated the law, the onlookers were more likely to watch from a moral perspective. Why is the moral level of the celebrity not high. However, from an economic perspective, there can be different interpretations. For example, why don't the management companies behind celebrities strengthen their moral education? Why do many public figures frequently engage in various illegal activities? Why do people pay attention to the unethical behavior of celebrities, while no one cares about the unethical behavior of capitalists? These

issues can be explained and analyzed using various microeconomic theories such as cost theory and information theory. By discussing these hot issues, it can satisfy students' curiosity and pursuit of fashion trends, as well as encourage them to think about how to apply economic theories to interpret various phenomena encountered in life.

3.2.2. Using various tools to enable students to showcase their talents

Through various methods such as writing articles and shooting short videos, university students can unleash their creativity, connect the study of economic theory with the solution of practical problems, and actively participate in the learning of professional knowledge. For example, in the second semester of 2023, our students shot more than 20 short videos, published more than 120 official account articles, comprehensively interpreted various theories involved in microeconomics, and analyzed current hot topics. From these articles and videos, it can be seen that college students have basically formed correct values and practiced the requirements of socialist core values. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China emphasizes that we must have firm confidence in our path, theory, system, and culture. And these confidences can only be perceived by more people through concrete and tangible manifestations. While students showcase their talents, they also provide more vivid and lively content to enrich socialist culture.

3.3 Combine teaching difficulties with the problems that need to be solved

The reason why university students find economic theories difficult to learn is because these theories are relatively abstract. However, these theories are essential laws abstracted from social and economic phenomena, which can help people better understand what the laws behind social and economic phenomena are, and thus assist people in making better decisions. In the decision-making process, worldview, outlook on life, and values will inevitably affect the final decision results, that is, in the process of repeated application, to achieve the ideological and political goals of cultivating morality and educating people.

3.3.1. Guide students to solve problems on their own

The teaching objective of microeconomics is to apply learned theories to explain economic phenomena encountered in real life, and to be able to make optimal choices based on

economic laws. The process of solving problems is the process of cultivating students' innovative ability. Everyone's perspective is different, and the problems they face are also different. Even for the same thing, the choices faced by each participant will be different. For example, the analysis of overtime issues. There can be different interpretations of 996 overtime in the workplace from different perspectives. For the entire society, forcing employees to work overtime is a violation of labor laws, which is inconsistent with our goal of building a rule of law country. For enterprises, it involves issues of production costs and operational efficiency. In order to improve their competitiveness, they have to work overtime to achieve higher production efficiency. However, this can also lead to other enterprises adopting similar competitive strategies, making this behavior ineffective. For employees, this is a decision on the quantity of labor supply, and the decision results may vary for workers with different incomes. For business owners, both the benefits of success and the risks of failure are enormous. Therefore, their decision-making behavior is not applicable to the supply decision model of ordinary workers, and at least more variables need to be added to the supply decision model of ordinary workers. Through this multi-dimensional analysis, students can understand that behind each viewpoint, it represents their own position. In the era of the Internet, due to the asymmetry of information, people are easily guided by various public opinions. However, only rational analysis and thinking can correctly judge the truth. And all analysis and thinking require students to have their own thoughts and values in order to make correct judgments.

3.3.2. Guide students to form their own opinions

University students are actually a highly active group with their own ideas. However, what we need to cultivate are socialist builders and successors who are well-rounded in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor skills. They are useful talents who can continue the great cause of the Party, serve the people, and undertake the great task of national rejuvenation. Therefore, it is necessary to guide students to establish viewpoints that are in line with the core socialist values, rather than being blinded by certain phenomena (Wang Qianyu et al., 2022). For example, in Western countries, wealthy people are generally enthusiastic about charitable causes, and there are even cases where wealthy people donate all their assets to charitable organizations. These behaviors have earned the wealthy a

good reputation. Compared to them, the wealthy in China appear inferior. According to the assumption of rational people in economics, people pursue the maximization of their own interests and have earned a large amount of wealth. Why do wealthy people suddenly "treat money like dirt"? Digging deeper, one of the reasons is the high inheritance tax in Western countries, which requires these wealthy people to find various ways to avoid taxes. Donating through charitable organizations is a very effective way to avoid taxes. Therefore, it is not that wealthy people in Western countries are kinder, but rather that they choose to donate money to charitable organizations as a way to avoid taxes when pursuing maximum self-interest. Meanwhile, wealthy people in China do not yet have to face the issue of inheritance tax, so they do not have much motivation to deal with their wealth after death. The study of microeconomics courses provides necessary tools and methods for university students, while ideological and political courses aim to guide them to use these tools effectively to achieve creative development.

4 Summary

Western economics is a discipline that has emerged with the development of capitalism, and has accumulated rich experience and theoretical achievements in explaining the operation of capitalist market economy. However, Western economics is essentially aimed at explaining various economic phenomena in capitalist society, defending and serving the interests of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, when studying Western economics, we need to clarify our position and know clearly what choices we have made. This article combines the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China with the curriculum objectives, combines the difficulties of the curriculum with students' interests, and combines moral education with problem-solving. Putting students at the center, organically integrating what they need to learn, what they want to learn, and what they find difficult to learn, in order to achieve the ideological and political goals of cultivating students' moral character through subtle influence.

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