

Exploration and Practice of Ideological and Political Education Reform in the "The Economic Geography of Shipping" Course

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Abstract: In the context of modern higher education, ideological and political education (IPE) in courses has become a crucial method to enhance students' political literacy and comprehensive quality. This study focuses on the IPE reform of the "Maritime Economic Geography" course by analyzing the course content's comprehensiveness, global perspective, and local characteristics. It identifies issues such as insufficient integration of IPE elements, the need for improved IPE teaching abilities among teachers, and low student engagement. The study proposes reform paths, including optimizing course content design, innovating teaching methods, strengthening teacher training, and enhancing student participation. The aim is to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the IPE of the "Maritime Economic Geography" course, promoting the deep integration of IPE and professional education.

Keywords: Maritime Economic Geography, Ideological and Political Education, Teaching Reform, Political Literacy, Professional Education

Introduction

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, President Xi Jinping has frequently emphasized the importance of the ocean, guiding the development path of "prosperity through the ocean, strengthening the country through the ocean, harmony between humans and the ocean, and win-win cooperation." With the deep implementation of China's maritime strategy, cultivating talents with maritime awareness and international perspective has become a critical task for higher education. Through the "Maritime Economic Geography" course, students can gain in-depth knowledge of maritime economy, maritime politics, and maritime culture, thereby enhancing their maritime awareness and national mission. In active response to the national maritime power strategy, integrating IPE with the maritime power strategy is essential. The "Maritime Economic Geography" course, as an interdisciplinary course, covers various fields such as maritime economy, geographical environment, and global trade, showcasing significant comprehensiveness and practicality. However, there are still many issues and challenges in the IPE of this course. This paper aims to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the IPE reform of the "Maritime Economic Geography" course through systematic analysis and discussion, promoting the deep integration of IPE and professional education.

1 Characteristics of the "Maritime Economic Geography" Course

1.1 Comprehensiveness of Course Content

The "Maritime Economic Geography" course is an interdisciplinary course, encompassing multiple fields and reflecting significant comprehensiveness. Firstly, the course covers the basic theories and practices of maritime economics, including maritime markets, shipping management, port operations, and logistics networks. These topics require students to grasp foundational knowledge in economics and management while understanding the unique rules and operating mechanisms of the maritime industry.

Secondly, the course content integrates geographical knowledge, such as the marine geographical environment, the impact of climate change on shipping, the geographical location of sea routes, and their strategic significance. These geographical factors directly influence the operation and development of the maritime economy. Students need to have strong geographical analysis skills to effectively address practical issues.

Additionally, the course involves knowledge of laws and regulations, environmental protection, and international trade. Important topics include the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, various national marine environmental protection policies, and changes in the global trade landscape. By integrating knowledge from multiple disciplines, the course aims to develop students' comprehensive analytical abilities and cross-disciplinary problem-solving skills.

1.2 Emphasis on Global Perspective and Local Characteristics

The "Maritime Economic Geography" course not only focuses on cultivating students' global perspectives but also emphasizes the importance of local characteristics. This dual perspective ensures a balanced approach between theory and practice, as well as between macro and micro aspects (Zhang Yurong & Zhang Peng, 2024).^[1]

Firstly, the cultivation of a global perspective is evident in the course's analysis of the international maritime market and its focus on global trade dynamics. Students need to understand major global shipping routes, the distribution of international ports, and the supply-demand relationship in the global shipping market. Through the study and analysis of international cases, students can gain a comprehensive understanding of global maritime economic trends and challenges, equipping them with the ability to compete internationally.

Secondly, the emphasis on local characteristics involves a deep understanding and application of the local maritime economy. For universities in coastal areas, the course should pay special attention to the operational models of local ports, the construction of regional logistics networks, and local government maritime economic policies. Through field trips, project research, and cooperation with local enterprises, students can apply theoretical knowledge to local practical situations, enhancing their ability to solve real-world problems.

2 Problems and Challenges in Ideological and Political Education (IPE) of the "Maritime Economic Geography" Course

2.1 Insufficient Integration of IPE Elements

The integration of IPE elements in the "Maritime Economic Geography" course is currently insufficient. Although the course itself features interdisciplinary content, the inclusion of IPE content often remains superficial, failing to deeply explore the intersections between professional knowledge and ideological education. Firstly, the course design lacks systematic integration of IPE elements, leading to a formalistic approach to IPE. For example, while teaching about maritime trade between China and other countries, there is often insufficient emphasis on integrating the socialist rule of law concepts and national policies, which results in students understanding legal provisions only at a textual level without appreciating the underlying political ideas and social significance.

Secondly, the lack of IPE elements in teaching cases hampers the effective implementation of ideological education. Most teaching cases focus on economic and management aspects, neglecting the education of patriotism, social responsibility, and professional ethics. For instance, while analyzing port operation models, there is rarely a discussion on the impact of the development of Chinese ports on national economic security and international status, making it difficult for students to appreciate the importance of patriotism and social responsibility from the cases (Yang Dan, 2024).^[2]

2.2 Need for Improvement in Teachers' IPE Teaching Abilities

The IPE teaching abilities of teachers directly affect the implementation of ideological education in courses (Zhang, et al., 2024)^[3]. Currently, teachers of the "Maritime Economic Geography" course often have rich professional backgrounds, but generally lack competence in IPE. On one hand, some teachers have not received systematic training in IPE and do not sufficiently understand how to organically integrate IPE elements into professional courses, making it challenging to achieve deep integration of IPE and professional knowledge during teaching (Cantoni et al., 2017)^[4].

On the other hand, teachers commonly adopt traditional lecturing methods in the classroom, lacking the means to stimulate and guide students' ideological awareness. For instance, when discussing maritime market dynamics, teachers focus more on market analysis and data interpretation, rarely guiding students to consider China's position and responsibilities in the global maritime market, which diminishes students' perception of IPE and affects the teaching outcome.

2.3 Low Student Participation

Student participation is a key indicator of the effectiveness of IPE (Tian, 2022)^[5]. However, in the "Maritime Economic Geography" course, student participation in IPE is generally low. Firstly, the appeal of IPE content is insufficient, leading to a lack of student interest. IPE content is often presented in a lecture format with little interaction and discussion, causing students to feel bored.

Secondly, the course evaluation system places a low emphasis on IPE assessment, resulting in a lack of motivation for students to participate. In course assessments, professional knowledge dominates, while IPE assessment is merely supplementary. Consequently, students tend to prioritize the study of professional knowledge and neglect participation in and understanding of IPE.

Additionally, students' ideological awareness and initiative need to be improved. Some students perceive IPE as unrelated to their professional studies, lacking the awareness and motivation for active participation. For example, when discussing the impact of maritime economic development on national

economic security, students often focus on data and market changes rather than actively considering the political and social implications behind them (Hu Zhuowen, 2024).^[6]

3 Reform Paths for IPE in the "Maritime Economic Geography" Course

3.1 Optimizing Course Content Design

Constructing a dual-track teaching model that integrates "course-based ideological and political education (IPE) and professional education" is essential. This model should maintain the characteristics of professional education while organically incorporating IPE elements into the course, achieving mutual promotion and coordinated development between professional and ideological education.

Firstly, it is necessary to systematically review the knowledge points of the "Maritime Economic Geography" course and integrate IPE with professional knowledge. In selecting teaching content, emphasis should be placed on combining relevant aspects of the maritime power strategy with the knowledge points of the "Maritime Economic Geography" course, enabling students to deeply understand the connotation and significance of the maritime power strategy while learning professional knowledge. Additionally, while teaching professional content such as maritime markets and port operations, incorporating IPE elements such as national maritime strategy, ecological civilization construction, and national interests in international trade can enhance students' understanding of national policies and social responsibilities.

For instance, when teaching about the maritime market, instructors can analyze the supply and demand relationship in the global maritime market, guiding students to pay attention to China's position and influence in the global maritime market and understand the importance of the national maritime strategy. By comparing the development history and operational models of major ports in China and abroad, students can recognize the historical development of ports like Quanzhou Port and Fuzhou Port and their key roles in international trade and national economic security (Yang Fang, 2024)^[7], thereby enhancing their national confidence and cultural confidence.

Secondly, developing teaching cases with distinct IPE characteristics can enhance the effectiveness and impact of IPE. For example, analyzing the role of Chinese ports in the "Belt and Road" initiative can help students explore the relationship between national strategy and maritime economy. Students can study the current status and future prospects of the China-Europe Railway Express, understanding its significance for economic cooperation and cultural exchange along the route, and appreciating the profound impact of national strategies.

Furthermore, integrating current international situations and national policies into teaching activities, such as setting up discussions on current affairs and simulated decision-making sessions, can be beneficial. For instance, in analyzing national interests in international trade, simulating United Nations meetings or international trade negotiations can help students understand the importance of national interest negotiation and win-win cooperation through role-playing. This immersive teaching method not only enhances students' critical thinking and comprehensive quality but also deepens their understanding and recognition of national policies and international situations (Tang Yanni, 2024)^[8].

3.2 Innovating Teaching Methods

Innovating teaching methods is a crucial approach to enhancing the effectiveness of IPE. Firstly,

employing Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Collaborative Inquiry methods can integrate IPE throughout students' practical projects. For example, students can work in groups to study an international shipping case, analyzing its economic benefits and strategic significance. Through this approach, students can deeply understand the complexities of the maritime economy while enhancing their comprehension of IPE through collaborative inquiry. Specifically, students can explore the development history of an international shipping route, its impact on global trade, and the underlying national strategic considerations, experiencing the interplay of national interests, economic benefits, and international relations in real cases.

Secondly, fully utilizing multimedia and information technology can enhance the interactivity and appeal of teaching. By using videos, animations, online discussions, and other means, instructors can vividly present IPE elements in the maritime economy, stimulating students' learning enthusiasm. For instance, teachers can show videos about the "Belt and Road" initiative, demonstrating its profound impact on international shipping and global trade, helping students visually understand the grand layout of national strategies. Additionally, employing Virtual Reality (VR) technology can allow students to "visit" international ports virtually, understanding port operations and national strategic layouts, enhancing the directness and impact of IPE. For example, through VR technology, students can virtually experience the operation of Shanghai Port, observing its position and role in the global shipping network, thus deepening their understanding of the relationship between national strategies and economic development.

Interactive teaching methods are also effective. Instructors can incorporate interactive elements such as group discussions, case analyses, and role-playing into their classes to enhance student engagement. Through group discussions, students can share their views and ideas, fostering collective brainstorming and deepening their understanding of IPE content. Case analyses enable students to apply their knowledge to real-world problems, enhancing their practical application skills. Role-playing exercises allow students to simulate international trade negotiations or government decision-making processes, experiencing the perspectives and positions of different roles, thereby cultivating their comprehensive analysis abilities and teamwork spirit (Wang Jing, 2024)^[9].

Moreover, the application of information technology can significantly enhance teaching efficiency and effectiveness. Online learning platforms allow teachers to share learning materials, assign homework, and organize discussions, enabling students to learn and interact anytime and anywhere, thereby increasing learning flexibility and autonomy. Online testing and assessment systems help teachers monitor students' learning progress in real-time, providing targeted guidance and feedback to help students better grasp the knowledge.

3.3 Strengthening Teacher Training

Teachers play a crucial role in IPE, and strengthening teacher training can effectively enhance the quality of IPE. Firstly, schools should regularly organize IPE training sessions to improve teachers' IPE literacy and teaching skills. This can involve inviting IPE experts to deliver lectures on the theoretical foundations and practical strategies of course-based IPE, helping teachers deeply understand the core concepts and methods of IPE. Additionally, schools should encourage teachers to participate in domestic and international academic seminars and exchange activities to stay updated on the latest research findings and practical experiences in IPE, share and exchange successful teaching cases and experiences, and promote continuous reflection and improvement in teaching methods.

Secondly, establishing interdisciplinary teaching teams can foster the deep integration of IPE and professional education (Perignat et al., 2023)^[10]. By facilitating collaboration between professional and IPE teachers, schools can create a synergy in teaching and jointly develop IPE teaching resources and cases. For example, maritime economics teachers can work with IPE teachers to design comprehensive teaching modules that cover both maritime economics and national strategies. Such collaboration not only enriches the teaching content but also achieves the organic integration of IPE and professional education. For instance, while teaching about the international maritime market, professional teachers can provide market analysis and operational management knowledge, while IPE teachers can guide students to focus on national interests and international relations, using case studies and discussions to ensure students acquire both professional knowledge and IPE literacy.

Furthermore, schools should encourage teachers to conduct research on course-based IPE, support them in applying for related research projects, and publish academic papers. By supporting research projects, teachers can delve into the theoretical and practical issues of course-based IPE, developing more innovative and practical IPE teaching resources. For example, they can research how to integrate IPE into various teaching segments of maritime economics, design and implement teaching cases and projects with IPE functions, and evaluate and provide feedback on the effectiveness of IPE.

To ensure the sustainability and systematic nature of teacher training, schools should establish regular teacher training mechanisms (Darling-Hammond, 2017)^[11]. This could involve setting up dedicated teacher training funds to support teachers' participation in various training and academic activities, developing a teacher training plan that outlines training goals, content, and methods, and establishing a teacher training assessment mechanism to evaluate training outcomes and motivate teachers to continuously improve their teaching skills and IPE abilities.

3.4 Enhancing Student Participation

Enhancing student participation is key to ensuring the effectiveness of IPE. Effective IPE relies not only on teachers' teaching abilities but also on students' active involvement and initiative. Schools and teachers should adopt various measures to stimulate students' interest in IPE and enhance their learning motivation and participation.

Firstly, organizing rich extracurricular activities and practical sessions can spark students' interest in IPE. For example, arranging field trips to ports and shipping companies allows students to experience the operational models and practical applications of the maritime economy firsthand. By interacting with industry experts, students can better understand the close connections between the maritime economy, national strategies, and social responsibilities. Additionally, conducting social practice and public welfare activities, such as volunteering for marine environmental protection and participating in community projects at ports, allows students to experience the value and significance of IPE in real-life contexts. These practical activities not only enhance students' social responsibility but also cultivate their practical skills and teamwork spirit.

Secondly, improving the course evaluation system by incorporating IPE into the assessment can encourage student participation. Traditional course evaluations often focus on professional knowledge, neglecting IPE content. To address this, schools can include IPE-related assessments, such as IPE essays, class discussions, and project reports, in course evaluations. These diverse assessment forms can motivate students to engage actively in IPE and enhance their learning motivation and participation. For

instance, students could be required to write essays on national maritime strategies, analyzing their impact and significance on the maritime economy; participate in class discussions on ecological civilization construction, sharing their views and insights; and design project reports related to IPE, demonstrating their awareness of IPE in real-world problems and solutions.

Lastly, creating a positive IPE environment through recognition and promotion can guide students to participate actively. Schools can establish awards for "Outstanding IPE Students" to recognize and reward students who excel in IPE. This approach can encourage students to achieve excellent results in IPE, fostering a positive learning atmosphere and competitive spirit. Additionally, schools can use campus media, bulletin boards, and social platforms to widely promote the importance of IPE and showcase exemplary cases, increasing students' awareness and emphasis on IPE. By setting examples and sharing successful experiences, schools can guide more students to engage actively in IPE, creating an environment of collective participation and mutual improvement.

Conclusion

This study analyzes the characteristics of the "Maritime Economic Geography" course, the existing problems and challenges in ideological and political education (IPE), and proposes reform paths such as optimizing course content design, innovating teaching methods, strengthening teacher training, and enhancing student participation. The research shows that the effective integration of IPE not only enhances students' political literacy but also improves their understanding and application of professional knowledge. With the deepening implementation of the maritime power strategy and the continuous development of the maritime economy, the content of IPE needs to be constantly updated to meet the requirements of the times. Future research can further explore specific implementation strategies and evaluation methods, focusing on the integration and optimization of teaching resources, and strengthening cooperation with practical bases and enterprises both inside and outside the school. This will help achieve resource sharing and optimal allocation. By continuously optimizing and innovating the IPE teaching model, we can promote the deep integration of IPE and professional education, providing solid theoretical and practical support for the development of higher education in the new era.

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