

# Exploring Innovative Approaches in Teaching Ideological and Political Education in Higher Vocational Colleges from the Perspective of Collaborative Education

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**Abstract:** The current education field is undergoing profound transformations. The concept of collaborative education, which emphasizes forming educational synergy through the organic interaction of various elements within the system, provides a crucial perspective for addressing the contradiction between the fragmentation of educational resources and the holistic nature of educational objectives. As a core educational component integrating ideological, humanistic, and vocational dimensions, the teaching system of ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges still faces practical challenges in areas such as the integration of concepts, coordination among stakeholders, content consolidation, and evaluation and feedback, which hinder the full realization of its educational effectiveness. Based on the perspective of collaborative education, this study first clarifies its intrinsic connection and goal isomorphism with ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges, demonstrating the inevitable logic of teaching innovation. It then systematically examines the main challenges in teaching practice. Finally, it constructs a systematic innovative pathway encompassing concept reshaping, model reconstruction, content integration, and evaluation reform, aiming to provide theoretical reference and practical guidance for enhancing the educational effectiveness and contemporary adaptability of ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges.

**Keywords:** Collaborative education; ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges; teaching innovation; pathway exploration; system construction

## Introduction

Against the backdrop of an increasing emphasis on openness and integration within the modern education system, the emergence of the collaborative education concept signifies a major shift in educational paradigms from singular and closed approaches to diversified and interconnected ones. Ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges bears the critical mission of cultivating students' comprehensive competencies and professional spirit, and its teaching effectiveness directly impacts the quality of training for technical and skilled talents. However, traditional isolated and fragmented teaching models struggle to meet the advanced demands for comprehensive talent qualities posed by the current complex social environment. Exploring innovative teaching pathways from the perspective of collaborative education is not only an inherent requirement for deepening the reform of ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges but also an inevitable choice for responding to contemporary challenges and enhancing educational efficacy. This study aims to systematically analyze the intrinsic logic between collaborative education and ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges, examine existing practical difficulties, and construct a set of effective teaching innovation systems, thereby holding significant theoretical value and practical necessity.

## **1. The Intrinsic Connection between the Collaborative Education Concept and Ideological and Political Education in Higher Vocational Colleges**

### ***1.1 The Core Tenets and Contemporary Value of the Collaborative Education Concept***

As a modern educational paradigm, the collaborative education concept has its core tenets in breaking down the isolation inherent in traditional education. It emphasizes forming a holistic educational synergy through the organic connections and interactions among various elements within the system, as well as between the system and its external environment. This concept posits that educational outcomes are not the result of a single entity or a single phase, but depend on the deep integration achieved through resource sharing, functional complementarity, and process cohesion among multiple actors guided by common objectives<sup>[1]</sup>. It transcends simplistic additive thinking and is dedicated to constructing an open, interconnected, and symbiotic educational ecosystem, thereby maximizing the educational function through structural integration.

The field of education is currently undergoing profound transformation, where the deep integration of knowledge transmission and value guidance, and the effective alignment of individual comprehensive development with societal needs have become crucial issues. The contemporary value of the collaborative education concept lies precisely in its response to these issues; it aims to resolve the inherent contradiction between the fragmentation of educational resources and the holistic nature of educational objectives. Against the backdrop of an increasingly complex society, no single institution or curriculum system can independently shoulder the responsibility of comprehensive education. Therefore, promoting the formation of an educational framework characterized by internal and external collaboration and multi-stakeholder synergy has become an inevitable choice for enhancing educational adaptability and effectiveness, thus providing conceptual guidance for addressing the uncertainties of the future society.

### ***1.2 The Essential Attributes and Goal Orientation of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Vocational Colleges***

Ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges constitutes a core component of the educational system within higher vocational institutions. Its essential attributes encompass the multiple characteristics of ideological, humanistic, and vocational dimensions. The ideological dimension establishes the value foundation of the curriculum, which is crucial for shaping students' worldview, outlook on life, and values. The humanistic dimension forms the cultural bedrock of the curriculum, aiming to cultivate students' moral sentiments, sound character, and humanistic literacy. The vocational dimension highlights the distinctive feature of this type of curriculum, requiring it to be closely integrated with the development of professional skills, the nurturing of professional spirit, and future professional life. These three attributes permeate and organically unify with one another, collectively forming the unique identity of ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges.

The goal orientation of this curriculum lies in guiding students to achieve coordinated development across three levels: cognition, affect, and behavior. At the cognitive level, its objective is to facilitate students' formation of a systematic understanding of basic theories, social norms, and professional ethics. At the affective level, it focuses on inspiring students' patriotic sentiments, sense of social responsibility, as well as identification with and passion for their major and future profession. At the behavioral level, it is dedicated to cultivating students' ability to apply learned theories to observe, analyze, and solve practical problems and professional dilemmas. This process realizes the transition from the internalization of knowledge to the externalization of behavior, ultimately shaping students into professional and technical talents possessing sound comprehensive competencies<sup>[2]</sup>.

### ***1.3 The Structural Alignment in Objectives Between the Collaborative Education Concept and Ideological and Political Education in Higher Vocational Colleges***

The collaborative education concept and ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges exhibit significant structural alignment in the top-level design of their educational objectives. This alignment first manifests in the integration of a holistic perspective. Both are committed to transcending isolated and fragmented educational models, viewing student development as a systemic project requiring the joint contribution of multiple elements across the entire process. The systematic methodology provided by the collaborative education concept offers a framework to support the achievement of the comprehensive goals of ideological and political education in higher vocational

colleges. Conversely, the comprehensive educational content inherent in ideological and political courses provides a concrete practical vehicle and a value-based destination for the collaborative education concept.

Another crucial dimension of their aligned objectives lies in a shared emphasis on interactive relationships among participants. The unidirectional relationship between educator and educatee characteristic of traditional teaching models is replaced, under the collaborative concept, by a relationship of equal interaction and dialogic meaning-making among multiple participants. This aligns closely with the teaching process pursued by ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges, which aims to construct meaning and inspire thought through deep interactions between teachers and students, among students themselves, and with the professional workplace environment. This inherent consistency in their objectives makes the deep integration of the collaborative education concept into the teaching of ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges not only possible but also a theoretical necessity.

#### ***1.4 The Inevitable Logic of Teaching Innovation in Ideological and Political Courses Under the Guidance of the Collaborative Education Concept***

The systems theory nature of the collaborative education concept defines the internal logic for teaching innovation in ideological and political education within higher vocational colleges. This concept reveals that optimizing the effectiveness of the teaching system cannot rely on adjustments to local or individual components. Instead, it must start from the overall structure, involving the reorganization and redesign of teaching elements. This implies that teaching innovation needs to shift from singular classroom lectures to multi-context linkage, from a knowledge-based orientation to competency integration, and from teacher-led instruction to teacher-student co-construction. The direction of this innovation has a strict causal relationship with the principles of openness, connection, and holism advocated by the collaborative concept.

The guidance of this concept transforms teaching innovation from an optional practice into an imperative necessity. When ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges pursues the achievement of a synergistic effect, its inherent teaching content, methods, participants, and evaluation systems inherently face the pressure for systematic reform. Adhering rigidly to traditional teaching models will be incapable of supporting the grand objectives of collaborative education. Only by proactively breaking down disciplinary barriers, classroom boundaries, and role divisions to establish new teaching paradigms compatible with this goal can the curriculum's objectives be effectively and authentically achieved. Therefore, teaching innovation based on the collaborative education concept represents the rational and inevitable path for ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges to fulfill its mission and align with contemporary development.

## **2. Examination of Realities and Analysis of Challenges in the Teaching System of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Vocational Colleges**

### ***2.1 Barriers to Integrating Teaching Philosophy with Practical Contexts***

In the process of translating the collaborative education concept into specific teaching practice, a tension arises between conceptual understanding and the inertia of established contexts. The emphasis on systematicity and interconnectedness at the theoretical level often encounters unclear implementation pathways when entering the traditional teaching context, which is centered around subject divisions and classroom settings. This disparity between cognition and operation results in advanced concepts struggling to become genuinely embedded within the organizational structure and operational mechanisms of daily teaching. Consequently, these concepts risk remaining at the level of ideas, lacking effective practical implementation tools.

The inherent stability and boundedness of the teaching context itself further constitute objective obstacles to the integration of new philosophies. Fixed class schedules, standardized classroom spaces, and relatively closed-off course management collectively form an institutionalized constraint framework. Within this framework, collaborative teaching activities designed to break down spatiotemporal boundaries and integrate multiple stakeholders often face high organizational costs and implementation difficulties due to misalignment with the existing institutional logic. As a result, attempts at teaching innovation tend to have limited effectiveness when confronted with the powerful inertia of traditional contexts<sup>[3]</sup>.

## ***2.2 Collaborative Inertia Among Educational Agents and in the Teaching Process***

The educational process of ideological and political courses in higher vocational colleges currently retains a strong characteristic of being dominated by a single agent. An effective interactive network among potential educational forces — such as subject instructors, school administrative departments, and industry enterprises — has not yet been established. Since these agents belong to different organizational systems and follow distinct work objectives and evaluation criteria, their functional roles and boundaries of responsibility within the educational process are insufficiently clear. This situation objectively leads to a fragmentation of efforts and ambiguity in responsibilities, making it difficult to form a stable collaborative community.

This weakened interconnection among agents directly results in "collaborative inertia" within the teaching process. There is a lack of regularized, institutionalized communication platforms and resource-sharing mechanisms between different agents, hindering the smooth flow of information and resources. Consequently, educational efforts that should mutually support and enhance each other may, in practice, operate as parallel yet largely disconnected independent tracks. This failure prevents the generation of a "1+1>2" synergistic effect, thereby weakening the overall collaborative educational force.

## ***2.3 Insufficient Integration of Teaching Content with Professional Contexts***

The current organization of content in ideological and political education within higher vocational colleges leaves room for improvement in aligning with the distinctive characteristics of vocational education. The theoretical and generalized exposition of the teaching content is not closely connected to the concrete, scenario-specific professional ethical dilemmas and future workplace realities faced by students in specific majors. This sense of distance makes it difficult for students to establish effective meaningful connections during knowledge construction, thereby hindering the internal transformation of learned content into professional competencies.

The detachment of teaching content from professional contexts weakens the pertinence and appeal of the course learning. When students struggle to find a clear value link between the theories they learn and their professional fields or career planning, their learning motivation tends to remain at the instrumental level of merely passing assessments. This lack of integration restricts the deep motivational role that the content of ideological and political courses should play as a resource for value guidance and spiritual impetus in fostering students' professional identity and development.

## ***2.4 Disconnection Between the Evaluation System and Feedback on Educational Effectiveness***

The current course evaluation models predominantly focus on quantitatively assessing the mastery of established knowledge, and their evaluation metrics struggle to effectively capture the comprehensive and formative competency goals pursued by collaborative education. There is a lack of corresponding scientific observation tools and assessment standards for measuring students' developmental changes in areas such as value judgment, teamwork, social responsibility, and the ability to solve complex practical problems. This leads to a measurement discrepancy between evaluation results and the authentic, long-term educational outcomes<sup>[4]</sup>.

This simplification in evaluation orientation, in turn, exerts a reverse shaping effect on the teaching process. Consequently, instructional design and implementation tend to unconsciously lean toward objectives that are easily measured and assessed, while the cultivation of more essential yet difficult-to-quantify comprehensive qualities may become marginalized. The disconnection between the evaluation system and the overarching educational objectives not only affects the accuracy of effectiveness feedback but may also structurally constrain the inherent motivation for the teaching system to undergo fundamental transformation towards collaborative education.

# **3. Constructing Innovative Teaching Pathways for Ideological and Political Education in Higher Vocational Colleges Oriented Towards Collaborative Education**

## ***3.1 Reshaping Innovative Concepts Guided by Consensus Building***

The deep impetus for innovation and transformation in the teaching system originates from the consensus reached among participating agents at the cognitive level. To advance collaborative

education, the primary task is to facilitate a value-based understanding of its necessity among teaching stakeholders. This involves moving beyond the traditional view of ideological and political courses as isolated knowledge systems and fostering a holistic perspective that considers them within the entire educational ecosystem. This consensus forms the cognitive foundation for changes in teaching practices, clearing ideological obstacles for the implementation of subsequent innovative measures<sup>[5]</sup>. Building such consensus is not achieved overnight; it requires ongoing dialogue, discussions, and thematic training to systematically deconstruct the entrenched mindset of subject-centric and classroom-centered thinking, thereby embedding the gene of collaboration at the conceptual source.

The core of this conceptual reshaping lies in establishing a relational mindset and an ecological construction awareness. This signifies that instructional design and implementation need to shift focus from the individual teacher's "how to teach" to "how multiple agents interact"; and from concentrating on "teaching events" within the classroom to cultivating "educational contexts" that support students' holistic development. Through organized seminars, exchanges, and co-design activities, teachers, professional departments, and social forces can be encouraged to form a shared commitment to educational goals. Consequently, collaboration transforms from an external requirement into an endogenous driver, providing stable value guidance for the profound reform of the teaching system. This process is essentially a cultural innovation aimed at nurturing a teaching community culture characterized by shared responsibility, open boundaries, and mutual growth. It elevates collaboration from a technical method to an intrinsic organizational value pursuit and behavioral consciousness.

### ***3.2 Reconstructing the Teaching Model Centered on Multi-dimensional Linkage***

Building upon the established consensus, the teaching model requires a transformation from a static structure dominated by a single entity to a dynamic framework characterized by interactions among multiple agents. The key to this reconstruction lies in the systematic design of linkage mechanisms between different subject teachers within the institution, between teaching units and student affairs systems, and between the school and social entities such as industry enterprises. This linkage aims to break down entrenched organizational barriers, facilitating the orderly flow and optimal allocation of human resources, information, and materials within the educational process through the establishment of stable collaborative platforms and projects. This reconstruction transcends simple cooperation; it necessitates the creation of an operational support system with clearly defined rights and responsibilities, shared benefits, and sustainable development. This ensures that linkage is not a temporary, project-based addition but a regular mechanism embedded within the organization's daily operations.

The teaching model of multi-dimensional linkage is concretely manifested in project-based and scenario-based learning designs. For instance, centered around a comprehensive social issue or a professional ethical dilemma, a guiding team composed of ideological and political education teachers, subject teachers, and even industry professionals can be formed to guide students in conducting interdisciplinary inquiry and solution design. In this process, knowledge transmission, value guidance, and competency development are integrated within authentic or simulated task scenarios. The knowledge backgrounds and perspectives of different agents collide and complement one another, naturally generating a synergistic educational effect through interactive action, thereby enhancing the depth and breadth of learning. This model transforms students from passive information recipients into active knowledge constructors and value discerners. Through deep interaction with multiple agents, they develop an understanding of complex realities and a recognition of their own roles and responsibilities.

### ***3.3 Integrating Teaching Content with the Aim of Unity of Knowledge and Action***

The direction for the innovative integration of teaching content is to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and behavioral expression. For ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges, this necessitates strengthening the connection of its content to the professional world, embedding abstract values and ethical principles into the interpretation of specific professional contexts, industry cases, and the history of professional development. By consciously anchoring the teaching content to students' professional backgrounds and future career paths, the relevance and impact of the learning material can be significantly enhanced, thereby stimulating students' intrinsic learning motivation<sup>[6]</sup>.

This integration requires a modular and project-based redesign of the course content, organizing

learning materials around the competency development logic of "value identification — rational deliberation — behavioral choice." Teaching content should no longer be a static collection of knowledge but should become a scaffold guiding students in value exploration and meaning construction. By designing tasks related to profession-specific ethical dilemmas, corporate social responsibility case analyses, and similar activities, students are propelled to transform from knowledge comprehension to value identification, and further to behavioral inclination through the process of solving complex problems, ultimately achieving the pedagogical aim of unity of knowledge and action.

### ***3.4 Reforming the Evaluation Mechanism with the Goal of Continuous Improvement***

Teaching innovation oriented toward collaborative education inevitably demands a shift in the evaluation mechanism from singular summative assessment to diversified formative feedback and developmental guidance. The new evaluation system must transcend the mechanical testing of factual knowledge and strive to develop assessment tools capable of capturing students' performance in comprehensive competencies such as value judgment, teamwork, and innovative thinking. This includes introducing various methods such as learning portfolios, performance assessments, peer reviews, and project reports based on authentic tasks to obtain more comprehensive and multifaceted evidence of student learning.

The fundamental purpose of evaluation should shift from screening and selection to promoting the continuous improvement of the teaching system. To this end, it is necessary to establish a closed-loop system integrating "instructional design — implementation — evaluation — feedback." Evaluation data should not only be used to assess student achievement but should also be systematically analyzed to reflect on the appropriateness of teaching objectives, the effectiveness of instructional strategies, and the operational status of collaborative mechanisms. Through this data-based, cyclical process of feedback and adjustment, the teaching system gains an intrinsic drive for self-optimization. This ensures that the innovative pathway for collaborative education dynamically evolves and continuously refines itself along a scientific trajectory.

## **Conclusion**

This study systematically elaborates on the intrinsic connection between the collaborative education concept and ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges. It provides an in-depth analysis of the practical challenges currently faced by the teaching system in terms of philosophy, stakeholders, content, and evaluation. Furthermore, it constructs a comprehensive pathway for teaching innovation. This pathway is guided by consensus building, centers on multi-dimensional linkage, aims for the unity of knowledge and action, and targets continuous improvement. The research confirms that integrating the collaborative education concept throughout all elements and the entire process of the teaching system is key to promoting the connotative development and effectiveness enhancement of ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges. Future research and practice can further focus on the specific operational mechanisms and implementation conditions of each innovative pathway. Their effectiveness can be tested in dynamic teaching practices to continuously enrich and refine the theoretical framework and practical models for teaching innovation in ideological and political education within higher vocational colleges from the perspective of collaborative education.

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