

Construction of the "National Defense + Ideological and Political Education" Integration Model in Frontier Secondary Vocational Schools: A Case Study of Chongzuo Polytechnic Vocational Technical School

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Abstract: Under the dual demands of vocational education development and national defense talent cultivation in frontier regions, exploring the "National Defense + Ideological and Political Education" integration model represents a crucial pathway for fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and cultivating technical and skilled personnel who possess both moral integrity and professional competence. Taking Chongzuo Polytechnic Vocational Technical School as the research subject, this paper analyzes the practical foundations and contemporary mission of integrating national defense education with ideological and political education in frontier secondary vocational schools. It constructs an integration model from the dimensions of curriculum systems, practical platforms, and teaching faculties, summarizes its practical effectiveness in cultivating students, and proposes optimization strategies, thereby providing a replicable experiential paradigm for the high-quality development of vocational education in frontier areas.

Keywords: frontier secondary vocational schools; national defense education; ideological and political integration

1. The Contemporary Context of Integrating "National Defense + Ideological and Political Education" in Frontier Secondary Vocational Schools

1.1 The Special Mission of Vocational Education in Frontier Regions

The Implementation Outline for Patriotic Education in the New Era emphasizes the importance of collaborative education between national defense education and ideological and political education. Frontier secondary vocational schools must transcend traditional educational boundaries to construct an educational framework of "Comprehensive National Defense" and "Comprehensive Ideological and Political Education," thereby strengthening students' national consciousness, awareness of potential crises, and sense of mission. This is essential not only for addressing current international circumstances but also as an inevitable requirement for cultivating well-rounded, high-quality talent.

The convergence of geopolitical factors and educational imperatives is evident in the "Overall Plan for Series of Themed Practical Teaching Activities in 'Walking Ideological and Political Courses' for Primary, Secondary, and University Students in Chongzuo City (2024)". This plan mandates that all schools fully leverage local red cultural resources and frontier-specific assets, integrating them into ideological and political curricula to solidly conduct patriotism education and initiatives to foster a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation. Located on the China-Vietnam border and adjacent to ASEAN, Chongzuo Polytechnic Vocational Technical School must capitalize on its unique geographical advantage. This necessitates a deep integration of national defense education with ideological and political education, aiming to cultivate "frontier builders" who possess patriotic sentiment, professional competence, and an international perspective.

1.2 The Developmental Characteristics and Educational Challenges of Students in Frontier Secondary Vocational Schools

Most students in frontier secondary vocational schools exhibit vague career planning and lack clear

life goals and direction. National defense education can cultivate their sense of discipline and resilience, enabling them to strengthen their willpower and enhance self-restraint in challenging environments. Meanwhile, ideological and political education can solidify the foundation of their ideals and beliefs, guiding them to establish a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values, thereby clarifying the close connection between personal development and national needs.

Currently, national defense education in some frontier secondary vocational schools often remains superficial, focusing merely on students' physical training through military drills while neglecting the instruction of deeper content such as military theory and national defense history. Ideological and political courses lack distinct frontier characteristics and fail to adequately incorporate local historical, cultural, and geopolitical realities. Moreover, insufficient integration of resources between the two domains prevents the formation of a synergistic educational effect, resulting in inadequate depth and practical effectiveness of their fusion. Therefore, there is an urgent need to explore integration pathways that are aligned with the principles of secondary vocational education and highlight frontier characteristics, in order to enhance the quality of education and teaching and meet the developmental needs of students.

2. The Logical Rationale for Integrating National Defense Education and Ideological and Political Education

2.1 Goal Alignment: Cultivating a New Generation of Individuals "Imbued with Soul, Rooted in Tradition, and Equipped with Competence"

National defense education, centered on "enhancing national defense awareness and fostering patriotic spirit," is dedicated to inspiring students' concern for and commitment to safeguarding national security and developmental interests. It aims to foster a deep understanding of the importance of national defense construction for the nation's survival and development, thereby instilling a resolve to contribute to the cause of national defense. Ideological and political education, guided by the tenet of "fostering virtue and nurturing the soul," helps students form a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values through systematic theoretical instruction and value guidance. Its purpose is to cultivate students' sense of social responsibility, moral character, and political literacy.

Chongzuo Polytechnic Vocational Technical School delves into local distinctive resources such as "frontier culture" and "Zhuang ethnic red culture," transforming historical national defense events and heroic deeds into ideological and political teaching cases. These elements are integrated into professional competency education, forming a content matrix of "national defense history + ideological and political case studies + professional competence." When teaching the patriotism section of ideological and political courses, the historical background, progression, and significance of the Longzhou Uprising are introduced to help students deeply understand the concrete connotations of patriotism. In fostering professional competence, the steadfast spirit of frontier guards is incorporated to instruct students in developing a professional attitude of dedication, love for their work, and perseverance, thereby achieving a resonance between knowledge transmission and value guidance.

2.2 Content Isomorphism: Two Facets of the Whole in Patriotic Spirit

National defense education features diverse and multifaceted content, encompassing military theory, skills, and national defense regulations, among which red revolutionary culture constitutes a significant component. For instance, the spirit of the Longzhou Uprising in the Chongzuo region serves as vivid material in national defense education to inspire students. The deeds of border garrison soldiers, who endure hardships, remain steadfast at their posts, and defend national territorial sovereignty, also profoundly embody patriotism and the spirit of dedication. The socialist core values within ideological and political education emphasize patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendliness, with patriotism being the core essence. Education on ethnic unity is dedicated to jointly safeguarding national unity and stability, which aligns closely with the objective in national defense education of upholding national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Chongzuo Polytechnic Vocational Technical School delves deeply into local distinctive resources such as "frontier culture" and "Zhuang ethnic red culture," transforming historical national defense events and heroic deeds into case studies for ideological and political teaching. These are integrated into professional competency education, forming a content matrix of "national defense history + ideological and political case studies + professional competence." When teaching the chapter on patriotism in

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2.3 Methodological Mutual Reinforcement: Collaborative Innovation in Practice-Oriented Education

The quasi-military management in national defense education emphasizes discipline, standardization, and collectivism. It cultivates students' self-discipline, teamwork spirit, physical fitness, and willpower. The social practice component of ideological and political education encourages students to step off campus and engage in voluntary service, thereby enhancing their sense of social responsibility. This approach contributes to fostering students' spirit of dedication and moral character.

Chongzuo Polytechnic Vocational Technical School deeply integrates the two, constructing an educational chain of "cognition-experience-practice." By organizing activities such as visits to the Longzhou Memorial Museum and the Friendship Pass, students can not only gain an intuitive understanding of the importance of border areas and the practical significance of national security, thereby enhancing their awareness of national defense responsibility; but also, through interactions with border garrison soldiers, they can profoundly appreciate the soldiers' spirit of dedication and sense of responsibility, deepening their respect for the cause of national defense. Through these practices, students solidify their understanding of patriotism and national defense education, achieving a transformation from theoretical cognition to emotional experience and, ultimately, to practical action.

3. Exploration of the Integration Model: Constructing a "Three-Dimensional Integrated" Educational System

3.1 Curriculum Integration: Developing a Curriculum System with a "National Defense Foundation + Vocational Characteristics"

The exploration of ideological and political elements within core courses is a crucial step in curriculum integration. In the Military Theory course, beyond imparting basic military skills and theoretical knowledge, the course delves into the embedded ideological and political elements, integrating them with the actual conditions of frontier regions. For instance, when teaching the "Battle of Faka Mountain," the background, progression, and significance of the battle are elaborated in detail, allowing students to deeply appreciate the heroic spirit of revolutionary predecessors who sacrificed everything to defend the nation's borders. In the Professional Ethics and Law course, frontier national defense cases are incorporated to guide students in establishing a correct view of professional ethics and legal awareness. When explaining legal responsibilities, cases from frontier regions where individuals faced legal sanctions for violating national defense regulations are introduced, enabling students to profoundly recognize the importance of abiding by the law and safeguarding national defense security. In specialized courses such as automotive repair and construction, concepts of "military-industrial quality" and "craftsman spirit" are introduced. For example, in automotive repair courses, students are taught to strictly hold themselves to military-industrial standards, paying attention to every detail of vehicle maintenance. By explaining the stringent standards and relentless pursuit of excellence maintained by military-industrial enterprises in automotive manufacturing and repair processes, students come to understand that only by embodying the "craftsman spirit" can they achieve excellence in their professional fields.

3.2 Platform Integration: Building a Multidimensional Practical Field of "On-Campus + Off-Campus"

The construction of on-campus cultural immersion platforms serves as a crucial means to foster a sound educational environment. Chongzuo Polytechnic Vocational Technical School implements quasi-military management, organizing various military training sessions and collective activities. Initiatives such as the "National Defense Culture Festival" and "Party Secretary and President Deliver National Defense and Ideological-Political Lectures," along with activities like military skills competitions, frontier-themed speech contests, and national defense knowledge competitions, have attracted broad student participation. These activities allow students to hone their military skills, cultivate teamwork spirit and competitive awareness, express their patriotic sentiments and passion for national defense,

stimulate their interest in learning national defense knowledge, and enhance their national defense and national security awareness. The implementation of these activities not only enriches students' extracurricular life but also creates a strong national defense cultural atmosphere, enabling students to be subtly influenced by national defense education and ideological-political education.

The construction of an off-campus collaborative education network serves as a crucial guarantee for achieving platform integration. Chongzuo Polytechnic Vocational Technical School has established connections with local military sub-districts, people's armed forces departments, and border police stations, providing students with a broader practical platform. The school makes full use of the "National Defense Education Practice Base" in the Chongzuo area, enabling students to participate in activities such as military training and legal awareness campaigns, where they personally experience the importance of national defense construction and maintaining stability in frontier regions. Additionally, the school invites officers and soldiers from military sub-districts, personnel from armed forces departments, and police officers from border stations to participate in campus activities. Through their firsthand experiences and vivid narratives, students gain a deeper understanding of national defense endeavors and the actual conditions in frontier areas, thereby enhancing their national defense awareness and patriotic sentiment.

3.3 Faculty Integration: Cultivating a Teaching Team with "Dual-Qualifications + National Defense Literacy"

A faculty structure combining full-time and part-time instructors forms the foundation for building a high-quality teaching team. Chongzuo Polytechnic Vocational Technical School has established an interdisciplinary teaching team composed of ideological and political course teachers, military instructors, and specialized course teachers. Ideological and political course teachers possess solid theoretical knowledge in ideological and political education, enabling them to guide students in establishing a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values from a theoretical perspective. Military instructors bring rich military experience and professional military skills, allowing them to provide students with professional military training and guidance. Specialized course teachers are well-versed in professional knowledge and skills, enabling them to organically integrate national defense education with specialized teaching.

Regularly conducting thematic seminars such as "National Defense and Ideological-Political Case Education" and "Frontier Culture and Vocational Education" serves as a crucial method for promoting exchange and cooperation among teaching team members. During these seminar activities, team members share their experiences and insights gained from the teaching process, jointly exploring how to better integrate national defense education with ideological-political education and specialized education. Ideological and political course teachers and military instructors work together to combine military cases with ideological and political theories, making the teaching content more vivid, engaging, and impactful. Specialized course teachers and ideological-political teachers collaborate to discuss how to integrate frontier culture into specialized teaching, thereby enriching the instructional content and enhancing its relevance and effectiveness. Through these seminar activities, communication and collaboration among teaching team members become closer, and teaching standards and quality are effectively improved.

The establishment of a teacher capacity enhancement mechanism is pivotal for cultivating a high-quality teaching team. The school organizes teachers to participate in specialized training on national defense education, inviting experts and scholars in the field to deliver lectures, thereby providing teachers with systematic knowledge training in national defense education. Furthermore, the school arranges for teachers to conduct research at front-line border areas, allowing them to personally experience the national defense construction and actual conditions of frontier regions, which enriches their teaching materials and pedagogical experience. Through the implementation of these measures, the school has built a high-quality teaching team possessing "dual-qualifications + national defense literacy," providing strong faculty support for the effective implementation of the "National Defense + Ideological and Political Education" integration model.

4. Educational Effectiveness of the Integration Model

4.1 Transformation in Ideological Cognition: From "Passive Recipients" to "Active Participants"

Upon enrollment, the vast majority of students held perceptions characterized by "just giving it a try," "indifference," or "idling away their days." Following a series of national defense and ideological-

political education initiatives, a marked positive change has occurred in the ideological state of most students. They are no longer immersed in gaming, no longer act willfully or mischievously, and no longer defy their parents. Instead, they have learned to communicate with their parents, actively discussing academic plans, ideals and goals, and friendships with peers.

4.2 Behavioral Habit Transformation: From "Unrestrained Individuals" to "Self-Disciplined Followers"

Upon enrollment, most students lacked proper behavioral habits. The majority were either overly indulged by parents, beyond control, left unsupervised, or allowed to act freely. They exhibited arrogant and willful personalities, insisted on having their own way, and refused to give up until their demands were met. Negative habits such as drinking, smoking, and petty theft were also present. Addressing the various poor lifestyle habits common among secondary vocational students, the school started with minor details, focusing on incremental development. It targeted specific aspects such as speech and conduct, etiquette and manners, dressing and sleeping routines, assembly and formation, room tidying, and sanitation. The behavioral habits of the vast majority of students shifted from being "unrestrained and requiring enforcement" to being "cooperative and proactive." Some students even began assisting their classmates, helping others change their behavioral habits.

4.3 Change in Learning Attitude: From "Reluctant and Disengaged Learners" to "Willing and Capable Learners."

Upon enrollment, the vast majority of secondary vocational students had weak foundations, struggled to keep pace, and achieved poor academic results. Their attitude towards learning was characterized by self-abandonment, resignation, and a lack of hope, often with a mindset of simply getting by. Through an educational approach of "rigorous requirements, strict management, rigorous education, and rigorous training," the school helps students build confidence in the belief that "everyone can achieve success." It assists students in emerging from a state of learning difficulties, thereby achieving the goal that "every individual is a talent."

4.4 Transformation from "Skill Learners" to "Frontier Builders"

Over the past three years, under the impetus of the "National Defense + Ideological and Political Education" integration model, the ideological quality of students at Chongzuo Polytechnic Vocational Technical School has significantly improved. The proportion of students aspiring to enlist in the military after entering university increased from 15% in their first year to 55.3% by their third year. This data intuitively reflects the enhancement of students' national defense awareness and the stimulation of their patriotic sentiment. Furthermore, 85.3% of graduates progressing to higher education expressed willingness to work and settle in frontier regions. This proportion fully demonstrates students' sense of responsibility and mission towards frontier areas. Their career choices are no longer driven solely by personal professional development but are closely linked with the fate and progress of the frontier regions.

4.5 Innovative "One School, One Distinctive Feature" Ideological and Political Teaching Resources

Chongzuo Polytechnic Vocational Technical School requires students not only to possess solid professional skills but also to have firm political conviction, deep patriotic sentiment, and a strong sense of national defense. Through the integration of national defense education and ideological and political education, the school guides students to closely connect their personal career development with national strategic needs. This cultivates them into a new generation who possess the "soul" of ideals and beliefs, the "roots" of patriotism, and the "capability" of professional skills, thereby meeting the dual demands of socioeconomic development and national defense construction in frontier regions. The school's integration experience provides a replicable model for other institutions, promoting the development of national defense education and ideological and political education in vocational colleges across the Guangxi region.

5. Optimization Pathways for the "National Defense + Ideological and Political Education" Integration in Frontier Secondary Vocational Schools

Establishing a dynamic integration mechanism oriented by demand is key to addressing current

challenges. Schools should closely align with the development needs of frontier industries, gaining an in-depth understanding of local industry requirements for talent, and use this as a basis to optimize curriculum module design. When offering e-commerce specialized courses, content such as confidentiality awareness and security awareness from national defense education should be integrated in conjunction with the development needs of cross-border e-commerce in frontier regions. This cultivates students' ability to protect national information security and commercial secrets in cross-border e-commerce operations. A dual-dimensional evaluation system encompassing "national defense literacy + professional competence" should be established to comprehensively and objectively assess students' overall quality. Incorporating students' performance in activities such as frontier volunteer service and national defense competitions into academic evaluations motivates students to actively participate in national defense education and ideological-political education practices, thereby enhancing their national defense literacy and professional capabilities. Through frontier volunteer service, students can personally experience the importance of national security, strengthening their patriotic sentiment and sense of social responsibility. Participation in national defense competitions allows students to hone their military knowledge and skills, elevating their national defense awareness and teamwork abilities. Integrating these performances into academic assessments better guides students toward comprehensive development.

Strengthening "Digital Empowerment" and "Open Collaboration" is also a crucial direction for improvement. Schools should increase investment in digital resources for national defense and ideological-political education, developing a "Virtual Simulation Platform for Frontier National Defense Education." By integrating materials such as red resources and real-time border imagery, students can be provided with richer and more vivid learning resources. This allows them to experience the importance and urgency of frontier national defense in a virtual environment, thereby enhancing learning outcomes. The use of virtual reality technology enables students to immersively experience scenarios like border patrols and national defense construction, deepening their understanding and knowledge of national defense. Additionally, schools should deepen cooperation with vocational institutions in ASEAN countries by launching "Cross-Border National Defense and Ideological-Political Cloud Classrooms." Through online platforms, real-time interaction and exchange between teachers and students from both sides can be achieved, jointly conducting national defense education and ideological-political teaching activities, sharing teaching experiences and resources, and expanding the educational impact. Within these "Cross-Border National Defense and Ideological-Political Cloud Classrooms," students from both sides can discuss shared concerns regarding national defense, fostering mutual understanding of each other's national defense cultures, cultivating international perspectives and cross-cultural communication skills, and contributing to building a community with a shared future for mankind.

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