

The Integration of Red Culture Into the Comprehensive Ideological and Political Course for Graduate Students: A Study on Its Connotation, Logic, and Pathway

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Red culture, which embodies profound historical and cultural connotations and unique educational functions, is a culture with distinct Chinese socialist characteristics formed by the Communist Party of China, leading the Chinese people, during the periods of revolution, socialist construction, and reform. Red culture aligns with the value implications of the “Comprehensive Ideological and Political Course” for graduate students, and the two share similarities in content and form, promoting each other. Currently, integrating red culture into the “Comprehensive Ideological and Political Course” for graduate students should involve innovating the content and methods of integration, solidifying the practical base, strengthening the team support, and enhancing the educational effectiveness of integration, ensuring that the red gene is firmly rooted in the hearts, minds, and blood of the new-era graduate talents who are developing comprehensively in terms of morality, intelligence, physique, aesthetics, and labor.

Keywords: red culture, graduate students, great ideological and political course, connotation, logic, path

Introduction

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China highlights education, science and technology, and talent as the foundational and strategic support for comprehensively building a socialist

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modern country, which puts forward clear requirements for achieving high-quality development in graduate education. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Party Central Committee with General Secretary Xi Jinping as the core has attached great importance to graduate education. General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out that graduate education plays a vital role in cultivating innovative talents, enhancing innovation capabilities, serving economic and social development, and promoting the modernization of the national governance system and governance capabilities. He explicitly demands that graduate education should adapt to the development needs of the Party and the country, adhere to the “four-oriented” principle, aim at the forefront of science and technology and key fields, deeply promote the adjustment of disciplines and majors, enhance the level of mentor teams, improve the talent cultivation system, and accelerate the cultivation of high-level talents urgently needed by the country. This requirement aligns with the three fundamental issues of education, namely, “who to cultivate”, “what to cultivate”, and “how to cultivate”. To achieve high-quality development in graduate education, we should first clarify the goal of “cultivating talents for the Party and the country”, and then continuously carry out curriculum reforms, faculty development, and other measures to improve the talent cultivation system. Based on this logical rationale, integrating red culture into the “comprehensive ideological and political course” for graduate students is a beneficial exploration for achieving high-quality development in graduate education.

The Connotation of Integrating Red Culture Into the “Comprehensive Ideological and Political Course” for Graduate Students

What is red culture? Some scholars have compiled statistics on the definitions of red culture in the academic circle over the past decade and summarized four types of definitions: cultural resource theory, revolutionary culture theory, advanced culture theory, and characteristic culture theory. For example, some scholars have pointed out that red culture is a cultural lineage that has been accumulated over a long period of time in China’s revolution, construction, reform, and the new era of socialist modernization, with red genes as its spiritual core and composed of red resources, red traditions, red spirit, and red beliefs. It is an essential component of China’s revolutionary culture and advanced socialist culture (Wang, 2022, pp. 165-169). Other scholars have noted that red culture was formed during China’s revolutionary struggle and construction practice, guided by Marxism, as a result of the inheritance of traditional Chinese culture, and an important support for the common spiritual homeland of the Chinese nation, which is inherently unified with the socialist core value system (Xin, 2013, pp. 206-207). The above two definitions unite red culture in the period of China’s revolution and socialist construction, under the guidance of Marxism and the inheritance of excellent traditional Chinese cultural genes, as well as in tangible and intangible cultural carriers and connotations. Some definitions even push the starting point of red culture to an earlier time, such as Liu Runwei’s belief that the upper limit of red culture should be traced back to the historical moment when Marxism-Leninism was introduced to China on the eve of the May 4th New Culture Movement (Liu, 2013, pp. 4-9). Based on these definitions, it is generally agreed that red culture is rooted in excellent traditional Chinese culture and is an essential part of Chinese culture, with significant value in today’s society. Contemporary red culture, guided by Marxism, is an advanced culture created under the leadership of the Communist Party of China.

What is the concept of “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course”? On March 6, 2021, during his visit to members of the medical and health sectors and the education sector attending the fourth session of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and participating in a joint

group meeting, General Secretary Xi Jinping clearly put forward the concept of “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course”: “Ideological and political education courses should not only be taught in the classroom, but also in social life. ... We must make good use of ‘Broad Ideological and Political Education Course’ and integrate it with reality. We cannot simply read out documents in ideological and political education courses, making them lifeless and boring”. This was the first time that General Secretary Xi Jinping clearly put forward the concept and philosophy of “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course”. Looking back at history, the proposal of General Secretary Xi Jinping’s concept of “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” is a further development and refinement of his important discussions on ideological and political education courses. This concept not only sets new requirements for the capabilities and qualities of ideological and political education teachers, but also expands the content of ideological and political education courses and ideological and political education, and clarifies the relationship between ideological and political education courses and the broader social classroom. The distinguishing characteristic of “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” from traditional ideological and political education courses is its “bigness”. This “bigness” is not a concept in terms of quantity or scale. Instead, it refers to its vast scope, broad perspective, and comprehensive system. It is a large-scale social course and a systematic project. As some scholars have argued, the “bigness” of ideological and political education courses does not refer to the size of the classroom. Its “bigness” lies in the grand era, vivid practices, and dynamic reality, emphasizing the large number of participating forces from various sectors of society and the wide range of horizontal influence (Wang, 2022, pp. 39-42). Specifically, from a content perspective, theoretical knowledge, real-world cases, exemplary figures, ideological spirits, and more can all be included in the materials of “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course”. From a formal perspective, classroom teaching, social practice, innovation and creation, experiential observation, discussion and exchange, and other methods can all be adopted in “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course”. To make good use of “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course”, we must pool collective wisdom, utilize “big resources”, create “big classrooms”, build “big platforms”, strengthen “big teaching staffs”, and gather “big synergies”, truly implementing and refining “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” to expand the multidimensional space for the construction of ideological and political education courses in the new era.

Integrating red culture into the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for graduate students aims to fully leverage the educational role of red cultural resources to continuously enrich the content and form of ideological and political education courses for graduate students, expand their connotations and extensions, and contribute to the high-quality development of these courses. This endeavor ensures that the red gene is deeply ingrained in the hearts and blood of graduate students. It is not only an innovative measure for universities in the new era to strengthen the reform of ideological and political education courses and implement the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, but also a necessary response to implementing the requirements of the Ministry of Education and other departments for comprehensively advancing the construction of the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course”. Furthermore, it is a crucial requirement for cultivating high-level talents with both moral integrity and ability.

The Logical Relationship Between Red Culture and the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for Graduate Students

The essence of culture lies in “Cultivating People Through Culture”. The intrinsic quality of red culture

represents the accumulation of the spiritual strength of the Chinese nation and the spiritual product created by the Communist Party of China during the revolution and construction. It is a common historical memory and spiritual wealth for the Chinese people, capable of guiding and inspiring generations to forge ahead relentlessly. It possesses distinct national, political, and people-oriented characteristics, as well as scientificity and richness, which naturally align with the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for graduate students.

The compatibility of red culture with the value implications of the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for graduate students. The “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for graduate students differs from the traditional “Ideological and Political Education Course” by one character, primarily emphasizing the combination of ideological and political classrooms in spatial dimensions with social classrooms, encompassing the vast history of the Chinese nation spanning five thousand years in temporal dimensions. It stands firmly in the context of unprecedented changes in the world and the educational pattern at the historical intersection of China’s “two centenary goals”, actively utilizing the theoretical achievements of sinicizing Marxism, especially Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era (Li & Zhang, 2023, pp. 83-87). The profound historical connotations, national spirit, excellent traditions, and value norms embodied in red culture are all in line with the value implications of the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course”. Only with such rich value implications can the students of the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” truly become newcomers of the era worthy of the great mission of national rejuvenation, high-level talents with both moral integrity and ability.

The content and form of red culture align with the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for graduate students. Some experts have pointed out that the essence of the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” lies in the integration of small ideological and political classrooms with the vast social classroom, extending the course in terms of its connotations and extensions, vertical and horizontal dimensions, time and space, offline and online, explicit and implicit aspects (Shi, 2022, pp. 104-112). This means that the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” not only encompasses Marxist theory and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, but also rich content from economic and social development practices. In terms of form, it emphasizes both knowledge instruction and social practice. The subject of instruction can be teachers or various personnel from society, creating an atmosphere where “everyone speaks about ideological and political education”. Red culture aligns with the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” in both content and form. Material culture such as red historical sites, documents, and artifacts, as well as spiritual culture like red stories and red spirits, and the flexibility and integration of both on-campus and off-campus, online and offline platforms, all contribute to a synergistic effect between the two.

The “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for graduate students promotes the development of red culture. Firstly, the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for graduate students broadens the communication channels of red culture. Currently, the physical forms of red culture are primarily red cultural relics and revolutionary holy lands, which are difficult to access within campuses. Except for personal visits, graduate students can only truly engage with these resources during school-organized party activities or social practices. However, the issues lie in the limited exposure, short duration, lack of in-depth understanding, and ineffective educational outcomes. Meanwhile, the spiritual form of red culture has not yet systematically entered textbooks, classrooms, and minds. The “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” enables the spiritual connotations and physical forms of red culture to enter the view of graduate students more

systematically and profoundly, thus enhancing the effectiveness of red culture's dissemination. Secondly, the "Broad Ideological and Political Education Course" provides an opportunity to promote research on red culture and enhance teachers' red cultural literacy. As President Xi Jinping has emphasized, "We should make good use of red resources and continue the red bloodline". The "Broad Ideological and Political Education Course" is an effective path to utilizing red resources, further promoting in-depth theoretical research and rich practical experiences, thereby deeply integrating the spirit of red culture into the lives and bloodlines of graduate students and teachers.

The Path of Integrating Red Culture Into the "Broad Ideological and Political Education Course" for Graduate Students

The compatibility between red culture and the "Broad Ideological and Political Education Course" lays a solid theoretical and practical foundation for their integration and mutual promotion. Additionally, as socialism with Chinese characteristics enters a new era, where we are poised to embark on a new journey of building a socialist modern country on the basis of winning the decisive battle for a moderately prosperous society in all respects and the decisive battle against poverty, the development of the Party and the country urgently requires cultivating a large number of high-level talents with both ability and integrity. This social status and practical demand provide a timely opportunity for integrating red culture into the "Broad Ideological and Political Education Course" for graduate students.

Imbuing the connotation of red culture and innovate the content and methods of integration. Traditional indoctrination education tends to lead to the "mechanization" and "rigidification" of introducing red culture into the classroom, while graduate students belong to a youth group with a higher academic level and more active and mature thinking. Therefore, based on the ideological characteristics of graduate students, it is urgent to update the teaching content and optimize the teaching model to maximize their enthusiasm and initiative in learning. Firstly, innovate the "red classroom" and "tell well" red stories. On one hand, teachers can deeply explore and analyze the value connotation of red culture in line with the new era and new characteristics, introducing red culture into the "Broad Ideological and Political Education Course" for graduate students, such as classic red films, musicals, literary and artistic works, to make the course more engaging, infective, and effective. On the other hand, attention should be paid to making good use of red classic cases, which are a collection of the glorious history, basic experience, spiritual style, and outstanding achievements of the Communist Party of China over the past century. These cases cover areas such as Marxism and Chinese practice, scientific decision-making and strategic thinking, military thought and national defense construction, technological innovation, and cultural thought. They can effectively promote graduate students to draw spiritual strength from classic cases, enhance their emotional and ideological identification, maintain the freshness and vitality of the "Broad Ideological and Political Education Course" for graduate students, and achieve good results in ideological education. Secondly, establish a three-dimensional teaching model and "bring to life" red stories. On one hand, continuously optimize teaching methods based on the uniqueness of graduate student courses, introducing teaching methods such as lectures, seminars, case studies, simulations, interviews, and scenarios, to continuously enhance the intuition, innovation, and effectiveness of red education for graduate students and build a harmonious and vibrant red education ecosystem. On the other hand, use language and forms that graduate students are willing to accept to convey theories, complement "flipped classrooms" with "active learning",

establish a linkage model between in-class and out-of-class teaching, emphasize collaboration and interaction, achieve multi-dimensional integration of teaching models, and enhance the vividness, flexibility, and effectiveness of teaching. Finally, extend online teaching and expand online ideological and political platforms. On one hand, rely on the Internet platform to embed red culture in online teaching, fully amplify the “red effect”, and strengthen the leading role of red culture in graduate student cultivation. On the other hand, utilize intelligent ideological and political information carriers to create cross-border educational scenarios, achieve two-way interaction between consciousness immersion and ideological guidance in the learning process of educatees, and ultimately present a new form of education and teaching.

Nurturing the fertile soil of red culture and solidifying the practice base for integration. Marx believed that “whatever is mysterious about leading theory into mysticism can be reasonably resolved through human practice and understanding of that practice” (Marx & Engels, 1972, p. 18). Graduate education is an important pathway for cultivating high-level innovative talents, and the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” is an optimized and surpassed version of traditional ideological and political courses. Conducting red culture education practices is inherent in the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for graduate students. Theory is the foundation, ultimately implemented in practice. Integrating red culture into the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for graduate students necessitates abandoning moral preaching and theoretical indoctrination. Therefore, first, universities can rely on the practical implementation of the “Walking Ideological and Political Course” to carry out reforms and innovations in graduate education, creating a distinctive brand of “Walking Broad Ideological and Political Course” for talent cultivation. The “Social Big Classroom” is a melting pot and university for shaping characters and educating people. The small ideological and political class focuses on “knowledge”, while the big class emphasizes “action”, “utilizing vivid and practical materials to enable students to cultivate their sentiments through social exercises and promote their perception, understanding, and reflection through practice. Universities should refine more “Broad Ideological and Political Courses” that can “quench thirst”, evoke “resonance”, and leave a lasting “aftertaste” for graduate students, such as leading students to museums, memorial halls, and other red venues for practical teaching. This leads, assists, and supports graduate students to delve deeply into social practice and understand national conditions, enabling them to absorb the ideological essence, cultural nutrients, and spiritual strength of red culture. This ensures that the “Broad Ideological and Political Course” for graduate students has both “knowledge” and “flavor”. Second, promote the integration and interconnection of campus and community resources, actively build a large ideological and political practice teaching base, and construct a practical approach to talent cultivation. On one hand, the “Broad Ideological and Political Course” for graduate students and red culture education should break through the limitations and narrowness of traditional campus classrooms, expand their outreach, strive to create quality platforms that serve the practical teaching of the “Broad Ideological and Political Course”, and gather the strongest educational forces to achieve the widest educational impact. On the other hand, it is necessary to attach importance to practical education methods, actively utilize red culture research bases to carry out various teaching forms such as experiential, interactive, and immersive learning, and harness the practical and process-oriented guiding role of red culture education in the “Broad Ideological and Political Course”. This involves exploring new methods and carriers for research-based learning and enhancing the professionalism, analytical capabilities, and experiential aspects of practical teaching to highlight the red undertones. Finally, attention should be paid to the aesthetic appeal and affinity of graduate students’ on-site classrooms and social practices, promoting the

further development and consolidation of red culture on-site classrooms that integrate beauty, technology, and functionality. The red cultural resources embedded in society possess vivid infectivity, realistic exemplarity, and value guidance, which are often implicit and more easily accepted by graduate students. Therefore, utilizing red cultural resources for social practice should focus on its aesthetic appeal and affinity, promoting the mutual penetration of explicit and implicit education. On one hand, it is necessary to present the positive energy of red on-site classroom teaching with aesthetic appeal and externalize red culture through artistic means. On the other hand, the practical content and form should be well-received by graduate students, aiming for elegance without losing affinity.

Strengthening the red-culture teaching team and consolidating the integration's personnel support. Safeguarding the red roots and building a strong red-culture teaching team are the inherent requirements and effective pathways for integrating red culture into the "Broad Ideological and Political Education Course" for graduate students. Making red culture the spiritual driving force for shaping characters and educating people in this course hinges on cultivating a teaching team that practices red spirit and inherits red culture. Therefore, first, it is necessary to promote university-community collaboration, break down academic barriers, and build a robust "red-culture teaching team". As stated, "The key to the construction of ideological and political courses lies in teachers" (Xi, 2020, pp. 4-16), and the key to the construction of the "Broad Ideological and Political Education Course" lies in cultivating a "superior teaching team". This "superior teaching team" refers to a broad composition of teachers, high teacher quality, and strong teaching abilities. Therefore, it is essential to fully utilize social resources, inviting red figures, inheritors of red resources, and related experts to campuses. They can work with university teachers to discuss how to improve ideological and political theory and practice courses. Both sides can adopt diverse forms such as jointly developing teaching materials, applying for research projects, and jointly teaching courses. This approach includes involving graduate students in research groups, selecting them as teaching assistants, and making them the true narrators of the "Broad Ideological and Political Education Course", rather than mere "audience". Second, strengthen teacher ethics cultivation and enhance the construction of teacher ethics and conduct. In accordance with the requirements of fostering virtue through education, red cultural literacy is an essential quality that every teacher should possess, serving as a catalyst for improving the effectiveness of graduate classroom teaching. Therefore, it is necessary to actively explore and utilize various red resources as an important content to cultivate noble teacher spirit. Centered on red education, grasp the new benchmarks for teacher ethics and conduct in the new era, carry out exemplary activities to guide teachers in cultivating noble teacher ethics, and guide teachers in cultivating noble teacher ethics through the leadership of teacher ethics exemplars. Finally, cultivate a sense of patriotism and awaken teachers' sense of mission. Original aspirations and missions are the essence and driving force of teachers' teaching and educating. Teachers carry multiple functions such as theoretical education and value guidance for graduate students. Universities can adopt multi-dimensional collaborative methods such as educational immersion, role modeling, mechanism guarantees, and internal motivation to actively guide teachers to cultivate a sense of patriotism and build consensus on educating people.

Empowering red culture with digital technology to enhance the effectiveness of education integration. China is currently accelerating its transition to the digital era, with digital technology fully integrating and infiltrating into all areas and processes of human life through new concepts, business models, and modalities. The advent of the digital era has also imposed new demands on the construction and improvement of the graduate

education system. Therefore, graduate education must adapt to social changes and accelerate reforms, exploring the development of a more mature and higher-quality graduate education system to cultivate new talents that meet the needs of future career development. Graduate students are “natives” of the digital era, and their professional learning, scientific research, social practice, and even the establishment of self-concept all rely on digital products and the digitalized world. High-quality training and education for graduate students require a high-quality “digital foundation”. Based on this, first, it is necessary to fully utilize the advantages of new media networks to build a digital platform for red education. The establishment of a digital platform is not only an inherent requirement for promoting the integration of red culture into the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for graduate students, but also a necessary means to enrich and expand digital resources for this course. Graduate students are the users of digital courses, and universities can build red culture publicity and education platforms such as red-themed official accounts, connecting spatially dispersed red resources to form a diversified and coordinated educational environment in all directions, providing quality educational resources for teachers and students. When conditions are ripe, the digital platform of red education bases can be optimized and upgraded, making it a smart cloud platform for party building. This involves strengthening the knowledge of party building business among platform developers, building an internet-based red education position, and providing support for promoting the normalization and sustainability of red education and party history learning for graduate students. Second, develop vivid and immersive digital creative products to promote the integration and coupling of red culture and digital technology. The research, learning, and daily lives of contemporary graduate students are closely linked to the internet, and they prefer diverse and distinctive digital products. Therefore, integrating red culture into the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for graduate students requires closely combining digital simulation technology with red cultural resources. Utilizing vivid digital creative products can empower the course, enhancing the intuitiveness, fun, artistry, and three-dimensionality of red cultural resources. Finally, actively develop dynamic digital resources of red culture and strengthen the role of technology in guiding the value of red education for graduate students. By using technology to empower, we can enhance the appeal, leadership, promotion, and action of red education. For example, highly realistic virtual equipment can be used to simulate scenes of red historical events, enhancing students’ immersion and experience, improving the effectiveness of digital education in red culture, and achieving the educational effect of “gentle influence that nurtures silently”.

Conclusion

General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized the importance of making good use of red resources, carrying forward red traditions, and inheriting red genes. Red culture, as a valuable resource, possesses profound inspirational power and robust vitality. Taking red culture as a starting point to conduct the “Broad Ideological and Political Education Course” for graduate students in the new era and continuously expanding and innovating effective ways to integrate red culture into this course is a beneficial exploration to fulfill this requirement. It will promote the creative transformation and innovative development of red culture, synchronize the practice of cultural education with the education of ideals and beliefs, and contribute to realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

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