

# Formalism in the Implementation of Ideological and Political Curriculum: Manifestations and Causes

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**Abstract.** The ideological and political course should not only be set up but also effectively implemented, otherwise it cannot achieve the desired purpose. The ideological and political courses in China have generally achieved good results, but there are problems of formalism in some classes. In some classes, ideological and political courses are only offered on the class schedule but rarely implemented. In some other classes, there is too much time for actual teaching content to deviate from the course theme. And in some courses, many students of the class are absent-minded. The causes include the lack of the teachers' ideological and political professional ability, the lack of strong teaching ability, the audacity of teachers due to their insufficient understanding of the importance of the ideological and political curriculum.

**Keywords.** Formalism; Implementation, Ideological and Political Curriculum; Manifestations; Causes

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## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, most countries have set up civic education courses in schools. “In 2005/2006, the Dutch government laid down the promotion of citizenship in educational legislation and in the core objectives of primary and secondary education.” [1] Moreover, the Netherlands is a later country that legislated to regulate civic education in Europe. Civic education exists in Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Dominican and other counties. [2] “Therefore, schools have a fundamental role to play in empowering learners to become responsible and active global citizens.” [3] There are also civic education courses in China, which are called ideological and political courses. On the whole, the current implementation of ideological and political courses in China is normal and has achieved good results, which deserves great praise. However, there are still some formalism problems in the implementation of some ideological and political courses. The essence of formalism is that someone want to show to the outside world that he is doing things or even doing a lot of things, but in fact he has not effectively solved problems or really achieved the desired purpose. Specifically, the formalism in the implementation of the ideological and political courses is that the courses in some classes have not been implemented effectively or have not enabled most students to master the scheduled content of the course after implementation actually.

## 2. The Form of Formalism in the Implementation of Ideological and Political Lessons

### 2.1. Curriculum Only on the Timetable with Little or no Implementation

In some classes, ideological and political courses are only offered on the curriculum timetable but are implemented little or no. This situation is particularly prominent in the course of "Morality and Rule of Law" in primary school.

For example, in some classes, half or more of the time spent on ideological and political courses is diverted for other purposes. These classes are mainly used by the head teacher of the class who is also the teacher of "Morality and the Rule of Law" for the teaching, testing and evaluation of Chinese courses, mathematics courses or foreign language courses that he is responsible for teaching.

For another example, in some other classes, more than half of the ideological and political courses are taught by students themselves. Students can learn not only Morality and the Rule of Law but also other courses by themselves. It should be noted that even if some students in the class taught this course on their own in the Moral and Rule of Law class, which is not the same as the implementation of this course. Implementation of this course should be understood as a two-way activity of teaching and learning. Without teaching, the effect of self-study is unknown. In addition, other students do not learn this course by themselves during the class time, but learn and practice other course contents or do other things that interest them.

### ***2.2. Too Much Time for Actual Teaching Content to Deviate from the Course Theme***

In some ideological and political classes, teachers often deviate from the course theme after explaining the content of the textbook for less time, and spend most of the time in a class to talk about irrelevant content, namely, which is beyond the specified content of the course. Sometimes the bell that indicates the end of a lesson starts to ring before the teacher returns to the topic of this lesson, which is really embarrassing. It should be noted that if most of the time spent in the class is spent on expanding the content to further elaborate the theme of the class, then this practice is not formalism. In order to prove the content of this class, the teacher spent more than half of the class time explaining the knowledge of other courses and disciplines, such as a very complex knowledge point or multiple simple knowledge points of other courses and disciplines. Does it belong to doing other courses with the flag of this course? This paper believes that if one class or several classes are like this, it is understandable. But if many classes are like this, students think that they have got less ideological and political knowledge and more other knowledge gained accidentally from this ideological and political course in a semester, which is abnormal and should be considered as formalism.

Of course, there is another case. Some teachers spend more than half of the time in the class on the content of a novel, TV play or movie that most students are familiar with, in order to make students understand the ideological and political content more intuitively. Most students think that although this class is interesting, they get little from it. This is also abnormal and may constitute formalism. Because the main criterion of formalism is that it is ineffective or basically ineffective.

### ***2.3. Most Students Are Absent-minded in Some Courses***

The teacher is carrying out the ideological and political lesson according to the timetable and teaching the required teaching materials or relevant content, but more than half of the students of the class are absent-minded in some courses. In this kind of course the teacher does not teach the irrelevant content of the class and seems to be working hard, but most students do not try to sit close to the platform so that they can hear the teacher's voice more clearly, see the teacher's expressions, gestures or blackboard writing more clearly, but try to sit in the back of the classroom to do other things or sleep. Although teachers have paid for this course, most students have not gained or gained little, and the whole course has little effect.

It is worth emphasizing that the standard to judge whether it belongs to formalism in the ideological and political course should be whether students have gained, that is, whether students believe and master the scheduled content of the ideological and political course and then apply the ideological and political content to analyze the world, the country, the society and the problems he encounters. Therefore, if the teacher plays the teaching videos of well-known teachers most of the time in the classroom, which are directly related to the theme of this ideological and political course or are the teaching videos of this course, and the students have gained a lot, it should not be considered as

formalism.

### **3. The Causes of Formalism in the Implementation of Ideological and Political Courses**

#### ***3.1. Reasons why the Ideological and Political Curriculum on the Timetable are not Implemented***

One of the important reasons why the ideological and political courses offered on the curriculum timetable are not implemented is the lack of the teachers' ideological and political professional ability and on the score of the teachers without enough courage to take risks. The teachers do not understand the relevant majors and have a fear mentality. For example, some teachers majored in mathematics in college as students, and they have been teaching mathematics for several years since they graduated from work. Later, they became head teachers of classes and were assigned to teach ideological and political courses, in which many of them were professional knowledge of law, with mathematics at the same time. After reading the ideological and political course textbooks, they thought they did not understand much of their knowledge and feared that they might make mistakes and mislead their students. They were also afraid that they would lose face if students asked about legal expertise beyond the teaching materials and what they did not know how to answer or might answer incorrectly. They are afraid to take the class because of the panic caused by the lack of professional ability of the ideological and political course.

In addition, there is another factor, that is, schools and teachers regard the ideological and political course as a sideline rather than a main course, so they do not attach importance to it. Because many articles have explained this problem, this article will not repeat it.

#### ***3.2. Reasons for the Long Time Deviation from the Theme of Ideological and Political Courses***

The main reason why the teacher has long been off topic in the course of ideological and political education is that he does not have enough professional knowledge and professional ability but do not have fear. Due to the lack of respect for the system, school leaders, students and their parents, the teacher dare to attend ideological and political classes even though he don't understand the knowledges. In classes, unfortunately, he can't pass on enough professional knowledge of ideological and political courses, but can only talk about other knowledge instead. If the teacher is familiar with relevant majors, he will take corresponding ideological and political expertise from his mental knowledge warehouse to expound and demonstrate when explaining the course content. On the contrary, he can only explain and demonstrate from other professional knowledge he has mastered and even from the common sense of life of the general public. There are also deeper reasons for this: the lack of the teacher on ideological and political courses leads to the inconsistency between his majors and the courses he teaches. Non-ideological and political professional teacher himself is only willing to be in charge of his professional courses, and he is not willing to be responsible for this course. After being assigned to take this course, he feel angry, and he does not actively prepare for the lessons before the class, learn and understand the content of the textbook and relevant professional knowledge. If students go to the exam without studying is called "naked exam", then the practice of give a lesson without preparing can be compared to "naked lesson". For example, the content of the textbook is civil infringement, and the teacher did not study the infringement content of the textbook, nor did he learnt all the infringement content in the Civil Code of the People's Republic of China or even the entire code. He is even less aware of the administrative liability and criminal liability that may result from civil infringement. Once he talks about ideological and political issues or is asked relevant questions by students, he takes care of them and leads students to his familiar majors.

#### ***3.3. Reasons for Students' Absence of Mind in Ideological and Political Courses***

##### ***3.3.1. Lack of Strong Professional Ability of the Teachers***

One of the reasons why students are absent-minded in the ideological and political class is also the lack of strong professional ability of their teachers. Because some teachers are not competent in the ideological and political field, they echo what the books say. Because teachers themselves learn very limited knowledge from the outside world, the knowledge they tell students is very superficial. As a

result, students think that they have not gained much from the lectures, which are not as fast as students' own reading and are waste of time. There is another case, namely, although some teachers speak very abstrusely, they use obscure language rather than simple and easy language to explain profound knowledge and complex principles. The students do not comprehend what they have heard. Consequently, the students can't raise their interest in learning without much gain in the classes. The really core reason is that the teacher don't fully have a true grasp on what he said.

### 3.3.2. *Lack of Strong Teaching Ability of the Teachers*

Another important reason is that teachers' teaching ability is not strong. Some ideological and political teachers have strong professional ability and scientific research ability, but their teaching ability is insufficient, which leads to poor course results and little gains for students.

The first method of course design is traditional spoon feeding teaching, namely, "Duck-stuffing" type of teaching. Only the teacher speaks from beginning to end in the course because teachers do not understand the scientific teaching design. There is no discussion between students, no interaction between teachers and students including questions from students to teachers or from teachers to students. In this kind of class, students have no sense of democratic participation as the teaching subject, lack of excitement for the classroom, and do not focus on the teacher's lecture, do other things instead, or even lie on the desk to sleep, which embarrassed the teacher. This should be an abandoned teaching method, as some scholars have said: "Some people adhere to the teacher centered view in teaching, regard students as the object of passive acceptance of teaching, adopt indoctrination and spoon feeding teaching methods, and embody the authority and leading position of teachers in teaching everywhere. This is the expression of rigid teaching ideas and teaching viewpoints." [4] On the contrary, if the teacher can fully stimulate students' enthusiasm for participation, for example, when teaching legal issues in the ideological and political course, the teacher can make students understand apply"[5] Prophecy of what, by what, and on the basis of which input data?" The essence is to mobilize enthusiasm through active thinking.

The second way of course design is that the teacher arranges students to give lectures, but the teacher's guiding role in the curriculum knowledge and skills has not been fully highlighted. The teachers fail to sublimate the teaching content, refine the teaching skills and effectively improve the curriculum quality through the excellent comments on the students' teaching content and skills. After all, students, especially freshmen, middle school students and primary school students, usually have limited knowledge and vision, and their inspiration to other students in the same class is also very limited. At the beginning of the implementation of this method, students are often very active and even excited, but after a few classes, students slowly calm down. Unfortunately, they find that the teacher does not play an important role, and they will despise the teacher from their heart. In addition, they do not get much benefit from the explanations of other students, so they will doubt this course and reduce their interest in this course.

## 4. Conclusion

The ideological and political courses in China have generally achieved good results, but there are problems of formalism in some classes. In some classes, ideological and political courses are only offered on the curriculum but rarely implemented. In some classes, ideological and political courses are only offered on the curriculum but rarely implemented. In some other classes, there is too much time for actual teaching content to deviate from the course theme. And in some courses, many students of the class are absent-minded. The causes include the lack of the teachers' ideological and political professional ability, the lack of strong teaching ability, the audacity of teachers due to their insufficient understanding of the importance of curriculum.

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