

# Exploration of the Application of PBL Teaching Model in Ideological and Political Courses

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**Abstract**—Ideological and political courses are predominantly characterized by a didactic traditional teaching model, the limitations of which have become increasingly apparent over the course of long-term educational practice, urgently necessitating the introduction of innovative teaching models to ignite students' enthusiasm for learning. The exploration of the application of the PBL (Problem-Based Learning) teaching model in ideological and political courses can offer students a more in-depth and comprehensive learning experience, conducive to fostering their problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, and team spirit. This paper, grounded in the PBL teaching model—a problem-oriented approach to instruction—seeks to explore the application and potential of this teaching model in the teaching of ideological and political courses, with the aim of enhancing the quality and effectiveness of such courses.

**Keywords**—ideological and political courses, PBL (Problem-Based Learning) teaching model, instructional design

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ideological and political courses are a crucial component of the higher education system, guiding college students to form correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. These courses help enhance students' national consciousness and ethnic pride, cultivate a spirit of patriotism, and can complement other courses to promote comprehensive student development. However, the teaching of ideological and political courses in colleges mostly adopts a traditional “indoctrination” lecture method, which does not effectively stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning or guide them to think deeply, with the issue of low classroom engagement being a primary concern for educators in this field. Therefore, the exploration of new teaching models for ideological and political courses is both necessary and urgent, to better adapt to the rapidly changing social environment and meet students' learning needs, enhancing the appeal, effectiveness, and depth of these courses [1].

This paper analyzes the PBL (Problem-Based Learning) teaching model, introducing its problem-oriented teaching method into the teaching process of ideological and political courses, emphasizing the central role of students

and sparking their interest in autonomous learning. The PBL teaching model has broad application prospects in ideological and political education, enabling students not only to master course knowledge but also to develop critical thinking, innovation abilities, and a spirit of cooperation, thereby enhancing their overall quality. In the PBL teaching process, teachers act as guides and facilitators of learning, creating carefully planned problem scenarios to stimulate students' thought and exploration, encouraging active participation in learning activities. Through teamwork and discussion, students exchange ideas and jointly explore solutions to problems, fostering a spirit of collaboration and communication skills. As a result, ideological and political classrooms become more lively and engaging, effectively increasing students' motivation and participation.

## II. THE CONCEPT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PBL TEACHING MODEL

PBL, standing for “problem-based learning”, was originated by American neurology professor Barrows in 1969 and is widely applied in the field of medical education. The problem-oriented teaching method, known as Problem-Based Learning (PBL), has become a mainstream teaching model in the West. In 1993, Barrows introduced a five-step problem-oriented teaching process: “forming learning groups—setting up problems—implementing problems—presenting outcomes—reflection and evaluation”. This approach emphasizes problem orientation by using pre-set questions to guide students in independently exploring, analyzing, and solving problems, thereby constructing and applying the knowledge they have learned. The teaching process aims to develop students' innovation abilities and critical thinking, ultimately enhancing their overall quality [2].

When you submit your final version, The core feature of the PBL teaching model lies in its problem orientation. By designing problems closely related to the learning content, it encourages students to actively participate in learning activities, centering on autonomously exploring, discussing, and solving issues. This teaching method not only enhances students' interest and motivation in learning but also helps them develop critical and creative thinking. Through the process of solving actual problems, students cultivate the ability to tackle complex issues,

strengthening their self-directed learning and lifelong learning capabilities.

The characteristics of the PBL teaching model include problem orientation, group collaboration, student-centeredness, and diversified evaluation methods. Problem orientation brings the teaching process closer to real-life scenarios, sparking students' interest and initiative in learning, and fostering their critical thinking and innovative mindset. Group collaboration enhances students' teamwork skills; through joint discussion and problem-solving, it cultivates a spirit of cooperation and communication abilities. The transformation of the teacher's role puts students at the core of teaching, guiding them towards independent thinking and self-directed learning, and developing their critical thinking and self-management skills. Diversified evaluation methods assess not only students' mastery of knowledge but also comprehensively evaluate their overall literacy and capability development. The application of the PBL teaching model offers new approaches and methods for ideological and political education, aiding in the cultivation of students' comprehensive qualities and innovation skills, advancing the depth of ideological and political education, and making a positive contribution to nurturing well-rounded socialist builders and successors with moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education [3].

### III. COMPARISON BETWEEN PBL TEACHING MODEL AND TRADITIONAL IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL TEACHING MODEL

#### A. *Teaching Methods*

The PBL teaching model and traditional ideological and political teaching model exhibit significant differences in teaching methods. Traditional ideological and political teaching often adopts a teacher-centered approach, with the teacher leading the content and pace, and students playing a passive role in receiving information. In contrast, the PBL teaching model is problem-oriented, emphasizing students' active participation and inquiry. It involves specific applications such as elucidating clear problems, forming learning groups, devising study plans, conducting cooperative and exploratory learning, classroom reporting and exchanging results, and reflection and evaluation. Teaching practice has shown that the PBL model facilitates highlighting the central role of students, enhancing their enthusiasm for learning and cooperative learning abilities. Under this model, teachers primarily act as guides, leading students in autonomous learning and exploration. By posing challenging questions or scenarios, teachers stimulate students' critical thinking and interest in learning, guiding them to think independently and collaborate on problem-solving. Teachers play a role in facilitating learning, providing feedback, and offering guidance during the student inquiry process, rather than merely imparting knowledge. This problem-based teaching method helps to stimulate students' critical and creative thinking, foster their self-directed learning skills,

and promote the deep development of ideological and political education.

#### B. *Learning Methods*

In traditional lecture-based teaching models in ideological and political courses, knowledge transmission and passive absorption by students are the primary features. Students often passively receive information fed by teachers, making the learning process somewhat mechanical and leading to a lack of initiative and interest in learning. They may simply memorize information by rote, lacking a deep understanding of the knowledge and the ability to apply it practically [4]. The PBL teaching model emphasizes guiding students to think through problems and focuses on developing problem-solving skills. Under this model, students autonomously pose questions, participate in discussions, and engage in practical activities, actively involving themselves in the learning process. This not only allows them to understand the principles of the knowledge more deeply but also enables them to integrate what they have learned with real-world problems, achieving the internalization and transformation of knowledge. The PBL teaching method can stimulate students' interest in learning, enhance their ability to learn independently, and solve problems. This targeted teaching approach not only helps to improve students' comprehensive qualities but also promotes a deeper understanding and mastery of ideological and political theories, thereby cultivating new-era builders with multifaceted capabilities [4].

#### C. *Teaching Effectiveness*

Applying the PBL teaching model in ideological and political courses can break through the limitations of traditional lecture-based teaching. By designing project themes closely related to real life, enhancing teacher guidance and support, promoting teamwork and communication, implementing periodic assessments and feedback, and integrating social practice activities, it deepens students' understanding and application of political theory. The instructional design process is fully integrated with the ideological and political nature of the courses, effectively engaging students in teaching activities. This approach not only consolidates theoretical knowledge through mastering operational skills but also comprehensively enhances students' professional abilities and overall qualities, achieving a win-win in teaching and educating [5].

The PBL model emphasizes a student-centered approach, transforming the teacher's role into that of a guide and supporter. By posing thought-provoking questions and scenarios, it stimulates students' desire to explore and think critically. Encouraging group collaboration for problem discussion and solution seeking enhances team spirit and develops the ability to tackle real-world issues. Additionally, the periodic assessment and feedback mechanism ensures students can reflect on their learning process in time, adjust their learning strategies, and increase the initiative and relevance of their learning. By integrating theoretical knowledge with social practice, the PBL teaching model effectively promotes

students' political literacy, deepens their recognition of social responsibility and the spirit of patriotism, and achieves the educational goals of character building and leadership through ideological and political courses. This demonstrates higher teaching effectiveness and academic value compared to traditional teaching models [6].

#### IV. DESIGN OF THE PBL TEACHING MODEL IN IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL COURSES

##### A. *Design Principles*

The student-centered principle emphasizes the leading role of individuals in the learning process, ensuring that teaching activities can fully mobilize students' intrinsic motivation and interest, in alignment with their abilities and needs. This effectively enhances the initiative and engagement in learning, creating a teaching environment designed around student needs. This approach better stimulates students' interest in exploring the content of ideological and political courses and their motivation to learn.

The problem-oriented learning strategy, by employing real-world problem scenarios, encourages students to actively engage in the exploration of knowledge and the resolution of issues. This approach not only deepens students' understanding of ideological and political theories but also enhances their abilities to analyze problems and apply solutions practically. It transforms abstract theoretical knowledge into concrete practical skills, increasing the relevance and effectiveness of learning.

A cooperative-based learning environment encourages students to interact and collaborate in groups, enriching and diversifying the learning process through joint discussion and problem-solving. This approach not only cultivates teamwork and communication skills but also aids students in understanding and analyzing issues from various perspectives, leading to a deeper comprehension and insight [7].

The goal of autonomous learning reflects the ultimate pursuit of the PBL teaching model, which is to cultivate students' abilities to independently explore and solve problems. With timely guidance and support from teachers, students gradually learn to think and study independently, mastering self-directed learning strategies and methods. This is of great significance for students' lifelong learning and personal development. This series of principles, closely logical and interconnected, form the theoretical and practical foundation of the PBL teaching model in ideological and political courses. It ensures that teaching activities are effectively implemented, enhancing students' political literacy and value formation, and demonstrating the profound academic and practical significance of this teaching model.

##### B. *Design Process and Methods*

The PBL teaching model, as a student-centered teaching method, is centered on cleverly setting problems to encourage students to actively learn and think deeply during the process of exploring and solving problems, and

to apply theoretical knowledge in practice. The traditional PBL teaching process comprises five stages: identifying the problem, analyzing the problem, solving the problem, presenting the outcomes, and reflection and evaluation. This process emphasizes the complete cycle from posing a problem to implementing solutions, and then to showcasing and evaluating the results, effectively fostering students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In the teaching practice of ideological and political courses, considering their unique educational objectives and subject characteristics, the traditional PBL process has been appropriately adjusted to form five new stages: "posing the problem—forming groups—group discussion—presenting outcomes—reflecting and evaluating" [1]. This adjustment aligns more closely with the teaching needs of ideological and political courses, particularly in enhancing students' study of political theory and improving their ideological and political literacy [8].

1. *Posing Questions*: Teachers need to design thematic questions based on the course content, which can be extended to current social hotspots and political issues, crafting questions that are both targeted and of investigative value. The design of the questions must be able to provoke students' thoughts, stimulate their desire to explore, and also possess a certain level of difficulty and challenge to encourage continual thinking and exploration by the students.

2. *Forming Groups*: Teachers can divide students into several study groups, assigning roles such as researching information, organizing summaries, creating PowerPoint presentations, and reporting, to collaboratively discuss and solve the thematic problems. During the teamwork process, students can inspire and learn from each other through discussing and organizing the content of the problem.

3. *Group Discussion*: Teachers dedicate two to four class periods to guide group discussions. During the discussion, teachers can listen to the group's interim results, provide guidance and insights based on the reports, and especially redirect the focus of discussion promptly if the group is heading in the wrong direction, to prevent efforts from being counterproductive. The group discussion process also helps students quickly construct knowledge structures, enhancing their self-directed learning and problem-solving abilities [9].

4. *Reporting Results*: After completing the discussion and exchange on the problem, the study groups consolidate their collective insights and organize the discussion outcomes into a presentation PPT. A member is then selected by vote to present the findings. The report PPT may include audio and video clips to support the presentation, but these should not overly extend the duration; the primary focus should be on the comprehensive delivery by the reporting member. Through the presentation of discussion results, the study groups can fully showcase their overall perspective on the problem. This also allows other groups and teachers to visually understand the discussion outcomes, facilitating the evaluation and suggestions for the discussion results, thereby refining them [10].

5. Evaluation and Reflection: Through the application of the above four steps of the PBL teaching model, students have completed a relatively comprehensive collaborative learning experience in the process of teaching ideological and political courses, effectively enhancing their cooperative abilities and initiative. Therefore, the evaluation of the study groups' performance will involve joint assessment by both teachers and students. After refining the discussion outcomes, teachers evaluate each study group's presentation effect, content, and completeness, highlighting areas for improvement. The PBL teaching model is student-centered, with teachers acting as facilitators, and the final evaluation of study groups' performance incorporates self-assessment and peer assessment by students. During the evaluation process, members of the group can reflect on their strengths and weaknesses throughout the collaborative process and contemplate ways to improve. At the same time, representatives from other groups can also provide objective evaluations and suggestions for improvement. Ultimately, the assessment of the study groups' performance is determined after combining evaluations from the teachers, the group itself, and other groups. The entire evaluation and reflection process not only allows for a more comprehensive assessment of students' learning outcomes within the PBL teaching model but also further consolidates and elevates the learning achievements [10].

#### V. CHALLENGES AND ISSUES OF THE PBL TEACHING MODEL IN IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL COURSES

The application of the PBL teaching model in ideological and political courses aims to enhance students' agency and participation, with its core being the stimulation of students' self-directed learning interests and problem-solving abilities through a problem-oriented learning approach. This teaching strategy not only deepens students' understanding and application of theoretical knowledge but also promotes the development of critical thinking and innovative capabilities. However, challenges encountered in practice cannot be overlooked, including the lack of professional competence among teachers, difficulties in transitioning teacher roles, and differences in student adaptability.

Teachers may struggle to ensure the quality and practicality of questions due to insufficient professional competence. If the question design does not closely adhere to the teaching theme or is disconnected from students' professional backgrounds and real-life experiences, it can directly impact teaching effectiveness, failing to ignite students' curiosity and desire for knowledge. Enhancing teachers' professional competence and question design ability becomes key to improving the outcomes of PBL teaching. The PBL model requires teachers to transition from traditional knowledge transmitters to facilitators and supporters of student learning. If teachers cannot break free from the constraints of traditional teaching models and overly intervene in students' autonomous learning, it not only diminishes the core advantages of the PBL model but may also lead to reduced teaching effectiveness. The

cooperation and adaptability differences among students are also crucial issues that cannot be ignored in implementing PBL teaching. A lack of interest in course content or individual differences among students can cause fluctuations in learning motivation and teaching outcomes. Teachers need to employ innovative question designs and teaching strategies to stimulate students' enthusiasm for exploration, adjusting teaching methods to enhance student participation and learning outcomes.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

This article explores the application of the PBL teaching model in ideological and political courses and its potential to enhance teaching quality and effectiveness. Traditional ideological and political teaching methods often rely on a "didactic" lecturing approach, which has shown numerous shortcomings over time, particularly in terms of stimulating students' enthusiasm for learning, and developing their problem-solving capabilities, critical thinking, and spirit of teamwork. In contrast, the PBL teaching model, by incorporating a problem-oriented learning approach and emphasizing student agency and autonomous learning, introduces new teaching concepts and methods to ideological and political courses.

The fundamental principle of PBL teaching is to guide students in autonomous exploration, analysis, and problem-solving through well-designed problem scenarios, thereby facilitating deep learning and application of knowledge. Research has shown that the PBL teaching model effectively promotes active learning in students, enhances their ability to tackle real-world problems, and strengthens teamwork and communication skills, which are crucial for the deep development of ideological and political education. In exploring the application of the PBL teaching model in ideological and political courses, challenges such as insufficient professional competence of teachers, difficulties in role transformation, low student cooperation, and adaptability differences may arise. However, through continuous practical exploration, reflection on problems, and adjustment of strategies, teaching methods can be gradually optimized, enhancing interaction between teachers and students, and increasing students' agency and participation. Teachers need to improve their problem design abilities and professional qualities, ensuring that problems are closely related to teaching themes and relevant to students' lives and professional backgrounds, thereby stimulating students' interest in learning and desire to explore. Moreover, the transformation of the teacher's role is vital; shifting from traditional knowledge transmitters to facilitators and promoters of learning, encouraging students to actively explore and solve problems through guidance and support rather than direct intervention. To address differences in student cooperation and adaptability, teachers should employ flexible and diverse teaching strategies and content adjustments to meet the varied learning needs of students, fostering their self-directed learning capabilities and teamwork spirit. This injects new energy and vitality into the development of ideological and political education, promoting the comprehensive development of students

and cultivating outstanding talents with good political literacy and a sense of social responsibility.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

#### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Wang Ting and Yang Lisha formulated the PBL teaching mode scheme; Wang Ting conducted the teaching method questionnaire; Yang Lisha was responsible for the data analysis; and Wang Ting wrote the paper; both authors had approved the final version.

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