

# Exploring Innovative Approaches to Marxist Thought in Ideological and Political Education in Universities

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**Abstract:** Exploring innovative approaches to Marxist thought in the teaching of ideological and political education in universities is a fundamental requirement in response to societal development needs and changing educational environments. This paper proposes that strengthening the exploration of innovative paths in Marxist thought can enhance students' interest in learning and promote the integration of Marxist thought with social realities. Based on this, the paper elaborates on the current shortcomings in path exploration within ideological and political education in universities and proposes four effective innovative approaches, aiming to provide new ideas and practical directions for the dissemination of Marxist thought in university ideological and political education.

**Keywords:** Marxist thought; ideological and political education in universities; teaching; innovative approaches

## Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization and the development of societal pluralism, the field of education faces unprecedented challenges and opportunities. In this context, university ideological and political courses, which are important for cultivating students' socialist core values and enhancing national identity, urgently require innovation and transformation in teaching methods and content. As the theoretical foundation of socialism with Chinese characteristics, Marxism has not only played a pivotal role in the historical transformation and development of Chinese society, but its core ideas and methodology still hold significant relevance in contemporary social practice. However, traditional teaching models of ideological

and political education tend to be singular, focusing on theory while neglecting practice. This has led to students' superficial understanding of Marxist thought, lack of interest, and difficulty in forming a conscious identification with socialist values. Thus, exploring innovative approaches to Marxist thought in ideological and political education is not only essential for improving teaching effectiveness but also an important measure to meet the ideological needs of students in the new era.

## 1. The Significance of Exploring Innovative Approaches to Marxist Thought

Innovative approaches can help increase students' interest in learning and participation. Traditional ideological and political education is often delivered in a didactic manner, tending to make students feel tired and resistive.



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By incorporating interactive and inquiry-based teaching methods, such as case analysis, role-playing, and scenario simulations, classroom engagement and interest can be enhanced. This student-centered teaching model effectively stimulates students' motivation to learn, encouraging them to actively think and explore the core ideas of Marxism and its practical applications in contemporary society. Moreover, innovative approaches enable the close integration of Marxist thought with contemporary social realities<sup>[1]</sup>. As society rapidly evolves, the challenges and issues students face become increasingly complex and diverse. By exploring innovative paths, teachers can connect Marxist theory with students' lives and social practices, allowing them to apply Marxist analytical tools and methods to analyze real-world issues. This not only enhances students' practical application skills but also deepens their understanding and recognition of Marxist thought, linking theoretical learning closely with real-world problems. Additionally, innovative approaches facilitate interdisciplinary integration and collaboration. Marxist thought has a broad interdisciplinary nature, exerting profound influence in fields such as sociology, political science, and economics. Through the integration with other disciplines, teachers can design interdisciplinary projects and courses, enabling students to learn and apply Marxist theory from multiple perspectives. This integration not only enriches the content of ideological and political courses but also cultivates students' comprehensive thinking skills and enhances their ability to solve complex problems.

## **2. Shortcomings in Exploring Innovative Approaches to Marxist Thought in University Ideological and Political Education**

### **2.1 Difficulty Balancing Depth and Breadth in Teaching**

Many teachers, when innovating teaching methods, tend to introduce a large number of real-world cases and current affairs to capture students' interest, making the course more timely and relevant. While this approach effectively engages students and helps them connect theoretical knowledge with contemporary social realities, it also tends to increase the breadth of the course at the expense of theoretical depth<sup>[2]</sup>. Marxist theory has a profound historical background and logical system that requires systematic and in-depth teaching for students to truly grasp its essence. However, due to limited classroom time, teachers often struggle to balance in-depth theoretical

analysis with broad discussions of social phenomena, resulting in students' superficial understanding of the theory. In addition, an overemphasis on current affairs may weaken students' deep understanding of Marxism's core values, reducing the coherence of theoretical explanations and affecting students' comprehensive understanding of the entire theoretical system. While this innovative approach may spark interest in current events, its neglect of theoretical depth may ultimately hinder students' overall comprehension of Marxist thought.

### **2.2 Disconnect Between Teaching Methods and Effectiveness Evaluation**

Despite significant innovations in teaching methods in university ideological and political courses, such as case-based teaching, scenario simulations, and interactive learning, the effectiveness and outcomes of these methods are often not adequately evaluated. Many universities lack a scientific and systematic evaluation mechanism to measure students' understanding of Marxist thought under these innovative methods. Most evaluation systems remain focused on traditional knowledge mastery, lacking in-depth assessment of students' actual gains from innovative teaching methods. For example, when using situational simulation or case study, although students' participation is high, there is often a lack of corresponding feedback mechanisms as to whether or not these activities actually help students internalize the core concepts of Marxist thought and whether or not the teaching effect meets expectations. This lack of assessment makes it difficult to quantify and improve the actual effects of the innovative tools, weakening the impetus for their sustainable development.

### **2.3 Misalignment Between Teachers' Abilities and Innovation Requirements**

As modern teaching technology develops, teachers are expected to not only have a solid foundation in Marxist theory but also master advanced teaching tools and methods, such as multimedia and scenario simulation technologies. However, some teachers, accustomed to traditional lecture-based teaching, find it difficult to adapt to these new methods. Particularly in an information-driven teaching environment<sup>[3]</sup>, teachers need to incorporate more technological tools to engage students, yet some lack the necessary training and practical experience. Furthermore, ideological and political

education requires teachers to possess high levels of educational innovation capability. During the exploration of innovative approaches, some teachers struggle to organically integrate theory with innovative practices, limiting the potential for real reform in course content and affecting improvements in teaching effectiveness.

### **3. Innovative Approaches to Marxist Thought in University Ideological and Political Education**

#### **3.1 Integration of Theory and Reality with Contemporary Contexts**

Marxist thought is the core theory of ideological and political education in universities, and its teaching effectiveness largely depends on how closely theory is connected with contemporary society. Teachers need to focus on effective integration paths, enabling students to understand the close relationship between Marxist theory and current social developments. Teachers can introduce case analyses and discussions on social issues such as global economic inequality, climate change, and international relations, guiding students to analyze and interpret these issues from a Marxist perspective. For instance, in addressing global economic inequality, Marxist thought attributes the issue to the inherent contradictions of the capitalist mode of production and the expansion of the global capitalist system. According to Marx, the core contradiction in capitalist society lies in the opposition between capital and labor. This contradiction is amplified in the context of globalization, manifesting as conflicts between transnational capital and global labor. Through this process, students not only understand the practical value of the theory but also enhance their ability to critically analyze real-world problems. In addition, in teaching practice, teachers can enhance students' interest in the course and theoretical knowledge through the discussion of current hot events. For example, teachers can select the most popular hot events on the Internet and guide students to discuss the social background, class relationship and its development trend of the event through the Marxist theory of economic base and superstructure, so as to cultivate students' ability to look at the problem from different perspectives. Through this combined teaching method, Marxism no longer stays only in books, but becomes a powerful tool for students to analyze and solve practical problems.

#### **3.2 Carry Out Diversified Teaching and Form Dynamic Learning**

In order to break the traditional single mode of teaching, the teaching path of innovative Marxist thought can be diversified teaching methods to provide students with more active participation and experience opportunities, so that students are no longer only passive acceptance of knowledge, but through the practice and interaction of the real into the learning process. For example, teachers can design project-based teaching activities, choose the social phenomenon of “male-female dichotomy”, analyze the problem and propose solutions using Marxist theory. Teachers can ask the question “What factors lead to this phenomenon?” Group members need to collect more relevant news, national policies, data, etc. to summarize the answer and finally draw a conclusion. This task-driven teaching method<sup>[4]</sup> can effectively enhance students' cooperative consciousness and innovative ability. Secondly, teachers can also set up a flipped classroom in the university ideological and political education to break the single process of traditional classroom “lecture-acceptance”, combining pre-course self-learning and classroom interactive discussion, and prompting students to think actively. Before class, teachers should provide students with detailed self-study materials, such as video lectures, text materials, multimedia resources and so on. These materials should be centered on the core content of classroom teaching, focusing on the key concepts of Marxist theory and its connection with the real society. Teachers can make use of online learning platforms, such as Mooc or the school's internal learning management system, to push these resources to students in advance and ask them to carry out self-study before class. The flipped classroom in ideological and political teaching in universities can not only enhance students' learning initiative, but also deepen their understanding and application of Marxist theory.

#### **3.3 Utilize Information Technology to Broaden Teaching Paths**

With the development of information technology, digital tools and resources have gradually become an important means of teaching innovation in the university's ideological and political courses. Under the Marxist ideology, teachers can use online courses to break the limitations of time and space in the teaching of ideological and political education courses in colleges and universities. For example, teachers can use VR technology to restore the development course of Marxist thought, visualize abstract

theoretical knowledge, and provide students with an immersive historical and social background experience, so that students can more intuitively feel the role of Marxist thought in different historical stages. For example, students can “enter” the social structure of a certain historical period through VR technology, and directly observe and experience the class conflicts and economic phenomena analyzed by Marxism. In this way, students seem to have experienced the change of Marxist thought, not only will the learning memory be deeper, but also the application of knowledge can be enhanced. On this basis, teachers can also create realistic problems in the virtual situation, so that students can interact with them and exercise their problem-solving ability, thus improving students' acceptance of Marxist ideology and providing more possibilities for the innovation of future teaching paths.

### 3.4 Improve the Evaluation Mechanism and Deepen the Teaching Effect

The evaluation mechanism is the first standard for measuring the effectiveness of teaching. In order to effectively promote the innovation of teaching Marxist thought, colleges and universities need to establish a more scientific and reasonable evaluation system, which not only focuses on the theoretical understanding of students, but also comprehensively evaluates the practical application ability, critical thinking ability and social responsibility of students. The traditional evaluation system of university ideological and political often focuses on the final examination results, and this single assessment method is difficult to fully reflect the learning effectiveness of students. Therefore a sound evaluation mechanism should include diversified assessment means such as process evaluation, program outcome assessment, and classroom participation assessment<sup>[5]</sup>. Teachers can dynamically assess students through the frequency of classroom discussions, students' contributions in the project and their performance in social practice, and establish scoring criteria under individual options to give students a grade based on their actual performance. At the end of the teaching, the teacher will account for the students' scores, so that the real learning effect of the students can be understood. In addition, the evaluation mechanism should be closely integrated with the teaching objectives, for example, for the cultivation of innovative ability and critical thinking in the teaching of Marxist ideology, the evaluation mechanism should focus on whether students can apply theories to analyze the real

problems and whether they can propose innovative solutions. Through such a multi-dimensional evaluation, it can not only better motivate students to learn Marxist theory in depth, but also help teachers adjust their teaching strategies in time to further optimize the classroom effect.

## Conclusion

In today's rapidly developing social background, it is particularly important to explore the innovative path of Marxist thought in the teaching of university ideological and political courses. By closely combining theory and reality, implementing diversified teaching methods, making full use of modern information technology, and improving the evaluation mechanism, it can not only improve students' understanding and recognition of Marxist theory, but also stimulate students' thinking and creativity. However, the implementation of the innovative path also faces some challenges, so in the process of exploration, colleges and universities and teachers need to constantly summarize their experiences and adjust their strategies in order to ensure the continuous improvement of the teaching effect.

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