Research on the Teaching of Ideological and Political Theory Courses for Postgraduates in Southwest Minority Areas

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Abstract—The teaching of ideological and political theory in colleges and universities has always been highly valued in the academic community. This paper conducts the investigation and research on the teaching of ideological and political theory courses for the graduate students from ethnic colleges and universities in southwestern minority areas. It deeply analyses the current problems of ideological and political theory courses for postgraduates in southwestern minority areas and proposes suggestions for teaching reform, which provides reference and reflection for the promotion of teaching effect in ideological and political courses.

Keywords—ideological and political theory course; postgraduate education; teaching reform

I. PROBLEM INTRODUCTION

At the national conference on ideological and political work in China’s universities and colleges in December 2016, President Xi Jinping emphasized that: the ideological and political work in universities and colleges is crucial to the fundamental problem of what kind of people to foster, how to foster them, and why to foster them [1]. Ethnic colleges and universities are responsible for the mission of fostering high-qualified officials, technical talents, and the healthy growth of minority students in minority regions [2]. It stressed in the Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities under the New Situation, issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on February 27, 2017, that colleges and universities should hold on the education for all in the whole process and in all aspects, and insist the guide of ideological value throughout the entire teaching process [3]. The ideological and political theory courses of ethnic colleges and universities in southwestern regions, whose teaching objects have complex ethnic composition, diverse growth environment and multi-conception of ideology, result in the inadequate innovation and unpromising results of the ideological and political teaching work [4]. Some scholars believe that the significant issues faced by ethnic colleges and universities in southwestern region are unreasonable structure of teachers and titles, unpromising teaching results, single teaching methods, which result from the strength of curriculum reform, teachers’ ability, the management system of teachers and students, the background of students and so on [5]. The existing researches pay little attention to the ideological and political theory courses for graduate students in colleges and universities, especially those in ethnic colleges and universities. This paper makes a survey of the ideological and political theory courses for graduate students in southwestern minority areas, which will help people to correctly understand the problems and dilemmas faced by the ideological and political theory courses of colleges and universities in China, so as to fully realize the teaching effect of the ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities.

II. PROBLEM CONCENTRATION

Teaching has its methods but not fixed. Ideological and political courses cannot just repetitively inculcate teaching materials, national consciousness and political intelligence, nor ignore the importance of students’ subjective initiative, ethnic composition, educational background and values. This investigation gives out 100 pieces of questionnaire, and 93 of the questionnaire are valid. The respondents are the graduate students and doctoral students in Yunnan Minzu University, Southwest Minzu University, Yunan University, and Yunan Normal University. As an objective reference for data analysis and view induction, the survey results should combine with the deep interview and specific observation, ensure the objective and authentic results of the survey, and improve the reliability and validity of the research.

III. PROBLEM ANALYSIS

A. Fundamental Information

Among the respondents, the Hans account for three quarters of the total, and the rest quarters are Tibetan, Miao, Lahu, Yi, Jingpo, Hui, Buyi, Manchu, and Bai people. Some minority students lack political sensitivity and interest because of their unsubstantial political theory fundamental. Teachers should have a comprehensive understanding of the national minority policies at all levels, focus on the students’ ethnic background, combine students’ ethnic attributes and teach students in line with their abilities, which can attribute to the teaching effect.
B. Students’ Cognition of Ideological and Political Course

From the perspective of the cognitive level and attitude system of the ideological and political courses, 56 percent of the students think highly of the ideological and political courses for graduate students, 37 percent of the students consider the courses as important as others, while 7 percent of them think that the ideological and political course is not important, or even unnecessary. 60 percent of the students believe that the teaching effect of the ideological and political courses for graduate students is modest, 15 percent of them hold on that the teaching effect of the ideological and political courses is very good. In the ideological and political class, 24 percent of the students listened carefully, 10 percent of the students hardly listen to the class, and over 60 percent of the students think that class attendance and participation in the ideological and political course depend on the teacher’s teaching level. The more vividly the teachers teach, the more carefully the students listen. 55 percent of students would do things that have nothing to do with the class, such as playing with mobile phones, reading other books, whispering with classmates, sleeping in the class and so on. Only less than half of the students really listen carefully in the ideological and political class. As a public compulsory course, the attendance rate of the ideological and political class is around 80%. Similarly, half of the students believe that teachers’ teaching levels are modest, 35 percent of them think highly of teachers’ teaching levels, and 13 percent of them consider that teachers’ teaching levels cannot meet the students’ needs for ideological and political course. The consequence of irresponsibility is that students do not listen carefully and muddle along to get some credits. In conclusion, it is necessary to offer ideological and political courses for graduate students, yet the reviews on its teaching effect are not good.

C. Teaching Methods and Assessment of Teaching Effect

According to the survey, the teachers of the ideological and political courses for graduate students all have doctoral degrees and senior professional titles (associate professors and professors). The teaching effect depends on the teacher’s teaching style and personal charm. 66 percent of the students consider that the teaching style in ideological and political class is still conventional. Large class teaching, political preaching and cramming cannot arouse students’ attention to politics or the learning enthusiasm for the ideological and political class. Only 34 percent of the students consider that the colleges and universities focus on the combination of theory and practice, and that the course is innovating constantly and encouraging the diversification of teaching methods. In terms of assessment methods, 70 percent of the ideological and political courses are assessed by writing course papers or reading notes, 20 percent of them are assessed by open-book examinations, and 10 percent of them are assessed by other methods. 57 percent of the students think that ideological and political lessons can help students focus on national policies and understand political trends, and 25 percent of the students think that ideological and political courses are just tools for students to get credits. 17 percent of the students think that the ideological and political course can open students’ minds and inspire their wisdom. More than 80 percent of the students agree that the state attaches great importance to the ideological and political course, and the teaching effect of the ideological and political course is mainly affected by the teaching methods of teachers, whose “personal charm” is the crucial. Students prefer to learn the ways of thinking and learning to the dull indoctrination of national policies and system concepts.

D. Teaching Reform of Ideological and Political Course for Graduates

The teaching issues of ideological and political course are centered on four main factors: national policies, school system, teachers and students. Teachers’ and students’ attitudes toward the teaching are the core. 42 percent of the viewpoints consider the lack of enthusiasm for teaching as the biggest problem in ideological and political class. Teachers devote to the scientific research and the promotion of professional titles, and regard teaching class as a task to accomplish, which accounts for the students’ positive behavior in the class. In turn, students do irrelevant things in the ideological and political class will directly influence teachers’ mood and teaching effect. 34 percent of viewpoints regard the overlook of the school as the largest obstacles to the reform of ideological and political courses. 80 percent of viewpoints deem it necessary to pay attention to the reform and innovation of ideological and political course, and to improve students’ motivation of learning. 10 percent of them hold that it is unnecessary to incorporate political lessons for graduates into the school educational system. Half of them believe that the teaching effect of ideological and political course for graduate students cannot accurately show students’ ideological and political quality. According to the survey data, each college will organize 2 to 10 ideological and political lectures every semester, and students generally attend lectures less than 5 times, of which are demanded passively instead of active participation. It is helpful for graduate students to attend ideological and political class, so that it can develop students’ academic thinking and enrich their research perspectives.

IV. SUGGESTIONS AND COUNTERMEASURES

The ideological and political teaching work of graduate students from ethnic colleges and universities in southwestern region should highlight ethnical variety, cultural diversity, inclusiveness and interestingness. Combining the questionnaire survey and case interview, this paper discusses the direction of ideological and political reform and innovation from the following aspects.

A. Focus on the Ethnic Variety of Students

Considering the political basis of some minority students, teachers should pay attention to the ethnical variety of students, and adopt a plentiful and humorous way to teach students in the ideological and political class, which is accessible to the minority students. Given the political sensitivity of different nationalities, teachers are supposed to focus on their own professional quality and internalize the sense of humor and professionalism into the process of teaching political theory. Teachers ought to provide minority students with a platform for exchange and learning, emphasize teaching in line with
students’ abilities, and take the real life story and historical practice of all nationalities as teaching cases, so that students can experience the same way.

B. Focus on the Diversification of Teaching Methods

In terms of the disparate treatment towards ideological and political courses for graduate students and undergraduates, graduate students will have a deeper comprehension of the social political phenomena and political issue [6]. It is more profound and reasonable that teachers focus on the social phenomena and political issue. Teachers should give priority to guidance, focus on the roles transformation, be students’ teachers as well as friends, and innovate by different ways, such as “flipped classroom”, “students teaching, teachers listening” and “extracurricular practical teaching”. It is strongly suggested that political courses should not teach in traditional large class and cram knowledge. With the development of the network information and the diversity of communication modes, students have more access to information than teachers. The rich life experiences are teachers’ superiority in teaching. Only by exchanging roles in class and innovating teaching methods can it be possible to build equal, harmonious and superior relationship with students. The diversity of teaching methods should be based on the acceptance of school before it is feasible. Schools are supposed to encourage innovation in teaching methods.

C. Focus on the Authenticity of Assessment Methods

Through questionnaires and interviews, it is found that the current assessment methods of ideological and political courses for graduate students in most schools are nothing more than writing papers, writing reading notes, or open-book examinations, which are too formal. In many schools, teachers give a passing grade to a student who submits a paper at the end of the semester. The political class scores of graduate students are all above 85. Teachers are irresponsible and students are perfunctory. The ideological and political lessons are formalized, superficial and falsified, which will be contrary to the requirements of the Ministry of Education and schools. The author believes that graduates’ teachers should guide students to read original works, write articles and do academic work, rather than teach them to cope and copy. What is the most lacking among the current graduate students and even doctoral students is the study of classic works. Ideological and political classes are actually the best time for reading and academic training. It trains and tries students through reading clubs, reading salons, special lectures, brainstorming and other ways. Helping students find their own learning methods, students will be able to take out their true skills in the final examination, and take the assessment of political class as the basis of preparing for their own professional courses. From this point of view, ideological and political teachers should play the role of academic mentors who can enable students to fall in love with political lessons, read the original books earnestly, get to know national policies and political issues, and even find their academic hobbies in political class. They can help students find their research direction.

D. Create New Assessment and Evaluation System of Teachers

Since the national education system and the professional title evaluation system still has the obvious characteristics of emphasizing scientific research over teaching, many teachers struggle to apply for projects and engage in scientific research in order to have a place in teaching community. They are irresponsible and perfunctory to their teaching. When the personal title is assessed and the school is examined by the Ministry of Education, the achievements of scientific research have become stiff index and additional points, which directly affect the future of the school. Therefore, for the sake of their own interests and the overall interests of the school, teachers will choose scientific research supplemented by teaching in the specific teaching practice. As a compulsory course in colleges and universities throughout the country, ideological and political theory course will not reduce its class hours, nor emphasize its importance too much. Teachers are regular to complete teaching task, which leads to the upsetting situation that ideological and political courses are not valued from schools to teachers. The way to create new assessment of teachers is more about reform and the balance between teaching and scientific research. Teachers’ nature is to teach and educate people, impart knowledge and dispel doubt. Focusing on scientific research and neglecting teaching will only make students feel nastier, which results in a miserable loss of both teachers and students.

V. CONCLUSION

According to the research, it is found that there are various problems in the teaching of ideological and political courses for postgraduates in ethnic minority areas, such as students' ethnic background, cognition of ideological and political courses, teaching methods, evaluation system of teaching effect, and the direction of teaching reform and innovation. The innovation work of ideological and political class is faced with various difficulties. It is not easy to simply propose innovative solutions to the problems. It is necessary for the school to focus on the problems. Improving the importance of teaching work, increasing the investment of human and material resources in ideological and political courses, regularly holding teaching competitions for ideological and political courses, setting up a clear reward and punishment system, raising teachers' attention and enthusiasm to ideological and political courses for graduate students, and stimulating their expectations for ideological and political courses in view of the particularities of students in ethnic areas, which is the fundamental step in the reform and innovation of ideological and political course.

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