



# On the Integration of the Work of Full-Time Teachers of Ideological and Political Education and the Work of Full-Time Counsellors in Higher Vocational Colleges

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**Abstract.** Both full-time teachers of ideological and political education and full-time counsellors in colleges bear the responsibility for students' ideological and political education. However, the separation and imbalance of both parties' work in fostering students' virtue through instruction and teaching practices results in certain miscommunication, poor cooperation of both teams, and less effective or ineffective teaching. This article focuses on integrating the work of full-time teachers and that of the full-time counsellors by analysing the current situation and features of the work of the two teams, so as to improve students' ideological and political education and give insights into the related future work.

**Keyword:** teachers of Ideological and Political Theory courses · full-time counsellors · integration of the work

## 1 Introduction

Both the Decision of the State Council on Accelerating the Development of Modern Vocational Education issued in 2014 (No. 19 Document of State Council) and the Implementation Plan of National Vocational Education Reform issued in 2019 have made clear plans and positioning for the development of vocational education, in which the task of fostering virtue through education is taken as the uppermost priority and cornerstone of teaching tasks. Both full-time teachers of ideological and political education and full-time counsellors are responsible for students' ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges [1]; whereas there is a need for greater cooperation in their work to promote teaching effect. Taking into account the actual conditions and features of the work of the two teams, an in-depth analysis of the issue is made. By applying the theory of "Three-wide Education", namely, the whole staff education, all-round education, and the whole process of education into practice [2]. We explore an integrated approach to combine the work of full-time teachers and that of full-time counsellors to promote ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges.

## **2 Analysis of the Current Situation**

### **2.1 Current Situation of Integration of the Work of Teachers and that of Counsellors**

Both full-time teachers of ideological and political education and full-time counsellors in Chinese higher vocational colleges are assigned to different institutions, namely, teachers belong to the faculty of Marxism while counsel counsellors work as administrative staff under the dual leadership of the secondary colleges and the divisions of student affairs. Teachers are mainly responsible for teaching students in the classroom while counsellors are mainly for student affairs. There is a rare interface between the work of the two parties, let alone their sharing or cooperation in resources, complementary advantages, and integrated work.

### **2.2 The Causes of Separation the Work Between the Two Parties**

The difficulty in the integration of work of full-time teachers and that of full-time counsellors in ideological and political education lies in the restriction of the existing management mechanism, instead of the low quality of staff or less enthusiasm of the two teams.

#### **2.2.1 Different Evaluation Mechanism of the Two Teams**

As teachers of ideological and political education are full-time, their performance is assessed according to the teaching hours, teaching ability, scientific research ability and professional skills. Full-time counsellors are administrative staff and they are not required to give lectures. Their work performance is assessed based on their professional skills, communication skills and management level. The full-time teachers have to publish a certain number of research papers, do scientific research projects and win teaching competition awards, etc., while full-time counsellors have to win competition awards related to student management. Considering the differences between the two parties, China has set a distinct standard to evaluate the performance of teachers of ideological and political education, which is different from the full-time counsellors. There is, however, no distinct evaluation mechanism to distinguish the performance of teachers of ideological and political education and teachers of other disciplines.

#### **2.2.2 Different Disciplines of the Two Teams**

In order to ensure the professionalism and disciplinary alignment of the teaching staff, full-time teachers of ideological and political education are required to command more systematic and professional knowledge and skills. The newly recruited teachers are supposed to major in ideological and political education or the basic tenets of Marxism or some relevant disciplines. In contrast, full-time counsellors, who are mainly responsible

for student management, are recruited from a wide range of disciplines, spanning engineering, management, literature, economics and other disciplines [3]. In the case of a college included in China's "double world-class project" (world-class colleges and disciplines with Chinese characteristics), there are 68 teachers in the Faculty of Marxism, and the majors of teachers include the basic tenets of Marxism.

### **2.2.3 Different Personnel, Professional Title and Age Structures of the Two Teams**

Full-time teachers are relatively the elderly with senior professional titles, and females account for a high proportion of the faculty. In contrast, a majority of full-time counsellors are young people with junior professional titles and the ratio of males and females is basically balanced. Moreover, the full-time teachers are experienced and skillful in teaching and are able to tailor their teaching to the needs of their students. They have a good understanding of the history of the Communist Party of China, the history of New China, the history of reform and opening up and the history of socialism development. However, the lack of creativity in developing teaching methods and the incapability of keeping updated with current affairs may lead to their insufficiency in motivating students [4]. Some of the senior teachers lack passion and motivation to doing research work due to some subjective or objective reasons. Full-time counsellors in comparison, lack professional skills in teaching practice, and they are less competitive in transforming their experience in student management to research work. Despite the considerable state-level support in position promotion and improvement in evaluation mechanism of performance, remuneration and other aspects, teachers' limited energy and time spent on student management work and their unwillingness to be lifetime full-time counsellors remain the causes of the instability of the full-time counsellor personnel.

## **3 Some Suggestions on the Integration of the Work of the Two Teams**

### **3.1 An Open and Positive Mindset**

In March 2019, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed the important role of teachers in ideological and political education at a national symposium of ideological and political teachers, in which he encouraged the teachers to be enthusiastic, initiative and creative in instructing the students to be the successors of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

### **3.2 Improvement in Teaching and Motivating Students**

The long-windedness of theoretical courses about Marxism and ideological and political education without proper and effective teaching strategies may lead to students' loss of interests and lack of motivation. The carefully designed teaching combined with the

application of modern teaching methods such as micro-lectures, MOOCs and multimedia targets to treat students as individuals and to help students to achieve their full potential. In the process of student management, counsellors can try to consider different perspectives and have empathy for students' situations themselves in terms of their behavior and mental status, carry out ideological and political education and student management in accordance with students' personalities through effective communication skills and teaching techniques. Information-driven teaching methods and the internet should be skillfully applied to keep track of students' mental health and improve student management. Counsellors could also participate in various kinds of activities to promote both their teaching and research capability by means of academic salons, professional competence competitions, counsellor-to-student interviews, etc.

### **3.3 Exploring the Pathways of Integration of the Work of Full-Time Teachers and that of Full-Time Counsellors**

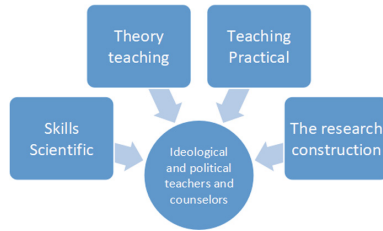
#### **3.3.1 Integration of the Work of Full-Time Teachers and that of Full-Time Counsellors Through Teaching Practice**

While Tagore remarked "knowledge is the crystallization of precious gemstones and culture is the luster of gemstone", Confucius also remarked, "be insatiable in learning and tireless in teaching". Teachers of ideological and political education are supposed to be equipped with competitive professional skills and ethics to keep updated with social development. Meanwhile, counsellors are supposed to combine practice with theory, and adopt flexible and feasible strategies in undertaking student-relevant affairs with strong management aptitude. Despite the differences in instructional strategies, teachers and counsellors bear the same target in their mind, namely, to foster "Pillars of the Country", making students the intellectuals in supporting China's integrity.

For a long time, it has been a common belief that the responsibility of full-time counsellors is to manage students and that there is little correlation between the counsellors' disciplines and the ways they adopt to manage students. Regardless of the distinctive disciplines, college counsellors share the common goal of training talents, which is to offer students social, emotional, and educational support [5]. Besides problem-solving skills, communication skills and compassion, full-time counsellors should give lectures as full-time teachers, which allows counsellors to put theory into practice and improve productivity in student management through after-class assessment as well as teaching practices.

#### **3.3.2 Integration of the Work of Full-Time Teachers and that of Full-Time Counsellors Through Practical Training**

For a long time, full-time teachers of ideological and political courses have been focusing on giving lectures, lacking interaction with students and practical training of students in concrete situations. However, according to the state-level document "Opinions on Further Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Higher Education" jointly issued by the Ministry of Publicity and the Ministry of Education of China, full-time teachers of ideological and political theory courses in higher education should undertake the task of the ideological and political education by working part-time



**Fig. 1.** The path of organic integration of ideological and political teachers and counselors

as head teachers and tutors [6]. Colleges, therefore, may require full-time teachers of ideological and political courses to assist counsellors in student management through several approaches. For instance, the newly recruited teachers could serve as full-time counsellors for one to two years before they work as full-time teachers, which may facilitate the new teachers to be better equipped with student management skills. Meanwhile, full-time counsellors have the priority to become full-time teachers of ideological and political courses when there is a job-transfer need as they have been trained the elementary skills of managing students. As shown in Fig. 1.

## 4 Conclusions

In addition to the integration of the work through teaching practice and practical training, the two teams could also cooperate in scientific research in various ways such as co-publishing research papers, co-proposing research projects, etc. In conclusion, the integration of the work of full-time teachers and that of the full-time counsellors is of great necessity and could be realized in numerous ways with united efforts.

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