



Task-Driven Teaching Reform for Red Study Tours in Higher Education: A Micro-Project-Based Approach

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Abstract. The key to enhancing the educational effectiveness of red study tours lies in realizing the paradigm transformation from superficial experience to in-depth research and critical thinking. Aiming at the main problems in current practice, including vague objectives and superficial implementation, this study takes “micro-projects” as the core driving force, follows the logic of precise orientation, immersive construction and collaborative sublimation, and constructs a practical path for deepening college students’ cognitive development. Specifically, this path stimulates students’ endogenous learning motivation through precise menu-based resource guidance and the establishment of learning initiative. It also promotes learners to complete the dual construction of historical significance and realistic value by using cognitive tools such as field reflection journals. Additionally, it achieves value symbiosis and learning progression through diversified achievement presentation. This proposed path can effectively deepen college students’ understanding of and identification with red culture, and provide operable methodological references for the innovation of ideological and political practical teaching in higher education.

Keywords: Red Study Tour, Micro-project, Practical Path, Higher Education

1 Introduction

In recent years, the integration of red cultural resources into ideological and political education (IPE) in higher education has catalyzed a diverse array of pedagogical innovations, establishing red study tours as a burgeoning frontier of curriculum reform. Current research broadly agrees that such tours are characterized by a distinct political orientation and inherent educational attributes, and are deeply aligned with the core values of ideological and political education in higher education ^[1]. However, in terms of practical educational effectiveness, this educational form still faces multiple practical dilemmas and the challenge of transitioning from activity implementation to in-depth talent cultivation^[2-3]. To address this challenge, grounded in the inherent logic of practice-cognition transformation, this paper explores the implementation path of task-driven teaching centered on micro-project topics in the educational context of red study tours, with a focus on attending to and stimulating students' subjective needs. This pedagogical approach leverages key red exhibition displays to design targeted, small-scale research topics that run through and guide the entire learning process,

aiming to provide feasible practical references for resolving the problem of disconnection between learning and research in red-themed study tours.

2 Problem Statement

Red cultural resources constitute vivid pedagogical materials that embody the spiritual genealogy of the Chinese Communists and the collective memory of the Chinese nation. Conceptually, red study tours constitute an experiential learning method centered on students, with red culture as the primary learning content^[4]. When higher education institutions organize red study tours for students to revolutionary historical sites and memorial venues, their core objective is to integrate red educational resources into the practical teaching of ideological and political education. Guided by the fundamental standpoints, viewpoints and methods of Marxism, students are expected to continuously deepen their understanding of the Communist Party of China's history and innovative theories through immersive and experiential learning, thereby cultivating profound emotional resonance and reinforcing their value identification^[5].

However, when examining the educational efficacy of red study tours from a normative perspective, a notable practical dilemma persists: a substantial portion of the learning process and its outcomes are frequently characterized by superficial sightseeing and shallow cognitive engagement^[6]. Specifically, three interrelated issues characterize this dilemma: First, prior to the tour, students lack adequate contextual understanding of the destination and are assigned ambiguous research tasks. Second, during on-site visits, activities are predominantly confined to passive sightseeing, guided explanations, and lectures, with limited opportunities for in-depth observation and active critical thinking. Third, post-tour learning typically concludes with generic reflection papers, failing to establish a progressive pathway for effective value internalization. Fundamentally, this dilemma stems from the marginalization and discursive suspension of the "research" component in study tour design and implementation, coupled with the failure to effectively activate students' learning initiative and inquiry capabilities. This results in physical presence without meaningful mental engagement and emotional arousal without deep cognitive integration.

To address this predicament, a paradigm shift from "passive learning" to "active learning" in red study tours is imperative. The core of this transformation lies in leveraging the unique characteristics and quality advantages of red educational resources to identify a cognitive deepening mechanism that runs through the entire study tour process, activates intrinsic motivation, and guides active inquiry. This will promote the transformation of ideological education from theoretical indoctrination to internal identification.

Accordingly, this study aims to elucidate the core connotations, design principles, and practical implementation pathways of a red study tour model centered on "micro-project"-based task-driven learning. Drawing on social constructivist learning theory and experiential learning paradigms, this study conceptualizes micro-projects as cognitive scaffolds that transform red study tours from passive sightseeing into active knowledge construction. Thus, a "micro-project" refers to a small-scale research task

developed based on the red study tour theme and teaching objectives, using local red educational resources as carriers. These tasks are designed to be completed individually or in groups within the study tour timeframe. Rather than being a simple miniaturization of academic research, micro-projects embed the core concept of student subjectivity into the entire process of “walking IPE” through their inherent problem-oriented, exploratory, and integrative nature. This approach provides a new theoretical perspective and practical pathway for enhancing the educational efficacy of red study tours.

3 Core Connotation and Design Principles of “Micro-Project” Task Driver

3.1 Core Connotation

The “micro” dimension of red study tour micro-projects lies in the pedagogical transformation of historical periods, figures, events, and artifacts related to the study tour destination into several research questions with small entry points, easy operability, and strong interconnections. Thus, driving red study tours with micro-project tasks requires grasping the essential research nature of micro-projects, endowing the learning process with academic rigor and intellectual depth.

Simultaneously, this study tour model embodies three interrelated dimensions in its core connotation: research, micro-scale, and authenticity. Research is the fundamental attribute, defining the activity as education rather than red tourism. It requires students to enter the site with clear problem awareness, employing methods such as observation, interviews, textual research, and comparison to collect information, analyze materials, and form insights. This transforms the learning process from passive reception of pre-determined conclusions into active, student-centered knowledge construction.

Micro-scale is the formal characteristic, ensuring the feasibility and focus of the research. It originates from attention to specific figures, events, and artifacts within grand historical narratives. For example, the military-civilian solidarity embodied in an anti-Japanese woodblock print or the self-cultivation of Communists reflected in a “three-purpose” overcoat (serving as coat, quilt, and rain gear). This narrow-entry-point approach avoids overly broad research topics and superficial descriptive analysis, thereby enabling deep learning to take place within the constrained time and space of a study tour.

Authenticity is the source of motivation, ensuring the engagement and value of the inquiry. Micro-projects should address genuine interests and doubts of students, representing real problems; inquiry must unfold in authentic historical sites and social contexts^[7], creating real situations; and outcomes should reflect students’ authentic thinking and insights, yielding genuine gains.

3.2 Design Principles

The fundamental principle guiding the design of red study tour micro-projects is to promote deep learning and empower students' cognitive growth. First, the unity of orientation and openness. Micro-projects should incorporate clear guidance aligned with the core of the red spirit and IPE objectives, preventing inquiry from losing thematic focus or deviating from the intended educational direction. Concurrently, they should be formulated in an open, non-prescriptive manner, leaving sufficient room for critical discussion and diverse interpretive perspectives.

Second, the unity of situational embeddedness and transferability. Micro-projects should be rooted in specific red sites, cultural relics, and historical materials, guiding students to engage their senses and immerse themselves bodily in the on-site situation. Concurrently, the problems addressed should possess a certain degree of abstraction and transfer value, inspiring students to reflect on principles that transcend specific historical contexts and correspond to contemporary realities.

Third, the unity of individual inquiry and collaborative research. Micro-projects should be decomposable into relatively independent yet interrelated subtasks, encouraging individual accountability within groups and enabling the completion of the overall research through structured close collaboration^[8]. This cultivates both individual research capabilities and team spirit.

4 Practical Pathways of the Red Study Tour Paradigm Driven by “Micro-Project” Tasks

4.1 Overall Logic of Practical Teaching

The underlying practical teaching logic embodies a progressive, student-centered learning path that facilitates incremental cognitive deepening. This logical framework begins with specific cultural relics, primary historical materials, and historical sites, from which targeted research questions are extracted. These questions drive students to transform from passive visitors into active interpreters of spiritual values and constructors of personal self-enlightenment. Upon entering the authentically restored historical sites, students initially construct perceptual understandings of historical events and revolutionary spirits through embodied participation and continuous reflective practice.

Following the on-site learning experience, students exchange, critically discuss, and evaluate their personal insights within the teacher-student learning community, thereby achieving collaborative meaning negotiation and shared value consensus. When drafting micro-project reports, students engage in multi-dimensional dialogical thinking. Through rigorous historical excavation and logical analysis, they establish meaningful connections between history and reality, and between revolutionary spirit and self-perception. Ultimately, they achieve the meaningful presentation of study tour learning outcomes based on authentic research findings.

This practical teaching logic of “orientation–construction–sublimation” forms the core framework for the three implementation stages elaborated in detail below.

4.2 Study Tour Guidance and Learning Community Formation Based on Targeted Questions

Development of Multi-Dimensional Pre-Tour Guidebooks. Traditional study tours typically feature themes directly assigned by educators, leaving students without prior cognitive preparation. To address this gap, the teaching team must pre-conduct pedagogical transformation of important resources at the study tour destination and compile a multi-dimensional study tour guidebook. This guidebook is not a mere introduction to locations but a resource package integrating background historical materials, cultural relic images, red stories, and important conclusions, organized chronologically or by spiritual dimensions. For example, around a memorial hall, the guidebook might set dimensions such as “ideals and beliefs” “mass line” and “work style and self-cultivation” providing research clues.

The guidebook should also include heuristic questions, such as: “What emotional conflicts and faith choices can you perceive in this family letter?” The purpose of students browsing the guidebook during pre-tour preparation is not to obtain answers in advance but to identify cognitive gaps and points of interest under the stimulation of rich information, laying the groundwork for clarifying their own genuine questions for on-site research. This process essentially returns the initiative of learning to students.

Construction of Interest-Oriented Learning Communities. Students form teams autonomously based on their topic intentions. This differs fundamentally from mechanical grouping by student ID or class. These “learning partners” are active learning communities formed by individuals with shared research interests to accomplish common research tasks, facilitating strong social support for in-depth study tours. Within the community, members conduct role division, plan negotiation, and resource sharing based on common goals, forming a collaborative relationship of shared responsibility and co-construction of knowledge. This fully embodies the advantages of peer learning: discussions, explanations, and debates among peers effectively promote cognitive processing, exposing and correcting blind spots in thinking. The existence of learning communities also provides emotional support and sustained motivation, enabling individuals to persist when encountering challenging research obstacles.

Teachers Role as “Navigation Companion”. This stage focuses on establishing research directions and questions through pre-tour learning using the study tour guidebook and related extended materials. Teachers need to participate in discussions, provide clues, and inspire thinking based on student needs, playing the role of peer-like study tour guides.

The foundation of this role is teachers’ active integration and equal dialogue, with the core being direction guidance and value leadership. Specific responsibilities include: First, designing high-quality study tour guidebooks to ensure their accuracy, operability, and heuristic nature; Second, organizing pre-tour task briefings to help students clearly understand the study tour schedule, micro-project task arrangements,

requirements, and evaluation criteria; Third, analyzing topics with students and guiding in-depth discussions with professional expertise to ensure that research directions and values do not deviate from the main theme; Fourth, organizing proposal defenses to listen to groups' research plans and encourage peer questioning and reflection, making research designs more rigorous and feasible.

Through this series of designs, study tour activities take targeted questions as the practical starting point, promoting students to form active research willingness and laying a solid foundation for subsequent in-depth immersion.

4.3 Meaning Exploration and Value Recognition Through Embodied Immersion

Field Reflection Journal as a Learning Tool for Knowledge Construction. It refers to structured paper or electronic notes used by individuals or groups to record the research process in a timely and continuous manner. Unlike casual reflections, it is guided by micro-project questions and has more specific objectives, typically including: observation records, interview or data excerpts, questions or conjectures, epiphanies, and associative thinking.

First, it prompts students to observe purposefully to solve problems. To document their footprints, students must actively seek evidence related to their topics, making their observations more focused. Second, it makes thinking visible. Fleeting thoughts in the mind are fixed in writing, facilitating subsequent review, organization, and deepening. Third, it provides a basis for formative assessment. Teachers can regularly check the documentation to understand each student's thinking process, encountered difficulties, and research progress, thereby providing timely and personalized guidance.

Multi-Dimensional Dialogue and Meaning Generation in On-Site Situations. The unique educational value of red study tours lies in their irreplaceable sense of place. Immersive construction driven by micro-projects fully leverages this uniqueness to guide multi-dimensional dialogue.

First, dialogue with history. When facing a cultural relic or historical site, students attempt to understand the lived experiences, choices, and circumstances of historical figures through multi-sensory engagement, including listening, observing, touching, empathy, and historical imagination, thereby making abstract historical events concrete and tangible.

Second, dialogue with reality. Field reflection journal should specifically guide students to establish connections between history and reality. For example, exploring how to inherit the scientific and rigorous spirit of seeking truth from facts from the story of the famous "Seeking Truth from Facts" stone inscription, or what enlightenment the National Salvation Room of Chinese People's Anti-Japanese Military and Political University^[9] offers for guiding young people's life aspirations. This connection promotes the contemporary interpretation of revolutionary spirit, avoiding the separation of history from reality. Third, dialogue with oneself. Students engage in

continuous self-reflection, asking critical questions such as: Does this history touch me? How is this spiritual quality related to my professional studies and future career? Through multi-dimensional dialogue in historical situations, learning is no longer alienation from and superficial perception of historical contexts. Instead, under the emotional stimulation of the red field, students gradually construct a profound understanding of red culture and its inherent values through continuous interaction with tour guides, classmates, teachers, and their inner selves.

Teacher Role in Process Guidance and Feedback. During the immersive construction stage, teachers' guiding role shifts from "lecturing" to "supporting" and "catalyzing". Their primary functions include: first, providing key information by supplementing background knowledge or research clues that are not easily accessible to students on-site; second, promoting deeper thinking by challenging superficial conclusions through probing questions and skepticism, guiding more in-depth analysis; third, offering professional support by acting as "navigation companions" when students encounter difficulties in analyzing problems or constructing frameworks; fourth, organizing extensive exchanges to allow groups to share interim findings and unresolved confusions, using collective wisdom to inspire each other and solve problems.

This embedded teacher role offers need-targeted guidance, building learning scaffolds for students to analyze primary historical materials, deepen thinking and form practical insights. It also keeps inquiry activities from falling into low-level repetition or straying from their theme.

4.4 Outcome-Oriented Exchange Dialogue and Learning Evaluation

Diverse Outcomes as Personalized Expressions of In-Depth Inquiry. Requiring groups to submit formal study tour learning outcomes is a critical step for transforming implicit learning processes into explicit, tangible products. Study tour learning outcomes should take diverse forms to showcase students' different strengths and accommodate various expression preferences. For example, formal micro-project reports, party class lesson plans, Vlog short videos, original situational dramas, educational podcasts, original songs, or well-illustrated cultural and creative designs.

The core of evaluation lies not in the aesthetic appeal of the presentation form but in whether the outcomes earnestly and comprehensively address the assigned micro-project research questions. Evaluation criteria should focus on four key dimensions: the appropriateness and uniqueness of the problem perspective selection; the accuracy and sufficiency of evidence use; the logic and depth of analysis and argumentation; and most critically, the rationality and enlightenment of the "history-reality-self" connection.

An excellent outcome should clearly demonstrate how a group entered from a "small entry point" question and ultimately derived conclusions or insights meaningful to themselves through rigorous, evidence-based inquiry. This comprehensive process provides students with holistic training in research competencies, collaborative team spirit, and innovative critical thinking.

Creation of Exchange Dialogue Scenarios and Generation of Collective Wisdom.

Completing study tour outcomes is not the end of the task. Organizing centralized exchanges to promote ideological intersection and mutual enlightenment is a critical step in sublimating the educational value of study tours. Exchanges can take the form of thematic seminars, outcome presentation meetings, or micro-project report defenses. Each group is required to present their research overview, process design, and main findings, and accept constructive questioning and evaluation from teachers, student representatives, and experts.

This scenario design aims to create a rigorous, equal, and intellectually stimulating dialogue field. Questioning and debate prompt presenters to further clarify their logic and reflect on weak links in their arguments. Questions and supplements from different perspectives often reveal blind spots that researchers have not noticed or open up entirely new directions for critical thinking.

Such situations have been observed in the author's teaching practice: a group researching "scientific and technological talent cultivation during the Yan' an Period" was inspired by a group researching "the ideological line of seeking truth from facts", and they exchanged insights on inheriting and promoting the spirit of "seeking truth from facts" in the AI era around the topic of "algorithmic fog and the path to truth". This process vividly embodies the core tenet of social constructivist learning theory: knowledge is not passively received or independently discovered by individuals but is jointly constructed and deepened through social interaction, negotiation, and critical debate^[10]. Collective wisdom thus transcends the simple sum of individual insights, and the connotation of the red spirit acquires richer and more widely consensual interpretations through such productive ideological collisions.

Developmental Evaluation Integrating Process and Outcome. Micro-project-driven deep study tours require the evaluation system to shift from a single-dimensional outcome-focused evaluation to a comprehensive developmental evaluation that emphasizes both process and outcome. Process evaluation is primarily based on three key indicators: the completeness of field reflection journal; the direction and depth of thinking; the degree of active participation in team collaboration. Outcome evaluation is based on the quality of final results, assessed according to evaluation criteria.

This evaluation system expands the evaluation focus from "what theories have been learned" and "what spirit has been perceived" to "how to learn", "the meaningful connection between history and reality" and "what holistic growth has been achieved". It affirms the value of final learning outcomes while guiding both teachers and students to recognize the importance of methodological training, intellectual exercise, and character development inherent in the study tour process itself. This approach is more consistent with the educational philosophy of outcome-based education.

5 Conclusion and Reflection

This study aims to stimulate students' exploratory interest in red study tours, promote deep learning and value shaping, and construct a comprehensive micro-project-driven pathway. This provides a practical reference solution for addressing the superficiality dilemma of red study tours and has certain implications for innovating ideological and political practice teaching.

This pathway achieves pedagogical progression in study tour motivation, process, and evaluation by introducing structured learning tasks: stimulating student' learning initiative through problem orientation, promoting meaningful insight generation through immersive construction, and facilitating outcome transformation and value consensus through collaborative learning. The author's teaching team has implemented this framework in practical teaching activities focused on the Yan' an Spirit red study tours. Student questionnaire results indicate that this pathway effectively enhances problem awareness, research capabilities, and collaborative spirit, while promoting the transformation from emotional resonance to rational identification and from passive knowledge reception to active value internalization regarding red culture.

Future optimization can be pursued in the following aspects: developing specialized micro-project resource banks for different educational stages to enhance its adaptability; Improving interactive teaching practices among teachers, students, and professional memorial hall guides; and integrating emerging technologies such as AR/VR, artificial intelligence, and other technologies to enhance embodied experience, record study tour processes, and assist in effect evaluation.

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