

Research on the Current Situation and Countermeasures of Ideological and Political Education for College Students with Disabilities

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Abstract

As a special subset within the college student population, college students with disabilities have increasingly drawn attention to the issues concerning their ideological and political education. Currently, college students with disabilities face problems such as a relatively low level of ideological and political education and prominent mental health issues. This paper begins with an examination of the current status of ideological and political education for college students with disabilities, analyzes the existing problems in this field, and proposes countermeasures from the aspects of organizational leadership, mental health education, practical education, and classroom teaching.

Keywords

College Students with Disabilities, Ideological and Political Education, Current Situation, Countermeasures

1. Introduction

With the advancement of educational modernization, increasing emphasis has been placed on strengthening the ideological and political education (IPE) of college students. The National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities and the Symposium for Teachers of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Schools have repeatedly underscored the significance of IPE, thereby charting a clear course for the current endeavors to carry out IPE work among college students effectively.

Currently, China has a total population of approximately 85 million people with disabilities. There are 23 higher education institutions in the country that are qualified to conduct separate entrance examinations and recruitments for individuals

with visual impairments, hearing impairments, and other disabilities. Each year, around 30,000 students with disabilities are admitted to regular universities as well as special education colleges within universities. As a special group within the higher education setting, visually-impaired college students also enjoy the same right to education as their non-disabled peers and should receive necessary support and accommodations to better integrate into the university learning and living environment. At present, college students with disabilities on campus are confronted with prominent psychological issues, poor social adaptability, and a relatively low level of ideological and political education. Investigating the current situation of ideological and political education for college students with disabilities and proposing practical and feasible countermeasures are of great significance for fulfilling the mission of cultivating people through virtue and promoting the all-round development of college students with disabilities.

2. The Connotation of Ideological and Political Education, the Connotation and Significance of Ideological and Political Education for College Students with Disabilities

1) The Connotation and Significance of Ideological and Political Education

At the National Education Conference, the General Secretary emphasized the necessity of persevering in nurturing the souls and cultivating talents with the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and implementing the project of cultivating virtue and talent in the new era. It is imperative to continuously strengthen and improve school-based ideological and political education in the new era, so as to educate and guide young students to fortify their faith in Marxism, their conviction in socialism with Chinese characteristics, and their confidence in the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. They should be encouraged to set lofty aspirations for serving and strengthening the country and become resolute and responsible strivers.

Ideological and political education, as a distinct form of educational practice, fundamentally serves to meet the needs of real-life individuals and the requirements of social development. Through ideological and political education, college students are guided to care about the future and destiny of the Party and the country, correctly comprehend and address various contemporary social contradictions, and cultivate correct political and ideological perspectives.

To strengthen ideological and political education for college students, it is essential to center on ideal and belief education, prioritize patriotism education, build upon ideological and moral construction, and aim for the all-round development of college students. Ideological and political education must advance with the times and innovate in response to the situation. In light of the new circumstances and tasks emerging among college students, it is imperative to explore new methods and approaches actively. By staying close to reality and life, the pertinence, effectiveness, and appeal of ideological and political education can be enhanced, thereby nurturing qualified builders and reliable successors for socialism.

2) Insufficient Party Building Resources for Inclusive Education and Inadequate Adaptability of Party Member Education Content

Ideological and political education (IPE) for college students with disabilities stands as an integral part of IPE for all college students in China. It shoulders the pivotal responsibility of guiding these students to cultivate correct ideals, beliefs, and positive worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. This educational endeavor bears profound and far-reaching significance for grooming college students with disabilities into competent builders and successors for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, as well as for propelling the construction of a harmonious society and a moderately prosperous society in all respects (Lin, 2018).

As indicated in Dr. Song Zhiqiang's doctoral dissertation titled *Research on Ideological and Political Education for College Students with Disabilities*, IPE for college students with disabilities refers to an educational practice aimed at shaping their harmonious personalities. This practice is carried out by higher special education institutions and regular universities based on the actual physical and mental development of college students with disabilities. It takes psychological health education for these students as the foundation, prioritizes their social adaptability education, and centers on their political quality education. The content of IPE for college students with disabilities primarily encompasses three aspects: psychological health education, social adaptability education, and political quality education.

The 14th Five-Year Plan for the Protection and Development of Persons with Disabilities issued by the State Council underscores the necessity of attaching great importance to the development of the cause of persons with disabilities. It calls for special care and attention towards this group. By 2025, the achievements in poverty alleviation among persons with disabilities are expected to be consolidated and expanded, with an improvement in their quality of life. Conducting IPE for college students with disabilities yields multiple benefits. At the individual level, it facilitates the enhancement of their comprehensive qualities, the cultivation of harmonious personalities, and the fulfillment of their spiritual needs. At the societal level, it serves as an effective approach to safeguarding the rights and interests of college students with disabilities, constitutes a fundamental task in building a harmonious society, and is an inevitable requirement for cultivating talents in higher special education for socialism.

3. The Current Situation and Existing Problems of Ideological and Political Education for College Students with Disabilities

1) The Current Situation of Ideological and Political Education for College Students with Disabilities

As of the end of 2023, there were approximately 100,000 college students with disabilities across the country, enrolled in over 2000 institutions of higher education. These students encompass a diverse range of disability types, including those

with visual impairments, hearing impairments, among others.

The channels through which college students with disabilities receive ideological and political education (IPE) include ideological and political theory courses, philosophy and social science courses, as well as party-league and social practice activities. In comparison to their able-bodied peers, the internet has a profound impact on the study and daily lives of college students with disabilities. The vast majority of them spend four or more hours online each day.

To promote the all-round development of college students with disabilities, some universities have established integrated education centers. At the sub-college level, integrated education groups are set up, and in classes, integrated assistance and education mechanisms are put in place. Additionally, schools are equipped with full-time special education teachers.

However, due to the inadequate hardware facilities in schools, the needs of college students with disabilities cannot be fully met. The education mechanism for students with disabilities is not well-developed enough, and favorable measures cannot be thoroughly implemented. Sometimes, these initiatives are merely superficial and fail to address the actual problems faced by college students with disabilities. As a result, the ideological and political standards of college students in these schools are relatively low, and the number of party member development is limited. The main existing problems include low levels of mental health, insufficient hardware in terms of teaching staff and teaching materials, and a lack of social practice opportunities.

2) Issues in Ideological and Political Education for College Students with Disabilities

a) Low Levels of Mental Health

College students with disabilities often exhibit a range of psychological issues, such as anxiety, dependence, unsociability, and sensitivity. Additionally, due to their physical impairments and restricted access to information, they tend to suffer from low self-esteem, introversion, paranoia, mistrust of others, complaints about their surroundings, and even resentment towards others and society. Given their unique physical and mental developmental characteristics arising from their disabilities, these students present greater challenges and uncertainties for ideological and political education (IPE) (Xu, 2020).

Before entering university, disabled students primarily study in schools for the deaf or blind, where they interact with peers facing similar disabilities, and their emotions are understood and acknowledged. However, upon entering universities, they live, study, and socialize with able-bodied students, leading to feelings of maladjustment and resistance. They are reluctant to communicate with their classmates and tend to associate more with other disabled students on campus (Yu & Qiu, 2019). According to information from the psychological counseling center, a relatively large number of college students with disabilities are reported to have psychological problems, with some even harboring suicidal or self-harming thoughts.

Psychological issues among college students with disabilities are difficult to detect. Limited communication and coping methods, coupled with the inability to relieve pressure in a timely manner, may exacerbate these problems.

b) Insufficient Teaching Staff and Hardware (Teaching Materials)

General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out that ideological and political theory courses are the key to fulfilling the fundamental task of cultivating virtue and nurturing talents. Teachers play a crucial role in the education of college students with disabilities. In addition to meeting the requirements of regular IPE teachers, those teaching disabled students should possess specialized knowledge and skills in special education. Ideological and political theory courses are highly professional and not easy to comprehend. IPE involves a great deal of ideological and spiritual communication, and relying solely on written materials fails to clearly convey the intended meanings.

In schools, hearing-impaired students constitute the majority of disabled students. However, there are only a few ideological and political theory teachers who can use sign language. Consequently, teachers are unable to engage in face-to-face and heart-to-heart communication with all hearing-impaired students. Even with the aid of communication technology, it is challenging to ensure that ideological and political theory education deeply resonates with students. Although universities have appointed a certain number of full-time IPE teachers and offer different IPE courses tailored to disabled students, mainly the deaf and blind, there is a scarcity of full-time counselors specifically for college students with disabilities in daily management services.

Moreover, due to the lack of ideological and political theory textbooks in Braille, blind students, deprived of visual information, can only rely on their ears to listen and memorize, which hinders their effective acquisition and understanding of IPE knowledge, thus limiting the educational function of the classroom.

c) Inadequate External Environmental Support and Lack of Social Practice

Despite the growing public attention and care for persons with disabilities, in the realm of IPE, college students with disabilities still face the risk of marginalization. The general public often focuses on the physical disabilities and living difficulties of disabled individuals, neglecting their IPE needs and rights as college students. This prejudice and neglect not only impede the all-round development of college students with disabilities but also hinder society's recognition and respect for the equal rights of persons with disabilities.

Practice-based education is an important means of strengthening IPE. On the one hand, the physical disabilities of college students with disabilities impede their mobility and communication. On the other hand, their low self-esteem, unsociable and sensitive personalities, and weak social adaptability result in low enthusiasm for participation. They engage in fewer activities, both on and off-campus, such as practical competitions. As a consequence, they are unable to delve into society, understand it, or serve it, thus failing to realize the educational effects of practice.

4. Strategies for Enhancing the Level of Ideological and Political Education for College Students with Disabilities

Based on the findings of this study, this paper proposes corresponding solutions to address the existing problems in the ideological and political education of college students with disabilities. Ideological and political education (IPE) serves as an essential means to promote the all-round development of college students with disabilities. It is imperative to adhere to a people-oriented approach, showing respect, understanding, and care for disabled students. Educators should delve into the lived experiences of these students, sparing no effort to address the practical problems they encounter in their study and daily lives. Moreover, it is crucial to comprehend the value pursuits of students with disabilities and arrange appropriate educational and teaching activities based on reality, so as to ensure the effectiveness of IPE (Yu & Qiu, 2019).

1) Strengthening Organizational Leadership to Address Practical Issues of College Students with Disabilities

The party committee of the university should place a high priority on the ideological and political education (IPE) of students with disabilities and focus on the prominent issues that constrain the development of IPE. A working pattern featuring unified leadership by the party committee, joint management by both party and administrative departments, and coordinated cooperation among relevant departments with each assuming its own responsibilities should be established. The university's integrated education center should take charge of overall planning. Based on in-depth research into the needs of college students with disabilities, it should formulate a top-level design. Sub-colleges should strengthen collaboration between party and administrative departments as well as between the party and the league, improve the integrated education assistance groups, formulate development plans for students with disabilities, and establish individual files for them, adhering to the principle of "one file per student" to achieve "one-on-one" assistance. Efforts should be made to resolve the practical problems faced by college students with disabilities in their study and daily lives. Additionally, attention should be paid to home-school cooperation. Parents should not indulge their disabled children unconditionally. Instead, they should incorporate IPE-related content into daily life, strengthen moral and rule consciousness, and guide students to form correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values.

2) Assessing Mental States to Enhance Mental Health Levels

On the one hand, the mental states of college students with disabilities should be accurately assessed. Methods such as psychological assessments for freshmen during enrollment and conversations with teachers from the college or university's psychological counseling center can be employed to understand their mental states and establish mental health files for disabled students. For students with relatively low levels of mental health, the underlying causes should be identified and analyzed, and psychological counseling should be provided to guide them to recognize themselves positively, face their disabilities, and accept themselves. On

the other hand, more attention and guidance should be given to students with disabilities to help them overcome inferiority and dependence. Platforms should be built to encourage interactions between disabled students and positive peer groups, leveraging the role of peer assistance. This will help cultivate psychological qualities of self-respect, self-improvement, and self-confidence, foster a sense of gratitude, and inspire love for themselves and society. Strengthening love-based education among classmates and dormitory mates is also crucial. By discovering the strengths and positive qualities of disabled students, others can correctly understand and assist them, creating an environment of respect and love for disabled students to study and live in.

3) Encouraging Participation in Activities to Leverage the Educational Effects of Practice

As an important link and approach in IPE for college students, practical activities play a significant role in strengthening service consciousness, stimulating enthusiasm for helping others, improving comprehensive qualities, and promoting all-round development. Given the mobility challenges and relatively introverted personalities of college students with disabilities, who are often reluctant to actively participate in practical activities, the pace of constructing a barrier-free campus should be accelerated to create a convenient environment for them, enabling their rapid integration into the group. A culture of fraternity should be cultivated on campus. Events such as speech contests, art galas, and track-and-field sports meets tailored for disabled students should be organized to allow them to showcase their talents, find self-worth in activities, feel love in practice, and learn gratitude. Outstanding individuals with disabilities should be invited to deliver lectures, engage in exchanges, and participate in forums, using the power of role models to enhance their self-confidence. Emphasis should also be placed on practical activities, such as visits to revolutionary bases, disability-assistance services, and “three-to-the-countryside” practices. These activities can facilitate college students with disabilities in understanding theoretical knowledge, improving political literacy, and enhancing social adaptability and the ability to apply knowledge (Niu & Wu, 2019).

4) Maximizing the Main Channel Role of IPE

To improve the effectiveness of IPE courses, the roles of IPE teachers as the “main force,” course materials as the “main battlefield,” and classroom teaching as the “main channel” should be fully leveraged. Comprehensive ideological and political theory courses should be offered to disabled students. While it is not advisable to lower the educational requirements for IPE of disabled students solely due to the perceived difficulty of their learning, flexibility in handling teaching materials is necessary. On the one hand, the communication skills of IPE teachers with college students with disabilities should be enhanced. Teachers should possess relevant special education theoretical knowledge and professional qualities. They should receive sign language training, utilize flipped classroom or intelligent voice-to-text conversion technologies, and provide Braille textbooks. This will en-

able hearing-impaired and blind students to “understand” professional IPE courses, current affairs and policies, philosophy, and social sciences. On the other hand, IPE teachers should understand the thinking characteristics and ideological levels of the disabled students they teach. Teaching should be conducted in a way that students can understand according to their learning pace, meeting the needs of personalized teaching. In addition to one-way instruction, classroom management should be strengthened. Blind students should be arranged in the front rows for better auditory clarity. For hearing-impaired students, vivid pictures and practical teaching aids should be frequently used. Question-and-answer sessions, interactive discussions, individual guidance, and homework checks should be organized in class to better enable disabled students to absorb knowledge. IPE teachers must keep up with the times, engage in lifelong learning, receive training, continuously acquire new knowledge and skills, and consciously guide students to think, exploring ways to cultivate the comprehensive abilities of college students with disabilities.

5) Expand educational approaches by leveraging the advantages of artificial intelligence and harnessing the role of online ideological and political education.

Regular communication with college students with disabilities through QQ, WeChat, phone calls, and emails should be maintained to understand their thoughts and the difficulties they face, providing timely answers to their questions and enhancing the pertinence of IPE. In particular, for students with mobility impairments and those who are sensitive and shy, unobstructed online communication should be ensured. Based on the characteristics of how college students with disabilities access information, online IPE resources should be fully tapped. Through platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and the “Xuexi Qiangguo” app, as well as official WeChat accounts and the “Youth Big Learning” program, red-themed works and exemplary deeds should be recommended. Outstanding individuals with disabilities who have achieved special accomplishments or made contributions to society, such as Jiang Mengnan, Zhu Yanfu, and the couple Zhang Shundong and Li Guoxiu, should be reported. Comprehensive course resources should be provided for college students with disabilities to study, creating an interesting and useful online platform for them. At the same time, given the mixed quality of online culture, proper guidance is necessary to prevent disabled students’ thoughts from being corrupted by negative online content, which could undermine the effectiveness of IPE.

5. Conclusion

College students with disabilities constitute a vital component of the diversified development of society. The enhancement of their ideological and political qualities is not only crucial for their all-round individual development but also an indispensable part of building a harmonious society and achieving educational equity. This paper analyzes the existing deficiencies in the ideological and political education (IPE) of college students with disabilities from aspects such as their

unique developmental characteristics, inadequate faculty and resources, and a deficient social support system. It then proposes targeted strategic recommendations aimed at breaking the limitations of traditional educational models and providing a more inclusive, flexible, and effective learning environment for college students with disabilities. To this end, the IPE work in universities must be firmly rooted in the fundamental task of cultivating talents with moral integrity. It is imperative to continuously deepen educational and teaching reforms, explore IPE models that suit the characteristics of college students with disabilities, and promote the development of higher education as well as the cause for people with disabilities.

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The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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