

The Integration of Curriculum Ideology and Politics in the Teaching of Medical Pathology in International Students

Rong He¹, Weirong Liu^{2*}

¹College of Agriculture, Yangtze University, Jingzhou, China

²Department of Pathology, Yangtze University Health Science Center, Jingzhou, China

Email: *348811089@qq.com

How to cite this paper: He, R. and Liu, W.R. (2025) The Integration of Curriculum Ideology and Politics in the Teaching of Medical Pathology in International Students. *Open Journal of Applied Sciences*, 15, 1017-1024. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojapps.2025.154070>

Received: March 26, 2025

Accepted: April 14, 2025

Published: April 17, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

In recent years, with the rapid development of China's economy, the number of international students in China increases year by year, which has become an important part of China's higher education, strengthening the education of international students in China has been highly valued by all walks of life. Facing the large-scale group of international students in China, to improve the quality of education for international students, not only should we attach importance to curriculum education, but also incorporate ideological education into it to better promote Chinese culture.

Keywords

Pathology, International Education, Curriculum Ideology and Politics

1. Introduction

The education of international medical students is not only an important part of talent cultivation in universities, but also an important sign that the quality of higher education in China is internationally recognized [1]. Curriculum ideology and politics is an important way to expand the ideological and political education of international students. Teachers can integrate ideological and political elements in professional courses to help international students understand China, perceive and identify with the core socialist values with Chinese characteristics, improve their own moral cultivation, and enable them to not only be the bearers of Chinese stories, but also the disseminators of Chinese stories. At present, the implementation of ideological and political education in the curriculum for international

*Corresponding author.

medical students is still in the exploration stage. How to cultivate virtues and morality among international students and help them establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values, making them important bridges and bonds for spreading Chinese culture, is one of the important issues in current international student education.

This article is based on the education situation of international students in China, relying on the pathology course, focusing on the issue of ideological and political education in the courses for international students, deeply analyzing the characteristics of ideological and political education in the courses for international students in China, exploring and condensing the elements of ideological and political education in the courses, with the expectation of promoting the high-quality development of education for international students in China.

2. The Current Situation of Curriculum Ideological and Political Education for Medical International Students

As for the medical international students in our school, the main source countries are India, Ghana, Pakistan and some other countries where basic education is not very developed. However, there is a large gap in students' learning ability, which poses a great challenge to the overall grasp of the teaching progress. In addition, due to the different political system, basic national conditions and social system from China, it is difficult to carry out ideological and political education. On the other hand, the teaching for international medical students in China is mainly conducted in English, which causes language expression barriers for the implementation of moral education work. Therefore, no courses related to ideological and political education have been offered to international students, or merely offer courses such as Medical Ethics and Psychology, which have negligible effects on ideological and political education for international medical students. Most medical universities conduct ideological and political education for international students through indoctrinating "explicit education", such as stiffly imparting Chinese socialist culture, without considering the customs and cultural differences of students from different countries. Some mechanically applied ideological and political education may even cause some international students to have resistant and bored psychology, thus failing to implement ideological and political education effectively.

Pathology is a basic medical science and, at the same time, one of the important disciplines of clinical medicine. However, in their daily teaching work, teachers pay more attention to the cultivation of students' professional knowledge and skills, while neglecting ideological and political education. Secondly, due to the particularity of the medical major, students find in the learning process that the major requires a high degree of mastery of basic knowledge and skills, which leads to students mistakenly believing that teachers of specialized courses should not take up time to teach ideological and political content. Therefore, students lack autonomy, enthusiasm, and feedback in learning the ideological and political

teaching content, making it difficult to achieve the expected goals [2]. In addition, although some professional course teachers are aware of the importance of ideological and political education, due to the lack of systematic and perfect teaching content, teachers can not grasp the connotation of ideological and political teaching, and unable to grasp the teaching focus.

In view of the above reasons, there are still certain difficulties in integrating ideological and political education into the teaching of pathology for international students, which is not conducive to enhancing their cognition of China, making it difficult for them to better integrate into the life during their study in China, and is not conducive to the dissemination of Chinese culture and Chinese knowledge.

3. The Significance of Integrating Curriculum Ideological and Political Education into the Pathology Teaching for International Students

Pathology is one of the compulsory courses for medical students after they enter the medical field [3]. Before studying pathology, students have already established a foundational understanding of medicine. Following their study of pathology, they will proceed to specialize in clinical subjects. Consequently, pathology plays a pivotal role as a bridge between basic medical sciences and clinical medicine. In terms of curriculum design, the teaching content of pathology includes general pathology and systemic pathology. The general pathology mainly studies the universality, general laws of diseases and the common pathological basis in diseases. While the systemic pathology elaborates on the particularities, morphological characteristics, prognosis and outcome, as well as the clinical pathological correlations of diseases in each system. During the general pathology teaching process, many outstanding deeds of medical workers have become important materials for ideological and political education, and these materials have a significant promoting effect on the development of pathology. The systemic pathology, on the basis of the general pathology, further clarify and summarize the particularities of different systemic diseases, reflecting the relationship between commonality and individuality in Marxist dialectics, and the mutual transformation of commonality and individuality, jointly promoting the occurrence and development of things, which coincides with the pathological changes in diseases. These knowledge structures with humanistic characteristics constitute all the links in the teaching of the pathology major, which not only expand the levels and dimensions of professional knowledge but also imperceptibly sublimate the spiritual realm of students. Furthermore, the pathology department is highly distinctive among many departments in a hospital. The main reason is that the objects of diagnosis and treatment are specimens and paraffin sections, which cannot express their own feelings or subjective intentions. Instead, it requires pathologists to determine the benignity or malignancy of tissue specimens through the professional knowledge they have learned and the experience they have accumulated. At the same time, a compre-

hensive analysis and judgment need to be made in combination with relevant clinical data, laboratory tests, and imaging examinations. This requires pathologists to be more patient, careful, and confident. Moreover, pathologists need to have doctor-patient communication with patients or their families, which demands that pathologists not only possess superb medical skills but also have good humanistic cultivation to improve the level of doctor-patient communication. Unlike the quality-oriented education that Chinese students receive, which focuses on the all-round development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics and labor skills, the current curriculum for international students leans towards specialized courses and neglects moral education, which is not conducive to the construction of their worldviews and values during their individual growth process. Integrating ideological and political teaching into medical education for international students can not only promote the concept of establishing oneself, conducting studies, and imparting knowledge with virtue, but also actively guide students to establish a correct world outlook, outlook on life, and values, cultivate the spirit of “cherishing life, saving lives, being willing to contribute, and having boundless love” among students, and place the cultivation of medical skills and the education of benevolence on an equal footing.

4. Practical Thoughts on Ideological and Political Education in Pathology Courses for International Students in Medical Colleges

4.1. Cultivate Ideological and Political Consciousness and Promote Teaching Innovation

Ideological and political education plays a crucial role in achieving the teaching goal of cultivating virtue through education in the new era, and it has relatively high requirements for teachers' ideological and political awareness, teaching responsibility, and teaching ability [4]. Therefore, in the process of exploring and innovating the ideological and political education of the pathology course in medical colleges, the first and most important thing is to cultivate teachers' ideological and political awareness and improve the teaching staff's level, so as to promote all-staff education. Teachers of pathology in medical colleges should have a firm cultural awareness, disseminate advanced ideological and cultural concepts and professional ideas to students, and guide students to develop comprehensively and grow healthily. First: Cultivate teachers' ideological and political awareness. Teachers need to change the traditional teaching mode and continuously improve their political consciousness by strengthening theoretical learning of ideological and political education. Second: Enhance teachers' ideological and political level. Professional course teachers who graduated from medical-related majors, after strengthening theoretical knowledge learning, should design the content of each class professionally and reasonably to achieve an effective combination of ideological and political content and professional courses. Third: Master the ideological and political connotation of the course. The pathology course contains relatively rich

ideological and political elements. When designing the course, teachers should constantly study and explore, and innovate the teaching mode on the basis of the effective combination of ideological and political content and professional knowledge.

4.2. Establish a Correct Outlook on Life and Values

The profession of a doctor has its particularity. Medical students not only need to master professional knowledge but also be full of love and a sense of responsibility. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out strong ideological and political education for them to guide them to establish the correct ideals, thereby having a positive impact on their ideological concepts, life positioning, and value orientation. Guangdong Maoming Health Vocational College conducted an online questionnaire survey on the overall educational effect of curriculum ideology and politics among students of four classes majoring in Nursing and Traditional Chinese Medicine. The results showed that 85% of the students were satisfied with the overall effect of the curriculum ideology and politics education. They believed that the curriculum ideology and politics in “Pathology” enabled students to establish the concept of having a benevolent heart as a doctor and saving lives, and cultivated their sense of social responsibility and mission. Some students also hoped that teachers could pay more attention to cultivating their meticulous working consciousness and dialectical thinking in classroom teaching [5]. In the general pathology teaching, teachers can actively guide international students by studying the stories of famous people in addition to introducing relevant professional knowledge. For example, the renowned surgeon Henry Norman Bethune, when facing a patient with erysipelas combined with acute cellulitis, in order to remove the shrapnel from the patient’s body as soon as possible, he resolutely insisted on continuing the operation with his already infected hand, and as a result, his infection aggravated and eventually led to septicemia. This selfless dedication and the spirit of sacrificing oneself for others profoundly reflect the core socialist values, and his humanitarian spirit of saving lives and helping the wounded is worth remembering by every medical student. Through this case, it can further stimulate the sense of identity and mission of international students towards medical work, thereby establishing the correct outlook on life and values.

4.3. Strengthen Situational Teaching by Integrating Modern Information Technology

The scenario is not a simple work place, but the activities of all directly related subjects such as medical staff, patients, and family members in the medical environment [6]. There are few resources related to scenario construction in the teaching materials, and the most important one is the lack of real cases. In the course of pathology teaching, the scientific research results and life stories of Nobel Prize winners in Physiology or medicine can be brought into the pathology teaching, which can enrich the teaching content and enhance students’ interest in pathology. Taking the ideological and political education in the Pathology teaching as

an example, here are a few simple examples: 1) When talking about tuberculous granuloma of chronic inflammation or infectious diseases such as typhoid fever, we can mention the German medical scientists Robert Koch, who won the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine in 1905. He had many remarkable pioneering achievements, such as isolating *Salmonella typhi* and tuberculosis bacteria, discovering the pathogenic bacteria of anthrax—*Bacillus anthracis*, discovering *Vibrio cholerae*, etc., to show the students that Robert Koch, a giant in the medical field, has made pioneering contributions to the medical cause. 2) When talking about gastritis and gastric ulcer, which are digestive system diseases, it was mentioned that Barry J. Marshall, an Australian scientist who was elected as a foreign member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering in 2011, along with J. Robin Warren, discovered *Helicobacter pylori* and the role of this bacterium in diseases such as gastritis and gastric ulcer. They were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine in 2005. This enables students to understand the impact of the discovery of *Helicobacter pylori* on medicine, and to think divergently, which is more in line with the requirements for cultivating innovative talents. 3) When discussing the complications and treatment of lobar pneumonia, it is pointed out that the discovery of penicillin has made the typical four-stage pathological changes and complications less common. At the same time, it is mentioned that in 1945, the discoverer of penicillin, Alexander Fleming, and the purifiers, Howard Florey and Ernst Boris Chain, won the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine together [7]. By combining the contribution of the discovery of penicillin to the Second World War, students can personally experience the significance of medical development for human progress.

4.4. Integrate the Thought of Preventive Medicine into the Teaching of Pathology

More than 2000 years ago, in “Huangdi Neijing”, it was proposed that “The best doctor treats diseases before they occur, the mediocre doctor treats diseases when they are about to occur, and the inferior doctor treats diseases when they have already occurred”, that is, the most brilliant doctor is not the one who is good at treating diseases, but the one who can prevent diseases. When teaching “precancerous lesions”, students are told that many diseases such as colorectal adenoma, chronic atrophic gastritis, ulcerative colitis, etc., are precancerous lesions. The general development sequence of cancer is precancerous lesion, carcinoma in situ, and invasive carcinoma [8]. If treatment can be taken early at the stage of precancerous lesion, the occurrence of cancer can be effectively prevented. The idea of disease prevention in our country lays emphasis on prevention first, preventing change during disease and preventing recovery after disease. Let the students understand the occurrence and development mechanism of diseases, understand the occurrence law of diseases, guide the students to change their ideas and pay attention to the prevention of diseases, so as to produce the idea of following the natural law to prevent diseases.

5. Conclusion

Medical colleges shoulder the important responsibility of delivering excellent medical workers to major hospitals. Ideological and political teaching plays a key role in the development of pathology courses in medical colleges, and is an important way to achieve the goal of classroom education in medical colleges in the new era. It is a long-term and arduous task and a systematic project to carry out “curriculum ideology and politics” for international students under the background of traditional Chinese medicine culture. In the teaching process of professional courses, pathology teachers should give full play to the role of classroom guidance, further strengthen the summary of teaching experience, explore the path of ideological and political construction of pathology courses for international students, and cultivate international talents who meet the needs.

Acknowledgements

The present study was supported by the Full English Teaching Course Construction Project of Yangtze University (Grant No. 202202).

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- [1] He, M. (2022) Evaluation and Stratification for Chinese International Education Quality with Deep Learning Model. *Computational and Mathematical Methods in Medicine*, **2022**, Article ID: 9627116. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/9627116>
- [2] Jia, H.L., Hu, J.A., Li, Y.N., Jie, W.P. and Xu, Y. (2023) Study on the Construction and Quality Evaluation of Courses for Ideological and Political Education in the Course of Oral Histology and Pathology. *Chinese Journal of Stomatology*, **58**, 462-467.
- [3] Gotlieb, A.I. and Mitchell, R.N. (2025) Pathology Education for Undergraduate and Graduate Students: It Is Not Just for Clinical Trainees. *Laboratory Investigation*, **105**, Article ID: 104126. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labinv.2025.104126>
- [4] Ouyang, S., Zhang, W., Xu, J., Mat Rashid, A., How, S.P. and Bin Hassan, A. (2024) Unmasking the Challenges in Ideological and Political Education in China: A Thematic Review. *Heliyon*, **10**, e29176. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e29176>
- [5] Li, G.X., Zhu, S.L., Liu, J., Chen, X.F., Wang, W., Wei, X.B. and Chen, H.L. (2024) Exploration and Practice of Ideological and Political Teaching Path of Pathology Course. *Guangdong Vocational and Technical Education and Research*, No. 11, 145-149+169.
- [6] Wu, J., Lin, P.C., Lee, K., Liu, H., Lu, P. and Lee, C. (2024) Situational Simulation Teaching Effectively Improves Dental Students' Non-Operational Clinical Competency and Objective Structured Clinical Examination Performance. *BMC Medical Education*, **24**, Article No. 533. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-024-05546-4>
- [7] Chhabra, S., Taksande, A.B. and Munjewar, P. (2024) The Penicillin Pioneer: Alexander Fleming's Journey to a Medical Breakthrough. *Cureus*, **16**, e65179. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.65179>

- [8] Chang, J., Zhao, X., Wang, Y., Liu, T., Zhong, C., Lao, Y., *et al.* (2023) Genomic Alterations Driving Precancerous to Cancerous Lesions in Esophageal Cancer Development. *Cancer Cell*, **41**, 2038-2050.e5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccell.2023.11.003>