

Innovation and Practice of Ideological and Political Teaching in Curriculum Driven by Problem Chains with the Support of Rain Classroom

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ABSTRACT

In the new era, the comprehensive advancement of ideological and political education in curricula must address the issue of the "separation between professional education and ideological education." The problem-chain teaching method is an effective approach to implementing the concept of ideological and political education in curricula. This paper takes the ideological and political teaching of the foundational public administration course Strategic Management in Public Sector as an example. It systematically designs and elaborates on how to use the Rain Classroom intelligent teaching platform to develop a problem-chain-driven ideological and political teaching system, providing referenceable teaching methods and practical pathways for advancing ideological and political education in curricula.

KEYWORDS

Ideological and political education in curricula; problem-chain-driven; teaching design; smart education

INTRODUCTION

In the new era, the comprehensive advancement of ideological and political education in curricula must strive to achieve seamless integration between ideological and political work and educational practice, reaching a state where "salt dissolves in water" and pursuing the educational effect of "gentle rain moistening things silently." *The Guiding Outline for Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Curricula* explicitly states that the comprehensive advancement of ideological and political education in curricula must address the issue of the "separation between professional education and ideological education," avoiding the rigid combination of "curriculum plus ideology." It is essential to actively expand educational horizons, innovate teaching methods, and leverage intelligent teaching platforms to subtly integrate ideological and political education into professional classrooms. The problem-chain teaching method is an important pathway for enhancing the ideological, theoretical, and interactive dimensions of ideological and political education in higher education, as well as its relevance and effectiveness (Wang, J., 2021). This method facilitates the integration of knowledge acquisition, competency development, and value cultivation, making it an effective approach to implementing the concept of ideological and political education in curricula. This paper takes the ideological and political teaching of the foundational public administration course *Strategic Management in Public Sector* as an example, systematically elaborating on how to design a problem-chain-driven ideological and political teaching system using the Rain Classroom intelligent teaching platform. It aims to provide referenceable teaching methods and practical pathways for advancing ideological and political education in curricula.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a theory-practice integrated approach to systematically construct a problem-chain-driven ideological and political teaching system, which includes: (1) literature research—reviewing scholarly works on ideological education in curricula, problem-chain pedagogy, and smart teaching platforms to clarify the research context, theoretical foundations, and practical status, thereby providing theoretical support for instructional design; (2) case analysis—taking the Strategic Management in Public Sector course as an example, identifying ideological elements (e.g., public values, ethical responsibility, strategic thinking) within the curriculum based on public administration discipline characteristics, and designing a corresponding problem-chain framework; (3) action research—implementing a closed-loop teaching process ("problem introduction—knowledge exploration—value guidance—practical reflection") via the Rain Classroom smart platform, dynamically adjusting problem-chain designs while monitoring student engagement and ideological objective attainment; and (4) empirical analysis—evaluating teaching effectiveness through questionnaires, student feedback, and instructional data (e.g., Rain Classroom interaction logs, assignment analysis), combining quantitative and qualitative methods to validate the problem-chain model's efficacy in resolving the "discipline-ideology" integration dilemma.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From Problems to Problem Chains: Integrating Value Cultivation, Knowledge Implantation and Competency Development

In classroom teaching, introducing thought-provoking questions to explain knowledge is a common teaching method. However, whether these questions are independent of each other or logically designed significantly impacts students' cognitive development and teaching effectiveness. Transitioning from isolated problems to problem chains emphasizes that classroom questions should be organically connected in a logical sequence, capturing the order and key points of cognitive development, rather than mechanically designing questions based on isolated chapter headings. Problem-chain-driven teaching guides students to understand professional knowledge from shallow to deep, from concrete to abstract, fostering their ability to comprehend and analyze issues (Yan, J., 2014). This process further enables students to internalize knowledge and competencies, ultimately shaping their values. The interconnected and progressively deepening problem chains highlight and enrich the teaching process, demonstrating the logical power of theory and igniting students' curiosity and desire for theoretical learning. This approach allows students to actively perceive the ideological and political elements embedded in professional knowledge, which is of great significance for achieving the educational goals of ideological and political education in curricula (Feng, X., 2017).

Rain Classroom: Intelligent Teaching Platform Support for Problem-Chain-Driven Teaching

Digital intelligence empowers the construction of collaborative partnerships for ideological and political education in curricula, serving as a "critical move" for high-quality development. Through multiple rounds of teaching practice, Rain Classroom has proven to be a user-friendly intelligent teaching tool (Lu, H., 2025). It enables synchronized courseware, question delivery, real-time answering, multi-screen interaction, and bullet-screen discussions. Teachers can open their lecture slides on a computer with the Rain Classroom plugin, directly add interactive questions, and send them to students in real time.

Students answer and submit the questions via We-Chat on their mobile phones. During the answering process, the teacher can view students' responses in detail. After submission, the teacher can see the overall distribution of answers from the entire class. This allows instructors to quickly assess students' understanding of the topic and adjust their teaching focus accordingly. By leveraging Rain Classroom's interactive features, instructors can transform teaching content into problem-based formats and resolve these problems through layered questioning (Wang, S.,2017). This approach mobilizes students' enthusiasm for active learning and participation, enhancing their sense of achievement in the course. Thus, the Rain Classroom intelligent teaching platform provides an efficient and convenient means to implement problem-chain-driven ideological and political teaching (Li, L., & Feng, X.,2025).

Case Study: Problem-Chain-Driven Ideological and Political Design for Public Sector Strategic Management

Textbook and Student Analysis

Mining ideological and political educational resources must align with the specific requirements of talent cultivation in different disciplines. Public administration professionals must possess ideological and political literacy characterized by a "public-oriented" trait. The strategic management process in the public sector is a core component and theoretical foundation of the course *Strategic Management in Public Sector* (Tan, S. 2020). From teaching practice, after learning concepts such as "environmental and issue analysis in public sector strategic management," students naturally raise further questions: "Who drives the strategic management process in practice, and what does this process entail?" This requires instructors to address these key questions by starting with familiar case studies, guiding students to understand theoretical knowledge while also learning about the governance logic, methods, and processes at the national strategic level. This approach strengthens students' confidence and belief in socialism, achieving a subtle yet profound educational effect.

Design of Ideological and Political Teaching Objectives

Using the problem-chain teaching method, the "problem-oriented, scenario-based, group learning" approach achieves the tripartite goal of ideological and political education: "knowledge implantation, competency enhancement, and value cultivation." For *Public Sector Strategic Management*, the specific teaching objectives are as follows (see Figure 1):

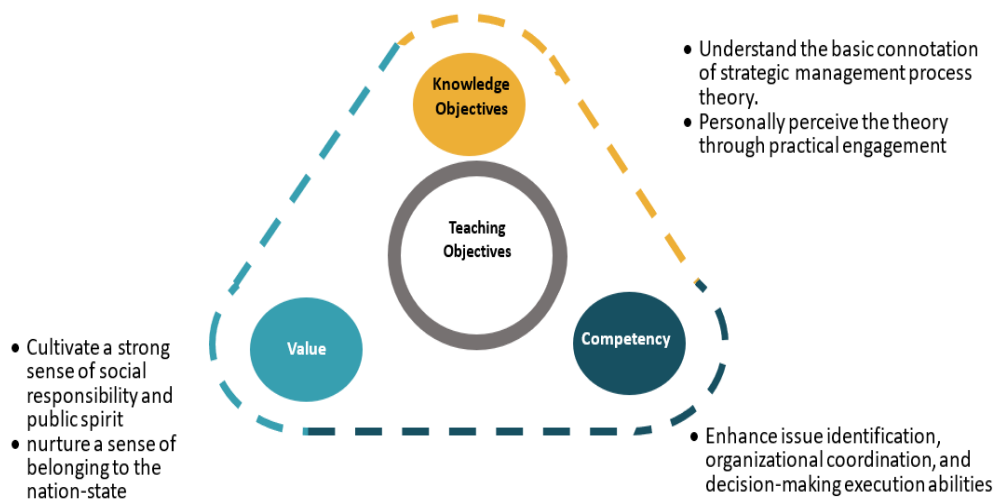


Figure 1. Ideological and Political Education Objectives in the Course "Strategic Management in the Public Sector"

First, knowledge objectives. The teaching reform introduces a problem-chain-driven pedagogy, adopting a problem-oriented approach to create simulated scenarios that enable students to grasp, internalize, and validate theories in contextualized settings. Case-based Theoretical Understanding. By analyzing the strategic management process of China's Five-Year Plan, students explore the core principles of strategic management theory. Experiential Learning .Through role-playing and scenario-based teaching, students observe first-hand and derive insights from hands-on practice, contributing to the development of China's public sector strategic management theory.

Second, competency objectives. The talent cultivation goal of public administration is to produce modern management professionals for government agencies and enterprises. *Public Sector Strategic Management* emphasizes responding to socio-economic development needs and government reform requirements, focusing on cultivating students' ability to analyze and solve practical problems. This section aims to enhance students' issue identification, organizational coordination, and decision-making execution abilities in strategic management processes.

Third, emotional attitudes and values. The problem-chain-driven teaching method stimulates students' enthusiasm for active participation and collaborative learning, helping them internalize the value implications of professional knowledge. It cultivates a strong sense of social responsibility and public spirit, inspires patriotism, and guides students in shaping correct worldviews, life perspectives, and values, providing positive energy for learning, growth, and belief-building.

Key and Difficult Teaching Points

The teaching focus of the public sector strategic management process lies in helping students understand two core concepts: the integration of tradition and innovation, and the alternation between strategy formulation and implementation. Unlike general management, the strategic management process is nonlinear, and grasping these two concepts is key to understanding this distinction.

The teaching difficulty lies in comprehending the "Five-Year Plan" strategic management process. Students need to understand the three stages of the Five-Year Plan—strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation—to grasp its unique experiences and institutional advantages. This requires prior knowledge of China's developmental history since its founding, making it a challenging teaching point.

Teaching Content and Logical Structure Design

1. Overall Design Approach

This lesson adopts a "problem-chain-driven teaching model", structuring classroom instruction around the sequence of posing, analyzing, and resolving questions. Guided by learning objectives and aligned with the syllabus, the lesson first identifies its central question: What are the unique experiences and institutional advantages of China's Five-Year Plan strategic management process with distinctive Chinese characteristics? The core question is then deconstructed into three interconnected, progressively deepening, and logically sequential problem chains. This approach: Transforms textbook content into a teachable framework Shifts pedagogy from rote memorization to critical inquiry and problem-solving. A detailed design guide is provided in Figure 2.

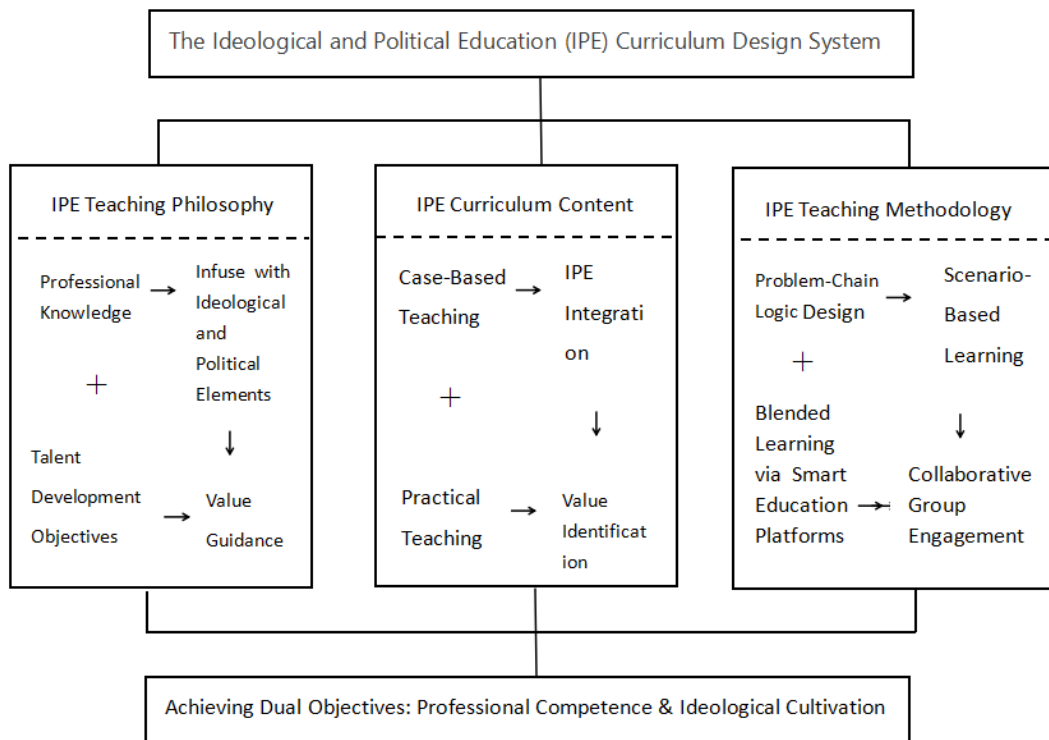


Figure 2. Design Framework for Ideological and Political Education (IPE) Curriculum Development Based on the Problem-Chain Teaching Method

2. Course Introduction

Prior to delivering this section's content, an introductory question—the first link in the problem chain—is posed: "What constitutes a key factor behind China's socio-economic development miracle?" To enhance classroom efficiency, the question is designed as a multiple-choice item with four options and distributed to students in real-time via the Rain Classroom platform. After students submit their responses, the aggregated class answers are displayed on PowerPoint slides, followed by 2-3 students being invited to elaborate on their selections. Building upon these responses, targeted instruction is provided, revealing that the four options reflect extant scholarly perspectives on this issue, with the core debate centering on whether China's developmental success stems predominantly from robust state capacity or the superiority of its governance institutions. The discussion culminates in the conclusion that governance institutions—more than state capacity per se—have played the decisive role in China's achievements. This leads naturally to an introduction of China's quintessential governance institution: the development planning system, through which national governance objectives are realized via the formulation and implementation of systematic plans, most notably the Five-Year Plans for National Economic and Social Development. Subsequently, the lecture transitions to its central focus: a case study analysis of the strategic management process underlying the Five-Year Plans, designed to illuminate the three-phase public sector strategic management framework (strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation). This analysis unfolds through three dimensions: (1) explicating the distinctive characteristics of China's Five-Year Plan system; (2) examining the strategic management process of the Five-Year Plans; and (3) synthesizing the unique institutional advantages and empirical lessons embodied in this planning mechanism.

3. The first part of the course instruction

The first section of the course focuses on elucidating China's distinctive Five-Year Plan system, employing three scaffolded interactive questions to guide student inquiry: (1) Is the Five-Year Plan an isolated blueprint or an integrated planning system? (2) What operational mechanisms characterize the Five-Year Plan? and (3) How has China's planning framework evolved since the founding of the PRC? Leveraging the Rain Classroom platform to visualize student responses, the instruction systematically unpacks China's institutional planning architecture—a hierarchically structured system with the national development plan (i.e., the Five-Year Plan) as its overarching framework, spatial plans as the foundation, and specialized/regional plans as complementary components, collectively forming a coherent, multi-tiered (national-provincial-municipal) system with clearly delineated functions. Particular emphasis is placed on the Five-Year Plan's paramount position as the "constitutional" document guiding all subordinate plans, followed by an analysis of its "dual-wing" operational mechanism (central coordination-local implementation) and historical progression from the 1st to the 13th Five-Year Plan periods. This segment incorporates ideological-political education by highlighting the Plan's historic achievements in national development, thereby enabling students to cognitively internalize the CPC's pivotal governance role and fostering institutional confidence through evidence-based understanding of China's planning paradigm.

4. The second part of the course instruction

The second section examines the strategic management process of the Five-Year Plan by posing three logically progressive questions to guide student inquiry: (1) What key phases constitute China's Five-Year Plan as a critical governance instrument? (2) How does this process align with the three-stage strategic management framework (formulation, implementation, and evaluation)? and (3) What adaptive mechanisms exist to accommodate rapidly changing external conditions? Through these conceptual lenses, the instructor facilitates systematic exploration of the Plan's operational dimensions—including its drafting procedures, content architecture, multi-level system integration, and mid-term evaluation protocols—demonstrating how China's planning paradigm theoretically embodies yet pragmatically adapts Western strategic management models to its unique governance context.

To enhance students' concrete understanding and contextual engagement, this section incorporates a textual analysis of the *Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development*, with the document shared via the Rain Classroom platform. Students are allotted eight minutes to review the designated text, after which they engage in interactive discussions addressing: (1) the overarching structure and key components of the planning document; (2) evolutionary characteristics of plan content from the 1st to the 14th Five-Year Plan iterations. Following this structural analysis, students are guided to examine the plan's formulation, implementation, and evaluation processes through the lens of strategic management theory, ultimately evaluating whether the Five-Year Plan mechanism demonstrates adaptive strategic responsiveness to environmental changes. The instructional content systematically unpacks three dimensions: the deliberative and consultative nature of plan formulation (emphasizing collective intelligence aggregation); the mobilization-driven implementation mechanisms (highlighting incentive structures); and the increasingly institutionalized evaluation procedures (demonstrating iterative optimization). Embedded within this analysis is ideological-political cultivation, wherein students interrogate the Plan's historical trajectory within the broader contexts of CPC history and national development. This

historiographical approach fosters: (a) macro-level comprehension of the Plan's theoretical positioning vis-a-vis China's economy and society develop transformation; and (b) critical appreciation of its normative foundations as both a policy instrument and value-laden governance paradigm.

5. The third part of the course instruction

This section elaborates on the unique experiences and advantages of the Five-Year Plans, building upon the previous two parts to raise a reflective question: Through study, we have learned that China's planning system has established the most ambitious and scientifically rigorous institutional framework in world history—how, then, should we summarize the successful experiences of China's planning model? Based on the strategic management process of the Five-Year Plans, it is concluded that China's planning system embodies a flexible institutional design, which is explained to students as comprising two core mechanisms: adaptive macro-planning and incentive-driven target governance. By analyzing the empirical logic of these two mechanisms, students are guided to understand the governance logic, methods, and processes employed by the Party and government at the national strategic level, thereby subtly strengthening their confidence and conviction in socialism (Zhao et al, 2020).

6. Summary and Assignment

The lesson concludes with a summary and an assignment: Analyze how the national Five-Year Plan aligns with local planning.

With the support of Rain Classroom, the application of the question-chain teaching method in the *Public Sector Strategic Management* course effectively helps students understand the strategic environment faced by public sectors in the new era. It enables them to grasp the theories and methods related to public sector missions and strategic objectives, strategic planning, strategic implementation, strategic evaluation, and strategic change. Additionally, it enhances their comprehension of how public sectors should make decisions and take action in rapidly changing environments to create greater and more enduring public value. The course achieved an excellent satisfaction rate of 96%, with students widely reporting that they not only expanded their theoretical knowledge but also gained a deeper appreciation of the significance of public value creation in advancing the modernization of governance systems and capabilities. Students demonstrated transformative growth in practical skills, research and innovation abilities, and the conceptual understanding of public value (Yang, 2019).

CONCLUSION

As the economy and society develop, contemporary students' thinking and ideologies also change. Integrating ideological and political education into professional teaching requires innovative methods. The problem-chain teaching model, supported by intelligent platforms like Rain Classroom, naturally engages students in the educational process. It enhances knowledge and competencies while addressing ideological, value-related, and Emotional Confusion, inspiring students to learn for the nation and society, and helping them define their social roles and values.

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