

How Micro-courses can Improve the Effectiveness of Ideological and Political Theories Curriculum Teaching through Teaching Design in China

Liangliang Wang¹ & Mingfang Fan¹

¹ School of Humanities, Economics and Law, Northwestern Polytechnical University, Xi'an, P.R.China

Correspondence: Liangliang Wang, Mailbox 889, Dong-Xiang Road, School of Humanities, Economics and Law, Northwestern Polytechnical University, Xi'an, Shaanxi, P.R. China. Tel: 86-029-8843-1909. E-mail: celia.liangliang.wang@hotmail.com

Received: May 12, 2016 Accepted: June 22, 2016 Online Published: July 7, 2016

doi:10.5539/ass.v12n8p219

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v12n8p219>

Abstract

In this article the concepts of micro-courses, research tools and research outcomes are used to clarify why and how the use of micro-courses could effectively improve Ideological and Political Theories Curriculum Teaching (IPTCT) in China. Firstly, IPTCT is significantly different from other kinds of knowledge courses in China and effective teaching in IPTCT is a research topic that is usually accompanied by the development of micro-courses in recent Chinese higher education. The relationship between them is important and complex. And then research has also been conducted to explain how micro-courses could affect the four aspects of IPTCT teaching design which includes concept design, content design, strategy design and assessment design. In this part, researchers spend a large amount of content explaining and illustrating event design processes using micro-courses, which has an important role in the overall teaching design of IPTCT. Finally, the article concluded that researchers and/or IPTCT teachers should pay lots attention to the utilities of micro-courses in the IPTCT, recognizing the strength and flexibility of micro-courses.

Keywords: micro-courses, effectiveness, ideological and political theories curriculum teaching, teaching design, China

1. Introduction

Ideological and Political Theories Curriculum Teaching (IPTCT) has played an important and effective role in Chinese higher education (Wenli, 2010). There are many different approaches and methods that impact on the effectiveness of IPTCT (Weihong, 2014; Silin, 2014; Sinian, 2006) and therefore it may sometimes be a difficult task for a researcher to choose the one that best suits the task at hand. In recent years, the use of micro-courses has also become accepted by the community of IPTCT researchers as a means of improving the effectiveness of teaching (Tianxiang et al., 2016). This paper aims to promote a discussion on the effectiveness of IPTCT and the use of micro-courses in situations where they are particularly suitable.

When we discuss in this paper how micro-courses could improve the effectiveness of IPTCT, we acknowledge first that one of IPTCT's strengths is in the area of teaching design and related aspects. We use the terms micro-course, mini-course, micro-teaching and micro-lectures as synonyms, based on the assumption that micro-courses and their variants could improve the effectiveness of IPTCT and that they are effective approaches for teaching design in general.

While researchers who have used micro-courses before are likely to be aware of many of the aspects we discuss in this paper, we hope to introduce new researchers in IPTCT to the special function of micro-courses used in this context. This paper is organized as follows: we will briefly discuss some aspects of IPTCT, including its definition, current status, and the history and development of micro-courses in China. We acknowledge that there are already several research papers that provide a detailed account of IPTCT and micro-course use. In this paper we aim to provide a short introduction to both topics, with references to some of the books and other publications that we have found helpful in understanding the issues involved. However, the main part of this paper was contained in the next section, where we aim to show how the utilities of micro-courses can affect concept design, content design, event design, strategy design and assessment design. In this section we

concentrate on showing how IPTCT designs include micro-courses at the event design stage. In the conclusion we summarized results, findings, strengths, distinctions, suggestions, and implicit threats in the inclusion of micro-courses in IPTCT.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *What Is the Effectiveness of IPTCT?*

The effectiveness of IPTCT is closely related to its definition. Understanding the meaning of the term and its main ideals has implications for understanding its foundational concepts. What core concepts and/or important content should be seen as comprising the IPTCT? If one considers the possibility of giving the definition of IPTCT a denotative meaning, this would not be completely satisfying without some content supporting the decision to classify it in this way. That is, we need to understand exactly what Ideological and Political Theories Curriculum Teaching (IPTCT) is before we can discuss its effectiveness. The term, Ideological and Political Theories Curriculum (IPTC), is the name of a series of courses taught in China including five courses altogether, which include Basic Principles of Marxism (BPM), Mao Ze-Dong Thought, Deng Xiao-Ping Theories, and Three Represents Important Thinking (MZDT, DXPT&TRIT), Chinese Modern and Contemporary History Outline (CMCHO), Ideological and Moral Education & Elements of Law (IMEEL) (Qin, 2009). Teaching in classrooms that covers the Ideological and Political Theories Curriculum (IPTC) is known collectively as Ideological and Political Theories Curriculum Teaching (IPTCT).

IPTCT has played an important role in China. Firstly, all Chinese undergraduates enrolled in any colleges and universities are required to choose this series of courses. Students need to finish all five courses learning in their higher education process. In addition, the Ministry of Education which manage college curriculum policy requires that all universities have to guarantee IPTCT taught on a regular basis, and that these courses will be kept up to date with new teaching content about the country and the current situation. What's more, IPTCT has a special importance position in China, which different from other regular knowledge courses such as Math or Science. In other words, the fundamental purpose of IPTCT was not merely a sort of knowledge education students have acquired, but rather to provide methods and skills that could give more guidance and orientation students could use them in their future lives. Its essence aims is that help students eventually form understand to the world, show personal values to society and present spirits to human being. From this point, a special status of IPTCT was given by the country, which means teaching for IPTCT has a special role in the education.

Researchers have different opinions about the effectiveness of IPTCT. In this paper, we are intending to adopt the following understanding from four aspects to describe IPTCT's effectiveness. Zha (2011) argued that IPTCT is a process of receiving knowledge firstly. It not only includes understanding of the Marxist viewpoint and methodology, Chinese Communist Party theory, the Communist Party's lines, principles and policies (including China's revolution, construction and history of reform and new open reform), but understanding of basic national conditions, circumstances and policies. Secondly, it is a process of emotional recognition of what the Communist Party stands for and requires. Thirdly, it is a process of education of the will, including the formation of good moral consciousness for college students. Last but not least, it is an orientation education process. It requires college students could use a Marxist standpoint, viewpoint and method to analyze and solve problems and establish a correct outlook for life. Altogether with an understanding of the basic values comprise the ultimate aims the IPTCT programme.

Only understanding the implications of IPTCT can one arrive at a definition of what it means. Specifically, the IPTCT programme helps IPTC (i.e. the curriculum itself) to be more effective. In the context of the current Chinese education situation, in order to improve the effectiveness of IPTCT, we should first look at the delivery of the Ideological and Theories Curriculum (IPTC) as this is where IPTCT mainly occurs.

2.2 *The Development of the Micro-courses*

The term micro-courses, also called micro-teaching, mini-course, micro-lecture, and micro-lesson originated in the United States in the 1960s, which was first proposed by an affiliated school of the University of Iowa in 1960 (Hu, 2014). It is clear that mini-courses play an important role in modern education. Research form Zipko (1975) has showed his flexibility for junior- and senior-high-school students. Borg (1972) pointed out that in 1963 many courses were used as an extension of the research into micro-teaching and of the technical skills of teaching that first commenced at Stanford University, which indicates that this type of mini-course was first used earlier in the last century. In addition, mini-courses are usually a shorter version of a normal school course, running for approximately 8 to 10 minutes, and usually presented by a student teacher to a smaller group of classmates. This made it possible to give student teachers more teaching experience in hands-on, learner-centered teaching. In 1998, micro-lessons projects were implemented by the Ministry of Education in Singapore, which had designed

many courses in their field with the main purpose of training teachers how to build mini-courses, generally ranging from 39 minutes to 1 hour in duration. Their teaching objectives were simple, centralized and gave more emphasis to the learning environment, resources and creative activities. The overall aim was to provide students with effective learning skills. In the autumn of 2008, David Penrose, known as the “one-minute” professor, and then a professor at the New Mexico College of San Juan, pioneered another kind of micro-course that closely combines teaching content with teaching objectives, using constructivism and online learning or mobile learning for the purpose of practical teaching content creation, all contained within a duration of one minute. Overall, mini-lectures have been developed for all levels of schools and at some institutions of higher education. We found that these micro-curricula and other educational activities together promote the development of learner knowledge. However, results for colleges and universities were not the same, as some were successful while others had poor outcomes. Some famous and well-known universities in the world, such as Princeton University, Humboldt State University and the University of West Florida are all good examples of successful outcomes using this approach. What they actively promote is a type of innovative teaching methodology that is one of the main styles of 21st century teaching and learning.

Some countries have experienced a developmental process that involves moving from online course components to wholly online teaching. A typical example is the Khan Academy, which is a non-profit organization founded by Salman Khan, a Bangladeshi-American. Salman Khan recorded over 2000 micro-instructional videos with his \$25 Logitech headset, a \$200 desktop video software called Camtasia recorder, an \$80 drawing-handwriting Wacom Bamboo Tablet, and the free software Smooth draw 3, and put them all on YouTube. Having done all of this, he created the Khan Academy Online Open Course Ware Website (KAOPCWW). In addition, Westhuizen (2015) emphasizes that micro-teaching lessons can use video annotation software applications for thorough collaborative assessment and feedback in geography education. In fact, according to a survey in Ohio, mini-courses delivered in America have a positive impact on students and administration relationships (Parkinson, 2015). Micro-courses have already attracted the attention of academics at all levels into every area of its exploration and research (McCoy et al., 1991; Fazel & Johnson, 1986; Geogre, 2011; Empen et al., 2015). This includes meta-theory concepts of micro-courses to their application in various disciplines, from services they provide to the study and practice of higher education, to guidance for primary and secondary education, and from the contents of discussions around them to their impact on teachers’ professional development.

In China research on micro-courses has occurred relatively later than any other countries on the whole, however it has involved exploration and basic research on both theory and practice. Zhang (2014) pointed that the concept of micro-courses was put forwarded by Hu Tiesheng first in China, and then put them under the new curriculum standards and classroom teaching practices, using teaching video for the main presentation style, reflecting on the fact that teaches generate organic combinations and at certain knowledge points in some teaching activities with a variety of teaching resources. Li (2013) contributes a lot for the definition of micro-course in China, which is a sort of small and short course which is confined to less than 10 minutes, with clear teaching objectives, limited content, and concentrated on a small problem. Other researcher assumed that micro-course is a sort of course that front-line teachers, rather than researchers, developed themselves to accompany small courses with a duration of around 5 minutes, which is often demanded by a teacher’s education situation and teaching practice, as required by and for teachers as a solution to the thorny issue of work. Tian (2009) defined micro-courses in terms of the independence and integrity of relatively small-scale programs, organized modules, availability of school-based resources, teacher ability and student interests. According to Qihua, characteristics such as short, small and fine are composed in microteaching and it is adaptable to all stages of school education and various course types. From a practical aspect, different provinces’ city schools in China have been developing micro-course designs and applications since 2010. For example, Guangdong province, and other coastal cities have been exploring further development school-based.

On the whole, based on what has been discussed above, under the current form of education in China, the development of micro-courses will certainly require further study. Recent research by Wen & Zhang (2015) supports that efforts have been around the design of micro-lectures mobile learning systems based on web platforms and designed for use on smartphones. Some researchers (Chuan & Jun, 2015) have explored a kind of Micro-lecture Mobile Learning System (MMLS), which was used for supporting multiplatform, including PC terminals and smartphones. Research by Hou et al. (2016) however points out that in China, micro-courses are highly valued by the Ministry of Education, education administrative departments at all levels, which show micro-course resources are rich.

2.3 The Relationship between IPTCT and Micro-courses

It has been demonstrated that teaching and learning could improve from a design perspective (Hauge, 2014;

Price & Kirkwood, 2014). Meanwhile, Nie (2014) mentioned the application of virtual reality technology in design. And also, effective technology and design gives the right way in the class (McNair & Clarke, 2007).

A current trend in teaching delivery is that learning should no longer be confined to the classroom, leading to increased flexibility in teaching and learning. In view of this, we reasonably believe the technology has not only changed our daily life, but the Ideological and Political Theories Curriculum Teaching approach to classroom teaching. It certainly should not be confined to the classroom, text-books or other traditional media. It is important to know that encouraging the exploration of new teaching models, changes or manners, and their timely use in teaching design, giving the teaching a more scientific, rational, mobile, and active role, meeting the interests of students and ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of IPTC.

We also found that in current teaching practice, some college teachers who taught the IPTC to post-90s students also persist in using one kind of teaching style who still rely on single exams, blackboards and textbooks. The most likely reason was that they did not want to change their traditional teaching methods. The conclusion cannot be avoided that in doing so they will lose more active opportunities to change their teaching approach and subsequently would not be able to improve the effectiveness of IPTC. It should also be noted, however, that some teachers are changing their teaching approach, by adding micro-courses to their teaching.

In studying the effectiveness of IPTC through the use of micro-courses, we made several assumptions about the conceptual model. On one hand, because all of the IPTC teachers had different levels of skill in designing micro-courses, we assumed that attaining a skillful level for micro-course design may influence teaching levels in teaching and may also influence the outcomes of some of the micro-courses themselves. However, it is unlikely to directly influence the overall effect in either the design of micro-courses or the process of delivering micro-lessons. On the other hand, these influences omitted from our current research. Therefore, the paper's authors have to illustrate that the paper's main intention is to talk about micro-courses as applied to the IPTCP from the college teachers' point of view, although students have also played an important part in the whole teaching process. There are also other methods which could be used to improve the effectiveness of IPTCT, which are not covered here.

3. How Micro-courses could Affect the Teaching Design of IPTCT

Teachers and researchers who teach the Ideological and Political Theories Course IPTCP cannot ignore the influence that micro-courses bring to the process. This is because technology not only brings technical innovation to teaching, but changes the nature of teaching methods, and even the teaching process itself. Indeed, technology can radically improve teaching through the use of these kinds of controlled methods. Given the current rapid development of information technology, the development of mini-courses plays a useful and complementary role in IPTCT delivery.

In attempting to shed some light on the important effect that micro-courses may play in the IPTC process, we have tried to focus on the effectiveness of teaching design for IPTCT. If we want to improve the effectiveness of IPTC, we should improve the effectiveness of teaching design first that is because starting with good design can affect the whole teaching process and the final evaluation of teaching, but only if it can be well used. Meanwhile, teaching design is an important part of the whole teaching process because design planning can arrange teaching in such a way that it adequately addresses expected teaching outcomes. If we want to improve the effectiveness of IPTC, we should pay attention to IPTC teaching and then apply micro-course development in the teaching design, in order to enhance the impact of IPTC teaching.

3.1 How Micro-courses Affect the Concept Design of IPTCT

Concept design is the process, which means you have to select an embodied concept when trying to develop solutions for a given problem, and covers the generation of ideas (Wodehouse & Ion, 2009). Instruction concepts design is an important condition of IPTC delivery, as it relates to a teacher's grasp of the whole teaching process and is also a manifestation of IPTCT effectiveness. Classroom teaching is considered the main space or the battlefield for effective Ideological and Political Theory teaching. Its concept design determines how effectively it can present the subject's objectives. It is only when we consider the concept of the subject first that it can be processed at the overall teaching level. What's more, if IPTC teachers understand concept design they can therefore gain an understanding of the whole teaching process. They must also first pay attention to teaching concept design aspects and will then be able to systemically design their entire teaching more effectively.

When considering micro-courses in the context of IPTCT concept design, all concepts of the subject should be designed according to the features of the micro-course. The target design should include not only mastery of the basic category, basic principles, and basic methods, but also the use of basic ideas and an ability to analyze

expected problems as well as establishing a correct outlook on life and its values. What is more, as anticipated in the design of micro-courses, concepts should effectively reflect the pedagogy, psychological characteristics, and social characteristics of contemporary college students. In the IPTCT context, teaching needs to link the core concepts. For example, when talk about the basic concept of materialism and consciousness, in the teaching process of unit called *Basic Principles of Marxism*, it is better for teachers relate abstract concept to real life through vivid examples based on the micro-course. And also it is good change built a relation involved in the teaching.

Furthermore, we need to reflect on the special characteristics of IPTCT, as it is not a knowledge-type course. Its concept teaching should be reflected with every step of the teaching process, that is, at the design step, the designer should pay more attention to the concept design. Our aim is not to ascertain what students remember about the concept of IPTC but to ensure that they understand the meaning of the concept. From this point of view micro-courses do not attempt to show subject concepts, but concentrate on building an understanding of them.

Last but not least important, it needs to be stressed that the use of micro-courses that make use of the concept design of IPTCT is the needs of teaching rather than pursuit fashion. Therefore, the concept design of micro-courses used in IPTCT must be effectively built at the very first stage and strengthened in early teaching design, then processed and unified in the overall aspect of instructional design if lecturers wish to improve the effectiveness of their teaching.

3.2 How Micro-courses can Affect the Content Design of IPTCT

Instruction content design is a core part of the whole instructional design process. Seven essential principles for designing and developing were identified by Cagiltay (Cagiltay et al., 2011). Based micro-course content design has different meanings in this context, which includes the following aspects:

In the first place, what form should be adopted to meaningfully illustrate the content of IPTCT? Since the implementation of the “05 Program”, some changes in the IPTC have opened up for undergraduates. Apart from the five types of courses mentioned above, there are also two courses for graduate students. One is Scientific Socialism (SS) and another is Socialism and Contemporaneity (SC) for PhD students. Both are to examine the students’ understanding of the basic theories of Marxism and finally to guide them for ideological education purposes. In fact, content of IPTC in China has been demanded, which means teachers could not flexibly express ideas that has no relation to the topic. Teacher however could change the teaching methods, making the process fun and meaningful.

According to this consideration, teachers could choose different types of formats such as micro-courses to capture students’ interests, promoting the effectiveness of IPTC. Taking the second chapter of the *Early Adventure of the Country's Pathway* as an example (*Chinese Modern and Contemporary History Outline*, 2009), it is a little bit difficult to illustrate the meaning of Chinese spirit. So, we could design a micro-course to show this teaching content. In this micro-course, we could use images, pictures and video to illustrate different times, different stages in Chinese history context, illustrating different special patriotic content and traditions. At present, build and contribute our country for college students is a good illustration to show Chinese spirit. In this micro-course party, more content is presented and tell students there is a changing in patriotism at different history stages. Eventually, China Dream will become the current Chinese spirit topic for Chinese. College students can therefore easily understand its different and changing content in different historical contexts, and they can also master the core content of this course.

In the second place, IPTC teachers can choose what sequence to arrange these components using micro-courses. We have discussed the fact that IPTC courses differ from other scientific and cultural programs. To a certain extent, it is not knowledge learning, but a kind of attitude learning. Compared to other courses that knowledge-based, IPTCT is skills-based. It ultimately help more students mastering scientific world outlook on life and values. Thus, IPTC teachers should effectively arrange the delivery sequence of the whole IPTC, based on micro-courses.

In the third place, time flexibility impacts on the teaching experience. College students are different from high school students. They have perfected their learning skills and they do not need to be taught by the teacher step-by-step. We can design micro-courses based on certain teaching content that allow students to learn by themselves. Typically, they are better at understanding, better at mastery and make more efficient use of class time. If teachers design content as micro-courses, learners could take advantage of their leisure time to study. They have more interesting, leisure time, and tend to be more practical as micro-medical (like cellphones, iPads, Wechat) play an important part in college students’ daily lives. By designing micro-courses teachers have more flexible time to arrange all of their teaching activities and decide which content to arrange for different times.

3.3 How Micro-courses can Affect the Events Design of IPTCP

Modern educational theory strengthens the importance of the teaching event, mainly through the design of a set of external learning supports and internal learning process events. Johnson (2013) has put forward a concept integrated event design and achieve a blended course delivery. In general, in a single learning activity, teaching events are usually divided into the following nine events.

Table 1. Instructional events in relation to learning processes

Instructional Event	Relationship to Learning Process
Gaining attention	Reception of patterns of neural impulses
Informing learner of the objective	Activating a process of executive control
Stimulating real prerequisite learning, provoking a prerequisite	Retrieval of prior learning to working memory
Presenting the stimulus material	Emphasizing features for selective perception
Providing learning guidance	Semantic encoding: cues for retrieval
Eliciting the performance	Activating response organization
Providing feedback about performance correctness	Establishing reinforcement
Assessing the performance	Activating retrieval: making reinforcement possible
Enhancing retention and transfer	Providing cues and strategies for retrieval

Note. Source: Gagné, R. M., Briggs, L. J., Wager, W. W. (1916).

As Table 1 shows, with regard to teaching, the subject matter establishes a common understanding of teaching events, thereby enabling the effect of IPTCT to reflect its purpose, and its main purpose is to activate the process of information processing. For the IPTCT this should abide by the principles and formation of IPTC teaching events. We could use micro-course design in IPTC teaching events and thereby build up the teachers' teaching philosophy. We are not denying that college students have the learning ability to build their own teaching events, however we should also stress that the following nine events described below are used in IPTCT.

3.3.1 How to Gain Attention in IPTC

We must accept the fact that different kinds of events were employed to gain a student's attention and also to appeal learners' interests or curiosity. However, in micro-course design for this step, a fundamental and frequently used way to obtain attention is highly suitable because higher education learners are considerably different from primary students and high school students. For middle and high school students, teachers may present a demonstration, a motion picture or television scene, or introduce some joke to appeal to the students' curiosity. For college students, however, who are learning IPTC, this is not always functional for them because they need to direct attention to the content or topic of IPTC rather than a mere introduction. So, designing the IPTC, it would be better to design a less formal introduction.

3.3.2 Informing the Learner of the Objective

The learning of objective of IPTCT is usually clear and no special communication is required. Sometimes, however, it has been speculated that the communicative objective of IPTCT for college students could tend to keep them from trying to meet other objectives. The best and simplest method in dealing with this sort of problems is IPTCT teachers confine themselves to answer questions in classes and thereby allow students to develop their own objectives and learn how to learn by themselves.

When designing this part of the course, teachers should be aware that micro-courses are not present the objectives of this class, requiring students to be aware of the class' destination goals. Obviously, teaching will become special for students to show the objectives of the lesson using micro-courses. What adds to its impact is that the requirements should be achieved by the end of the lesson and they should persist throughout the whole teaching. Naturally, skills about informing students of the objectives are primarily based on the teacher's design skills in creating micro-courses, and involves knowledge of related fields such as management, organizational skills and logic skills.

3.3.3 Stimulating Recall of Prerequisite Learned Capabilities

This is an essential event in the design of micro-courses for IPTCT and also affects the outcomes of IPTCT. For IPTCT, prerequisite learning capabilities are an essential part for students as it is their first opportunity to learn some content of IPTCT. They will have learned some of this content in middle school or high school. So, it is easy for IPTC teachers to elicit this content from the memory of students. However, it remains difficult for teachers to engage a learner's curiosity. Thus, in the design step for IPTC using micro-courses, it may be useful to give students more images and videos that show more information about the topic and that can allow students to contrast and compare opinions. It is also a reminder to make more material available or to show related knowledge and finally, to encourage student learning of IPTC and also to assist in the transfer from short to long term memory. In this aspect, micro-courses have more advantages over traditional textbooks as they are more vivid, active and may be easier to understand.

3.3.4 Presenting the Stimulus Material

For this particular event, it is relatively obvious that the proper stimuli be presented as part of the instruction events. Firstly, for the micro-course component of IPTCT, we should present stimulus materials that are either understood inductively or deductively with the IPTCT topic. For example, when designing the concept instruction, especially the philosophy concept, we should use a variety of examples before introducing the definition of the concept. What's more, the variety of materials or examples should be authentic. That's because authentic examples are more trusted by undergraduates, especially in the Ideological and Moral Education & Elements of Law. It is hard to imagine how inauthentic examples or a troublesome example of a phenomenon could give students good guidance or promote good behavior. Finally, the materials should as recent as possible. We all know that the latest news creates a strong impression on memory and also strongly impresses student consciousness. If teachers can design these types of stimulus materials for these types of events, the effect will be to the students' benefit.

3.3.5 Providing Learning Guidance

Guidance for learning is an event that may readily be adapted to learner differences. At the micro-course design stage, materials that IPTC teachers provide should guide students' learning efficiency. Hinting or prompting will vary according to different student types. For some students, less guidance is required, while others may need more. So teachers should be prepared to be more flexible in providing different levels of content that will suit individual learners' needs.

Micro-courses used in IPTCT provide more communication opportunities for learners, which is one function of the learning guidance approach. That is not to say this guidance based on micro-courses will provide answers to questions about the learning, but that they will presumably help students to combine subordinate concepts and tips in order to build new ideas. For students commencing IPTC studies, micro-course learning should help them to acquire knowledge out of class and in addition to the basic conceptual knowledge acquired in the classroom. From this perspective, micro-course contributes a lot to the efficiency of IPTC.

3.3.6 Eliciting the Performance

Eliciting the performance not only shows that students know how to learn, but also helps them to convince themselves of their own ability. Accordingly, this event uses the same stimulus materials that the learners have been interacting with all along. In the design of micro-courses for IPTCT, teachers can design in more tips intended to improve the performance of teaching. Meanwhile, all of these vivid images, videos, and information help to illustrate the learning process. Compared to other traditional methods, micro-courses used in IPTC show advantages in many aspects of teaching design.

3.3.7 Providing Feedback about Performance Correctness

Teachers need to be highly aware of overall feedback in IPTCT, as this plays an important part in understanding what students have learned in the classroom. There should be an effective feedback mechanism concerning student levels of understanding in IPTC. However, we should be aware that feedback for IPTCT is different from other knowledge courses, such as Physics or Chemistry, which includes attitudes, beliefs, viewpoints and values associated with the course material, which may be less explicit. Although there may be active and positive feedback from students about IPTCT through the micro-course teaching process, it is difficult to show its long-term effect on IPTCT. It is more explicit to the emotional, behavioral and other outcomes of IPTCT.

3.3.8 Assessing the Performance

Giving an assessment of learning outcomes is an essential step in the teaching design of IPTCT based on

micro-courses. How does the teacher know that the performance exhibited by the students is what the teacher aimed to achieve? Obviously, we should design a fair and suitable assessment of student learning performance in IPTCT. In fact, it is a little bit difficult to design IPTCT assessments in this kind of course. For other courses we could give a quiz to assess the outcomes of learning, but for IPTCT, we may use more flexible methods to provide an assessment. These methods should only be used if the teacher thinks that they could be effective in achieving his or her teaching aims. For example, a micro-course assessment could be a type of show or a kind of presentation given by the students. This means that the micro-course could save time for teachers and students by allowing them save more time to discuss, comment on the content and express their own ideas.

3.3.9 Enhancing Retention and Transfer

For IPTCT courses, it is important to recall knowledge and eventually transfer the learned abilities to other parts of a student's life. The process of retention and transfer of IPTCT concepts through micro-courses is easier than traditional teaching methods. If IPTCT teachers want to ensure that the transfer of learning has taken place, a variety of new tasks should be included in the course to test whether such transfer has occurred. Note that what students have been learning in the class should be clearly illustrated in the associated micro-course, otherwise contradictory views of the content may appear that may fail to improve the effectiveness of IPTCT. The inclusion of variety and novelty in problem-solving tasks are of particular relevance to the continued development of cognitive strategies in IPTCT, particularly when facing complex situations of social reality. Students could solve these problems using IPTC's ideas or opinions expressed in the classroom. So, when designing this part of the event, we should pay more attention to combine IPTCT with the lived reality of students.

3.4 *Micro-courses can Affect the Teaching Strategy Design of IPTCT*

Teaching strategy is typically a teaching method that is an essential part of teaching activities and also forms part of the implementation of the teaching task itself. Micro-courses used in IPTCT increase diversity and interaction between teachers and students, and students with each other. Firstly, the student-guided position has been designed into IPTCT. We know that student motivation can be active in changing old teaching models that are teacher-centered to student-centered, resulting in more time will saved and the teacher having more time communicate with students. Thus, students also have more time and opportunities to discuss some of the topics that they are interested in.

Secondly, traditional methods can be reversed. In the past, IPTCT teachers did more in classes, speaking and writing throughout lessons while students merely listened. Now, however, this has changed, as more interactions such as discussions, interviews, videos, and audio are used in the process of IPTC delivery based on micro-courses. So, when we design these types of events, we should add more flexible strategies that avoid emphasizing that the whole lesson was spoken and guided by teachers.

Thirdly, many education resources can be applied to the IPTCT and different ideas from students can be expressed in the classroom. The IPTCT aims to encourage the students to master the basic theories and methods of Marxism through the effective teaching of IPTC, so that students can express their ideas about IPTC topics and show their experiences in the classrooms, which will provide great opportunities for students to achieve their learning goals. That is because the designated goals of IPTCT will have been achieved, which are to enhance student learning and encourage the use of Marxism in their later life experiences, analyzing and solving problems, and ultimately improving their characters and personalities. Thus, teachers should give more opportunities to students expressing their ideas in classes.

Overall, the instruction strategy for IPTCT design is so important that teachers should focus on the teaching strategies of micro-course teaching design. From the instructional design point of view, we should thoroughly consider what active teaching strategies should be used to promote students learning within this unique form of micro-course teaching, and how a better understanding of the teaching content can be achieved in order to truly understand the essence of IPTCT.

3.5 *Micro-courses can Affect the Assessment Design of IPTCT*

Teaching evaluation is a part of the ultimate expression of teaching achievement. In the current educational situation, the main methods used in China are process evaluation or summative evaluation. Taking the special nature of IPTCT into account, students should pay special attention to moral, ethical and values evaluation. This aim cannot be achieved through one kind of exam or text, unlike evaluations used in other kinds of science courses. We cannot assess what moral level students have attained by conducting a single test. We also cannot know their viewpoint about the world, life and value by merely conducting a quiz. So, in teaching evaluation

design of micro-courses, the evaluation should change from traditional to a modern form of evaluation, which consist of multiple evaluations which combine process evaluation and summative evaluation.

The process of evaluation described above has many advantages in many aspects such as:

- Providing timely interactions and exchanges
- Greatly enhancing the timeliness, and
- Providing effective feedback to teachers.

During this process, teacher can change their evaluation plan and choose more effective methods to evaluate students. Therefore, in the design of micro-teaching courses, IPTC teachers should give special attention teaching evaluation.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper we have argued that micro-courses-based teaching design could improve the effectiveness of IPTCT in China and that, therefore, four key aspects emerged in this qualitative analysis. The first aspect was that building a good relationship between IPTC and micro-courses could improve teaching efficiency. The second aspect was that concept design and content design have important roles in overall teaching design. The third aspect was that event design of IPTCT based on micro-courses is vital to the process of teaching design, allowing it to be more flexible and effective. Finally, strategies and assessments through micro-course design can affect the effectiveness of IPTCT.

Based on what we have discussed, findings were clearly illustrated that the application of technology provident, like micro-course, add strengths and flexibilities on the IPTCT, and also provide opportunities to improve the IPTCT program, which has a special function in the context of Chinese education. During past teaching practices, we paid lots of attention to the teaching outcomes rather than teaching design. In other words, the application of micro-courses in the teaching design will become more useful and popular in the future.

Innovative and fundamental distinction described in this paper was summarized compared other researches. A special perspective on teaching design using micro-courses was illustrated through the whole research on the one hand. We did not deny however the important role student engaged for improving the effectiveness of IPTCT. The methods and ways were showed in every step in the teaching design on the other hand.

We therefore, suggest that greater consideration be given to micro-courses by IPTCT teachers, who would spend more time on designing teaching as instructional design and media technology development have an inextricably role that includes real challenges and threats in the Chinese education context, and the reporting of IPTCT research should be more explicit about the nature of the process engaged in. It also suggests that various kinds of design skills and/or theories conceptions further highlighted in the process design of IPTCT.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express appreciation for the support of the sponsors Chinese Scholarship Council (20150322).

References

- Borg, W. R. (1972). The Minicourse as a vehicle for changing teacher behavior: A three-year follow-up. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 63(6), 572-579. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0034060>
- Cagiltay, N. E., Aydin, E., Kara, A., Aydin, C. C., & Alexandru, M. (2011). Seven principles of instructional content design for a remote laboratory: A case study on ERRL. *IEE Transactions on Education*, 54(2), 320-327. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/TE.2010.2058115>
- Chinese Modern and Contemporary History* (3rd ed.). (2009). Beijing: Higher Education Press.
- Chuanxue, W., & Junfei, Z. (2015). Design of a microlecture mobile learning system based on smartphone and web platforms. *IEEE Transaction on Education*, 58(3), 203-207. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/TE.2014.2363627>
- Empen, E. K., Robinson, D. M., Pfahlberg, A., Gefeller, O., & Dahm, J. B. (2015). Efficiency of a minicourse in radiation reducing techniques: A pilot initiative to encourage less irradiating cardiological interventional techniques (ELICIT). *Heart*, 91, 1221-1222. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/hrt.2004.048108>
- Fizel, J. L., & Johnson, J. D. (1986). The effect of macro/micro course sequencing on learning and attitudes in principles of economics. *The Journal of Economic Education*, 17(2), 87-98. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00220485.1986.10845151>

- Gagné, R. M., Briggs, L. J., & Wager, W. W. (1916). *Principles of Instructional Design* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Geogre, D. R. (2011). "Friending facebook?" A minicourse on the use of social media by health professionals. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 31(3), 215-219. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/chp.20129>
- Hauge, T. E. (2014). Uptake and use of technology: Bridging design for teaching and learning. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 23(3), 311-323. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2014.942750>
- Hou, T. X., Gou, X. R., & Gao, Y. F. (2016). Preliminary application of micro-course in distance education. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 6(2), 132-136.
- Hu, T. S. (2014). Understanding of micro-course and teaching design method. *Guang-Dong Education*, 4, 33-35.
- Hu, T. S., Huang, M, Y., & Li, M. (2013). The three stages of micro-lecture development and its enlightenment. *Distance Education Journal*, 4, 36-42.
- Johnson, C. W., & Pate, J. A. (2013). Three course connections: Integrated event design. *Schole: A Journal of Leisure Studies and Recreation Education*, 28(1), 32-43.
- Li, J. H. (2013). The meaning and development of micro-courses. *Primary and Middle School Information Technology Education*, 4, 10-12.
- McCoy, J. P., Brasfield, D. W., & Milkman, M. I. (1991). The Impact of macro/micro course sequencing. *Journal of Education for Business*, 66(4), 223-227. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08832323.1991.10117475>
- McNair, V., & Clarke, R. B. (2007). Effective technology and design teaching: Getting it right in the classroom. *International Journal of technology and Design Education*, 17(3), 271-291. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10798-006-9003-3>
- Nie, G., & Ren, G. (2014). The application of virtual reality technology in teaching of industrial design---outline of the project for the human-computer interactive simulation of the upper limb operations. *Applied Mechanics and Materials*, 464, 420-423. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4028/www.scientific.net/AMM.464.420>
- Parkinson, D. S. (1976). The minicourse approach in Ohio. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 57(8), 551-552. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20298370>
- Price, L., & Kirkwood, A. (2014). Informed design of educational technology for teaching and learning? Towards an evidence-informed model of good practice, *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 23(3), 325-347. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2014.942749>
- Qin, X. (2009). Ideological and political theories course and its implication since china was founded during past 60 years. *Journal of Ideological & Theoretical Education*, 10, 23-32.
- Silin, A. (2014). *MOOC and ideological and political theories course teaching innovation*. Beijing: Peking University Press.
- Sinian, Z. (2006). Rethinking and exploring to improve the effectiveness of Ideological and political theories courses. *Journal of Tsinghua University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, S2, 133-138.
- Tian, Q. H. (2009). Mini-course and its developmental strategy. *Curriculum Teaching Material and Method*, 29(5), 3-8.
- Tianxiang, H., Xuerong, G., & Yingfang, G. (2016). Preliminary application of micro-course in distance education. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 6(2), 132-136. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7763/IJiet.2016.V6.672>
- Weihong, L. (2014). Vigorously explore the teaching methods reform of ideological and political theories course reform of teaching methods. *China Higher Education*, 1, 4-6.
- Wen, C. X., & Zhang, J. F. (2015). Design of a microlecture mobile learning system based on smartphone and web platforms. *IEEE Transactions on Education*, 58(3), 203-207.
- Wenli, Y. (2010). A discussion on implications and property of ideological and political education courses. *Studies in Ideological Education*, 6, 34-37.
- Westhuizen, C. P., & Golightly, A. (2015). Video annotation software application for thorough collaborative assessment of and feedback on microteaching lessons in geography education. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 39(3), 420-436. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03098265.2015.1053802>

- Wodehouse, A., & Ion, W. (2010). Digital information support for concept design. *CoDesign*, 6(1), 3-23. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15710880903393100>
- Zha, Z. H. (2011). Ideological and political theories teaching effectiveness analysis. *Studies in Ideological Education*, 4, 35-39.
- Zhang, J. R. (2012). Literature review of micro-course. *China Information Technology Education*, 11, 19-21.
- Zipko, S. J. (1975). A classification minicourse. *Science Activities: Classroom Projects and Curriculum Ideas*, 12(6), 14-20. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00368121.1975.10112757>

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).