

# The Research of Effectiveness of Ideological Political and Theories Curriculum Teaching (IPTCT) in China: Development and Problems

Liangliang Wang<sup>1</sup>, Mingfang Fan<sup>1</sup> & Feng Zhang<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Humanities, Economics and Law, Northwestern Polytechnical University, Xi'an, China

<sup>2</sup> School of Mechanics, Civil Engineering & Architecture, Northwestern Polytechnical University, Xi'an, China

Correspondence: Liangliang Wang, School of Humanities, Economics and Law, Northwestern Polytechnical University, Mailbox 889, Dong-Xiang Road, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China. Tel: 86-29-8843-1909. E-mail: celia.liangliang.wang@hotmail.com

Received: July 25, 2016

Accepted: August 26, 2016

Online Published: September 22, 2016

doi:10.5539/ies.v9n10p116

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ies.v9n10p116>

## Abstract

Researchers have long been interested in how to improve the effectiveness of IPTCT courses in Chinese educational institutions. This article provides a framework for understanding the research undertaken into the effectiveness of IPTCT in China's higher education system over the past ten years, from 2006 to 2015. It begins with a discussion of the special position held by IPTCT in China and the importance of undertaking effective studies into IPTCT. After reviewing the research on effective teaching theory within IPTCT research, describing the current research development in China, in the next section, the reasons for the use of historical and document methodology used in this paper are also examined. Next, a literature review and analysis of data collected from over a ten-year period publications in this field of study is undertaken. Then, the review highlights the six main areas identified by researchers to determine the effectiveness of IPTCT courses, including concept research; class teaching; teaching method; practice teaching; discipline innovation as well as student engagement. Furthermore, three research problems are examined which highlight the complexity of undertaking research into the effectiveness of IPTCT. The article concludes by exploring implications for future research into the effectiveness and suggestions for IPTCT teachers.

**Keywords:** research of effectiveness, Ideological Political and Theories Curriculum Teaching (IPTCT), China, development, problems

## 1. Introduction

Effective teaching is complex and a difficult goal to achieve in education. The challenge exists not only in middle schools, but also holds a central role in realm of higher education (Byram & Dube, 2008; Kuijpers, Houtveen, & Wubbels, 2010). Given its importance of helping Ideological Political and Theories Curriculum (IPTC) teachers to become more effective and efficient is a major issue that researchers have been investigating for a number of years (Min, 2012; Wang & Fan, 2016). Research on the effectiveness of Ideological Political and Theories Curriculum Teaching (IPTCT) in Chinese higher education has increasingly becoming an important 'hot topic' of concern in recent years. IPTCT is actually made up of five courses in China, including An Outline of Fundamental Principles of Marxism (AOFPM); Introduction to Mao Zedong Thought and the Theoretical System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics (IMZTTSSCC); Chinese Modern and Contemporary History (IMZTTSSCC); Ideological and Moral Education & Elements of Law (IMEEL) and Situation and Policy Education (SPE) [School of Marxism, 2016]. The effectiveness of IPTCT is influenced by many factors in China's higher education system. This manifests itself in students' political ideals, ethics and personalities which may be enhanced through the effective delivery of these five courses (Wang, 2013).

Unlike other courses such as Math, Arts or Chemistry, all Chinese undergraduates, whether they attend public or private universities, undertake compulsory IPTCT courses. These courses are commonly known as the 'main-channel' and the 'main-battle field' in China (Ai, 2006). Nowadays, according to The State Council of the People's Republic of China (2015), China is planning to build internationally recognized 'Dual-class' universities which maintain a Chinese characters with a first-class universities (The State Council of the People's Republic of China [TSCPRC], 2015). Thus, IPTCT was given a more important position in higher education as it is regarded as an effective and efficient way of promoting ethical ideological and political viewpoints. And also

there have more research into ways to promote quality outcomes in these courses timely and significant in China. A number of researchers have begun to fill out effectiveness research of IPTCT from the perspective of effective teaching theory. For example, Giovannelli (2003) demonstrated the relationship between teaching and effective teaching (Giovannelli, 2003). Herring et al. (2015) proposed a framework for teaching and teacher education. Research mentioned promoting effective teaching behaviors through the hiring process (Schumacher et al., 2015). Devlin and Samarawickrema (2010) showed the criteria of effective teaching in a changing higher education context (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010). Farrell (2015) considered teachers' backgrounds and ethnicity in his work and pointed out they could be ignored in assessing effective teaching (Farrell, 2015). If we believe good and effective teaching could improve the learning of IPTCT, it is reasonable that studies of effective teaching are pursued to improve quality outcomes. Liu (2014) studied effective teaching modes based on activity theory (Liu, 2014). Gist (2014) develops a culturally responsive counter-narrative to explore the complexity of a teacher's racial consciousness. Gibbs and Coffey (2004) stated that training of teachers to develop their teaching skills impacts on better teaching and learning outcomes (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004).

In China, there are two terms need to identify related to courses. They are effectiveness of Ideological Political Education (IPE) and effectiveness of Ideological Political Theories Curriculum Teaching (IPTCT). Thus, both sometimes causes confusion for researchers. In fact, there is no large difference between the two. The core concepts of both aim to affect students views and behavior. In this article, authors hold the understanding for these two terms. Specifically, effectiveness of IPE is the superordinate concept of effectiveness of IPTCT while effectiveness of IPTCT is the subordinate concept of effectiveness of IPE. Research by Zheng and Hu (2009) supports the ideal that effectiveness of IPTCT companied with the effective construction of IPE. The subject was led by Marxist materialism in content, drawn related multi-disciplines information on the knowledge structure, expanded and developed understanding on world, life and values, which altogether decide its effectiveness in nature (Zheng & Hu, 2009). Shen (2002) was original researcher in China who systematically discussed this topic of effectiveness of IPE (Shen, 2002). It was reflected by how much the education goal was achieved in the ideological and political education, how deeply people were influenced by the education content (Shen, 2000). He also maintains in his book that the effectiveness of IPE will change in different time, different era and even with different content (Shen, 2008).

Chinese researchers also developed their understanding for this topic. The overall effectiveness was discovered by Min (2012), which means there is a need for the integrated human ideological and political quality objectives to be identified (Min, 2012). What's more, logic effectiveness was put forwarded by R. Wang (2013), from which six logic aspects have to be determined, including accepted logic; human logic; reform logic; expanding logic; evaluation logic and innovative logic. Furthermore, in research about learners' effectiveness was regarded as an important aspect. Yang (2013) stated his ideals that undergraduates were the main effective research subject in context of Chinese higher education (Yang, 2013). Finally, more and more research (e.g. Song, 2012) argued information technologies could improve the Effectiveness of Ideological and Political Education (EIPE) in universities. Ji (2013) combined different aspects in the process, such as the concept of 'cross-border' with the research of IPTCT, such as cross-border combination of theory and practice; cross-border integration of learning resources; cross-border joint combination between departments; cross-border convergence and spiritual culture and education between the intersubjective (Ji, 2013).

Given both the relative lack of attention to development of IPTCT and problems the research existed in the past years, which is relatively complex. In looking to develop a trend of IPTCT, in this paper, we turn initially to the research progress of IPTCT and also the problems they may have. In considering current research development, there is a need to know what the research area or branch is based on Chinese higher education. A literature review on studies of effectiveness of IPTCT follows in this paper. This approach details the development and problems associated with this research. The objective is to collate and summarize domestic academic research into the effectiveness of IPTCT. In this way we are able to demonstrate the development and problems on the research of IPTCT. This review also lets us identify the problems of research in this area of study in order to find out new ways to further improve teaching. This has important implications for ways to improve teaching practice to effectively deliver of ideological and political theories curriculum.

## 2. Method

For different studies, we will choose different method to conduct. This study uses a literature review of historical and documentary research to investigate the effectiveness research development of IPTCT in the past ten years at the same time the problems which exist in the research.

### 2.1 Historical and Documentary Research

Historical research has the ability “to employ the past to predict the future, and to use the present to explain the past, gives it a dual and unique quality which makes it especially useful for all sorts of scholarly study and research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2004). It was defined as the systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events (Borg (1963). This kind of research method has been illustrated in the history of education (See Table1), which gave a prominent influence part of their narrative.

Table 1. Some historical interrelations between men, movements and institutions

Men	Movements	Institutions	
		Type	Specific
Ignatius Loyola	Counter-Reformation	Religious teaching order	Society of Jesus, 1534
Benjamin Franklin	Scientific movement;	Academy	Philadelphia Academy, 1751
John Dewey	Experimentalism	Experimental school	University of Chicago
	Progressive education		Elementary School, 1896

Source: Research Methods in Education (6<sup>th</sup> ed.), P192.

Furthermore, documental research can take a multitude of forms such the use of diaries and journals, records, biographies, samples of students’ work, and reports and statistic, which written by researchers for researchers. These articles that published on the National Knowledge Infrastructure online and some books which have already published in print are our documents in this research. What’s more, we still consider other influence, including the context of the document, the writers of the documents, the researchers and the document itself. We take strong and more sufficient documents to confirm the reliability and validity in documentary analysis.

### 2.2 Choice of Subject

The method of historical research, for a topic research, Gottschalk (1951) suggested that four questions should be asked in identifying:

- Where do the events take place?
- Who are the people involved?
- When do the events occur?
- What kinds of human activity are involved?

This is only an initial and basically list on the topic, indeed, one could see that lots of related aspect are included in our research. Hence, in the research, when we choose the subject, we select those publications that represent important event in IPTCT, people involved have to be show their features, the time, and the human activities.

### 2.3 Data Collection

The principle difference between historical research and other methods is that it has to deal with data that already exists. The source of data may be classified into two main groups: primary sources and secondary sources. In approaching documentary research, although we need to stress the importance of primary sources of data, the value of secondary sources should not be minimized. As Travers (1969) pointed out that, the review of the literature in other forms of educational research is regarded as a preparatory stage to gathering data and serves to acquaint researchers with previous research on the topics they are studying. From the study of earlier endeavors, we can access data for research, researchers’ considered and interpretation provided.

#### 2.3.1 Sample

Articles published in the National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) were the main data repository, and for the most part, came from the China Integrated Knowledge Resources Database (CIKRD). The documents mostly belong to Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI) articles, which is an interdisciplinary citation index program in China and was developed by Nanjing University since 1997. It was a basic tool in China for the evaluation of academic achievements and promotion (CSSCI, 2016). This source was chosen because of the high quality, validity, and variety of material it provided. Additionally, this extended source provided for the research

over the period from January of 2006 to the end of 2015.

### 2.3.2 Data Presentation

As Plummer (1983) noted there are three points of direction for the academic. Firstly, having a clear view of who you are writing for and what you wish. Secondly, you should establish the purpose of the history. Finally, practice your writing regularly. The data found in the research has been presented in the following ways and also we will give a clear presentation for its meaning.

### 2.3.3 Research Design

The key words like EIPTCT and EIPE were used to input the CIKRD and collect all the articles, reports, conferences, and books that related to this topic. The journals from CSSCI and else journals which, we thought, gave a depth to the research for this topic. The data was then analyze by Microsoft excel worksheet to map trends.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Overview

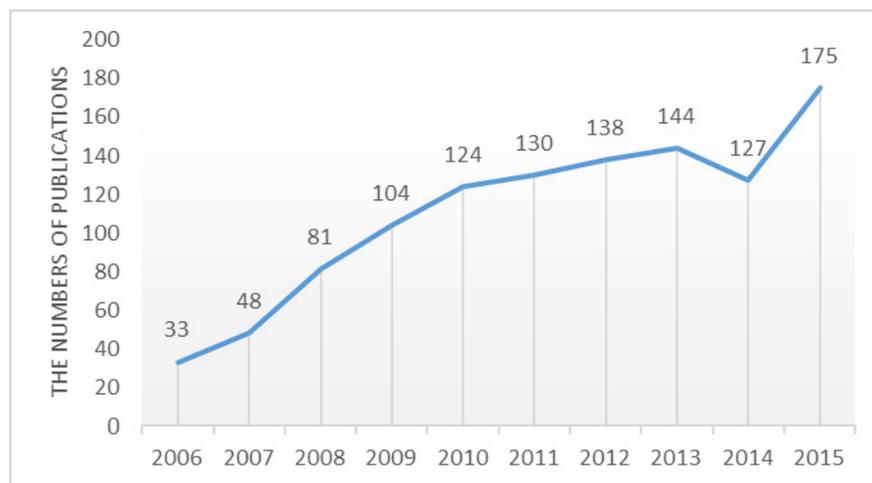


Figure 1. IPTCT Publications (2006-2015)

The results are shown in Figure 1 of the trends found in the research of IPTCT effectiveness. During past 10 years, the number of research publications of IPTCT increased dramatically (600%), although there was a slight decrease in the number of publications in 2014. Overall, the number of IPTCT publications was high. It is clear from the data there will be an increase in the number of publications in the future in this field of research. Furthermore, during the research for this paper, it became obviously that the research on IPTCT is becoming a 'hot topic' in China at the moment. It appears that many researchers are becoming aware of the importance of IPTCT research in China today. Ultimately, because of IPTCT research popularity in China's higher education, it would appear to be a desirable field of study in the future.

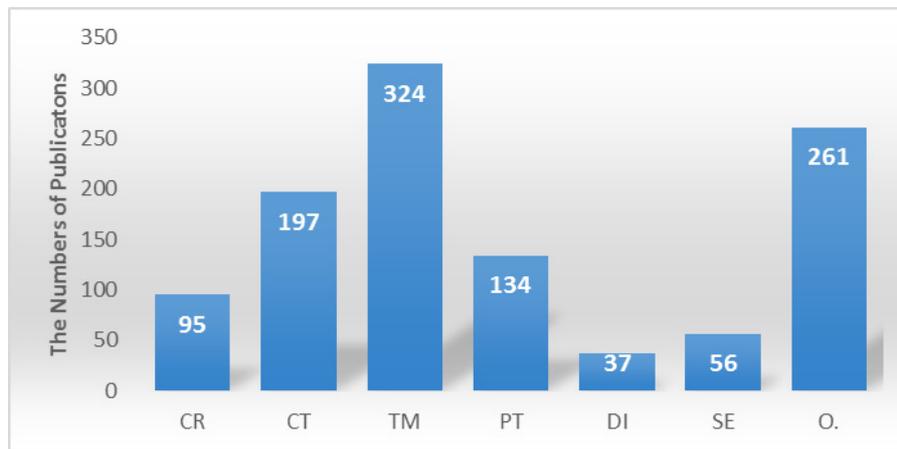


Figure 2. Main research areas on IPTCT

*Note.* CR=Concept Research; CT=Class Teaching; TM=Teaching Method; PT=Practice Teaching; DI=Discipline Innovation; SE=Student Engagement; O.=Others.

In the analysis of the papers reviewed, we found that there were six core areas of research identified in all publications (see Figure 2). It was also noted that there are many papers that concentrated on other areas of research on this topic including culture, political and economic factors. In the graph above, it can be seen that the main research area considered was teaching method (TM-324 publications), whilst the least popular was discipline innovation (DI-37 publications). Both concept research (CR-95) and practice teaching (PT-134) were contained in around 100 publications. The second ranked factor studied was found to be class teaching (CT-197). Of the lesser importance was student engagement (SE-56), which was only one quarter of class teaching research (CT-197).

One conclusion that can be drawn from the data, is that Chinese researchers were more interested to examine areas of research in which they could make changes in order to improve the effectiveness of their own teaching, particularly teaching method and class teaching. From the data, we found, the majority of Chinese researchers/lecturers concentrated on teaching method. That is because they thought what they concentrated on could improve the effectiveness of IPTCT. Additionally, they were concerned with using a variety of methods or activities in their classrooms. Alternatively, few teachers seemed to be aware of the student engagement factor, a different theory from western countries, which is new to them. We have to acknowledge that the discipline innovation factor was considered by very few. Teachers were less interested in this factor of research, possibly because IPTCT is a special course in China and its contents are managed by external processes, which cannot be easily influenced by them.

In the following section, the six core areas of research identified above for this topic are discussed. Our aim is to show the developments of research in this field in China during past 10 years.

### 3.1 Concept Research

In the papers reviewed, many of researchers expressed their understanding for the meaning of IPTCT. However, there was no unified agreement for the term of IPTCT. To demonstrate this point, the views of two research scholars are presented below. Ai (2006) argued the concept of IPTCT mainly refers to achieving the aims of curriculum. Whereas, Zha (2011) explained that IPTCT is a kind of representation of ideology and behavior, which has four aspects including: receiving knowledge; emotional recognition; education of the will and an orientation education process.

Even though there are differences in the definitions of concept research, all accept that a student's world outlook and values should be positively affected through effective course learning.

### 3.2 Class Teaching

As highlighted earlier in the paper, a great deal of research has concentrated on class teaching, as teachers felt it was a direct and effective way to improve outcomes. Zhang (S. Zhang, 2006) holds the view that good teaching in classroom is the basic requirement for effective IPTCT results. He explained that perfunctory or poorly prepared teaching would result in poor outcomes. What's more, this is addressed further by Chen, Mo, and Pang

(2012) who indicated the traditional teaching model has to change, transforming from an indoctrination mode to a two-way interactive approach. The content of lectures has to overcome the 'empty talk' tendency, combining theory and practice. In addition, the philosophy of teaching should change from viewing students as only a receptive member in learning to one that sees students as independent thinking entities who provide feedback.

Thus, lecturers have to be good classroom teachers who can well manage the teaching process, interacting with learners and encouraging more creativeness. If teachers construct this learning environment in the classroom then IPTCT can be effectively delivered.

### 3.3 Teaching Methods

All kinds of popular teaching methods were adapted by lectures to improve their teaching. Li, Vice-Minister of Education, emphasized that changes in teaching methods was the breakthrough element that needed to be face to strengthen IPTCT courses. Her presentation was delivered at the National College Ideological and Political Theories Curriculum Teaching Method Reform Exchange Conference in 2014 (Li, 2014). Research from Zhang and Peng (2014) agreed that improving IPTCT teaching methods was a critical strategy. They believed lecturers should organize and manage classrooms and teaching content, integrate various teaching methods and create a harmonious atmosphere in the classroom to fully mobilize the enthusiasm of student engagement.

Wang (B. Wang, 2011) in his book, *Ideological and Political Theories Curriculum Teaching Method Innovation Research* concurred that teaching methods were extremely significant. Liao (2014) built a 'four-in-one' teaching model, which aimed to improve the Ideological and Political Curriculum Theories Courses effectiveness through connecting theory teaching; special teaching; seminar and practice.

### 3.4 Practice Teaching

The review found there was a considerable amount of research of practice teaching to improve the effectiveness of IPTCT. A series of research works discussed this issue (C. Zhou, 2012; Liu, 2013, W. Li, 2014). Researchers generally believed that the provision of quality practice teaching experiences would result in effective teaching of IPTCT, in the future, when student teachers entered their profession. It is for this reason that so much research has been concentrated on this element. Therefore, research of practice teaching in IPTCT has become popular in China.

Wang (2013) undertook a study of practice teaching examining its history and problems, and created a virtual practice teaching technology that is being trialed in a web environment, which allows college students to undertake IPTCT learning in virtual environment. Kang and Fang (2014) investigated and analyzed practice teaching using their 'Topic Return to Hometown' survey carried out at the Northwest A & F University. It is a good example to show the effect of practice teaching in IPTCT.

### 3.5 Discipline Innovation

Recently, research of discipline innovation in different subjects has become popular in China in modern higher education. Research by professor Ai of Tsinghua University discussed the impact of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) for the ideological and political theories course teaching in China, which provide a new and effective way to research IPTCT (Ai, 2014). It cannot be denied that there is general agreement that reform needs to incorporate teaching concept, teaching mode, teaching methods and assessment in a MOOC environment (Gao, Wang, & Li, 2014). Experiential teaching (She, 2002) and 'case-teaching' were the focus of other researchers (L. Tang, 2010; Zhang & Li, 2012; Cao & Xue, 2014). Some scholars mentioned 'open-teaching' (Liu & Zhou, 2010) and thematic teaching (Ma & Zhang, 2009). Zhang (2014), as the leader of IPTCT research, explored the Quality Monitoring System (QMS), which gave a new insight to further research. In the papers reviewed numerous other ideas regarding discipline innovation were individually discussed (e.g. Wang, 2014) however more research into this area is required in future.

### 3.6 Student Engagement

Some researchers have concentrated on studying effective teaching from a student engagement point of view (Gebre, Saroyan, & Bracewell, 2014). It is strongly agreed that studying IPTCT from a perspective of student engagement was a more effective and efficient way to enhance the learning process. Research on student engagement in China began later than in any other countries, originally appearing in the 1980s. The concept of student participation is a basic feature of modern education, which goes beyond the purely traditional educational view that merely values teacher knowledge and teaching methods (Guo, 2003). Some researchers maintain that student engagement is an inherent requirement for IPTCT to be effective, which is also an important assessment measure used in IPTCT (e.g. Tang, 2010). It encouraged students' cognitive engagement, affective engagement and behavioral engagement in IPTCT (Tang & Wu, 2010). In current research many

scholars pointed out the importance of student engagement but failed to look deeply into how students could engage more in course learning.

An example of a recent study in the field of IPTCT is the doctoral thesis of Liu (H, Liu, 2013) where he had established a Student Engagement Mechanism Full Model (SEMFM). It added motivational variables to analyze the mechanism of student engagement in the growth of success, which resulted in a positive spiraling circulation loop between students and universities. Peng (2013) emphasized three advantages of student engagement: full participation; rich content and flexible form. Hu and Guo (2011) insisted that as a kind of philosophy, student engagement reshaped the relationship between teachers and students in the IPTCT, at the same time it highlights the important role of students in the teaching of IPTCT.

### 3.7 Others

Researchers also investigated other factors affecting the effectiveness of IPTCT. However, there were no stand-out areas of investigation, as many different ideas were explored. For example, only one paper examined the proposition that the training of good lectures teams would benefit the development of IPTCT (She, 2009). Some researchers analyzed Chinese traditional culture as a foundation for developing the effectiveness of IPTCT (e.g. G. Li, 2014). She argued that if teachers could actively explore and deepen research into theories and integrate core thoughts of Chinese traditional culture, it would unify political theory and cultural mission. Zhang (2014) suggests that IPTCT has to respond to the current affairs, in a timely manner, and relate these to the era of Marxism. Sheng (2009) asserted that teachers should combine knowledge, capability and moral education in the same assessment process.

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study has reviewed the research into the effectiveness of IPTCT in China during the past 10 years and identifies the main aspects used in the published papers. Furthermore, researcher in this field has provided better insights into the theories and practices needed to improve the outcomes of IPTCT courses. However, the following issues need to be the focus for future research.

In the first place, qualitative research was mostly implemented in the research of IPTCT than quantitative research. Since there is a tradition for qualitative research in China, and most researchers chose to use this method, possibly because they were familiar with this method of research. It is not to say this method of research is poor, or of little value, but it needs to be noted much research relies predominately upon it. The authors of this paper assume that most of the researchers have a good understanding of the use of qualitative methods. Some researchers used the quantitative method of research in their work. For example, Li (2009) developed her ideas using a border analysis, process analysis and structural analysis. Xing (2009) used the principles and methods of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) tool to analyze the effectiveness of IPTCT. These researchers aimed to understand why students became active recipients of knowledge, with more initiative and creativity, by analyzing the data they observed. However, quantitative research accounts for a small part of the whole published research study.

What's more, some of the qualitative research methods used in the studies of IPTCT present ideas merely based on subjective assertions and not on data, which made their studies less experiential and more anecdotal. While the individual research studies considered were effective in some ways, validity is questionable in others. At least, these studies identified and explored important focus areas to improve the effectiveness of IPTCT. The research helps to describe the nature and manner of learning in IPTCT China today. Finally, if we acknowledged that the Ideological and Political Theories Curriculum (IPTC) belongs to a scientific theory course, we have to use scientific research methods in studies and not merely rely on the assumptions or assertions of research. The descriptions and analysis of IPTCT data has be rooted in scientific study methods in all steps of research.

In the second place, it was found that the nature of research was quite shallow and lacked details. It tended to be as slogan in its approach. For example, research conducted by Zhang (2011) argued that the basic of IPTCT is to follow the teaching principles; the key was to improve the quality of teachers; the focus was to understand the object; the breakthrough was to improve teaching methods; the effective way was to strengthen the practice of teaching; the theoretical support was to leverage the discipline construction and so on. As a result, few, if any, innovative suggestions to improve the IPTCT were observed. What is lacking are detailed steps as to how to move forward. What are the strategies for implementation?

All educational organizations levels in China have a clear understanding of the mandatory requirement for the teaching of IPTCT. Specifically, lecturers and teachers in different educational levels have undertaken research on this topic, such as in vocational colleges (Zheng, 2013), in arts colleges (Zhou, 2012; Chen, 2012) and police

colleges (Tian, 2014). Nevertheless, much of the research results in highlighting on tiny differences between organizational levels, which showed the deficits of slogan. As readers, we did not see obviously difference between them. Many of the findings only gave the same tokenistic strategies and requirements to improve IPTCT. They failed to demonstrate deep levels of reasoning or flexibility in their research to suit the educational environments they exist within. Thus, the research only scratched the surface of understanding and did not look more deeply into how to improve IPTCT effectively in difference educational organizations. Furthermore, while some research looked deeply into the problems of IPTC teaching, they did not follow up by providing meaningful strategies to improve the nature of learning. This demonstrated a lack of awareness and attention to the complexity of the issues involved, and will not result in improved practices or outcomes in the future. There was a big gap between reality of teaching and research outcomes.

Finally, the research concentrated on teaching process of IPTCT rather than learning process, which adversely affects the effectiveness of IPTCT. In the traditional research, it was found that the improvements in IPTCT resulted from good teaching processes such as unique design; the good presentation of teaching content; appropriate use of teaching style; teaching art and changed strategies. Indeed, good lesson preparation and mutual cooperation jointly promoted teaching effectiveness. However, teaching is a bilateral activity, which depends on the teaching process on the one hand but more important on the students' learning process on the other hand, particularly for this unique and special type courses in China.

No matter how fantastic instructional design, teaching becomes extremely difficult to handle if we do not concentrate on the student's perspective. Researchers and lecturers should be more aware of the importance of student engagement in IPTCT. This includes a student's cognitive engagement, emotional engagement, and behavioural engagement. As a result, the study of IPTC courses could lead to a desired change from knowledge education to behaviour practice. IPTCT should be seen as more than just an educational process. The aim of the courses is to result in students becoming self-aware, self-managing and self-behaving. Hopefully, it should enable students, some through an epiphany, to awaken be moral citizens. Therefore, authors of this paper suggest that more research should emphasize the students' learning processes. That is, research should focus on how to engage students, promote initiative and enthusiasm, to enhance effectiveness of IPTCT in the future. Only by creating conscious, voluntary, self-motivated process within students can IPTCT get real effectiveness.

This study acknowledges the research limitation that the most updated articles, for the year of 2016, were not shown in the analysis. Additionally, there should have been more illustrations of the research of social effects, which will be the theme of next investigation. New perspectives, methods and evaluation processes need to be considered in the future research. Essential and detailed studies need to make this course not just regurgitation at textbook facts and figures but one that changes students' ideology and behavior. In this way the final aims of IPTCT courses will be effectively achieved.

Overall the effectiveness of IPTCT courses needs to be improved. Research into this topic needs to focus on more than just the problems encountered by providers of these courses. Improvements in the quality of the research need to occur in order to realize the benefits of IPTCT. Quantitative research methods need to be used more widely and data analysis needs to drill-down deeper into issues, and create practical suggestions for improvements. Additionally, more focus on research into student learning processes is required to create activated learners who will exhibit the values and behaviors sought in IPTCT courses. In particular, research into student engagement and enjoyment could help to make IPTCT courses effective for all students. The challenge is especially relevant now in China, as the government has launched the construction of Dual-first universities. These universities will cater for highly intelligent students and they will require quality IPTCT courses if the aims of the curriculum are to be effectively achieved. Hence, quality research into ways to improve the effectiveness of IPTCT courses is essential.

### **Acknowledgments**

The authors would like to express appreciation for the support of the sponsors Chinese Scholarship Council ([2015]3022).

### **References**

- Ai, S. L. (2006). Learned lessons and push forward the overall plan—the new ideas on ideological and political theories curriculum program implementation. *Journal of Tsinghua University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)*, (S2), 24-28. <http://dx.doi.org/10.13613/j.cnki.qhlz.001395>
- Ai, S. L. (2014). *MooC and Ideological and Political Theories Courses Teaching Innovation*. Beijing: Peking University Press.

- Borg, W. R. (1963). *Educational Research: An Introduction*. London: Longman.
- Byram, R. S., & Dube, H. (2008). *Planning for Success: Effective Teaching and Learning Methods*. New York, NY: Continuum International Pub. Group.
- Cao, S. X., & Xue, G. B. (2014). *Theory and Practice Innovation of Ideological and Political Theory Courses "integration" inquiry teaching mode*. Beijing: Beijing Institute of Technology Press.
- Chen, P. (2012). *Ideological and Political Theories Teaching Music Schools Information and Selected Stories*. Guangzhou: Sun Yat-Sen University Press.
- Chen, P. X., & Pang, H. (2012). Multidimensional improving ideological and political education curriculum classroom teaching. *Higher Education Forum*, 6, 7-11.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education* (6th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. R. B. (2004). *A Guide to Teaching Practice* (5th ed.). London: Routledge.
- CSSCI. (2016, May 27). In *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieve May 27, 2016, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_Social\\_Sciences\\_Citation\\_Index](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Social_Sciences_Citation_Index)
- Devlin, M., & Samarawickrema, G. (2010). The criteria of effective teaching in a changing higher education context. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 29(2), 111-124. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07294360903244398>
- Farrell, T. S. C. (2015). It's not who you are! It's how you teach! Critical competencies associated with effective teaching. *RELC Journal*, 46(1), 79-88. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0033688214568096>
- Gao, Z. Q., Wang, Z., & Li, L. (2014). Thinking of ideological and political theories classes transformation under MOOC. *The Party Building and Ideological Education in Schools*, (13), 42-44.
- Gebre, E., Saroyan, A., & Bracewell, B. (2014). Students' engagement in technology rich classrooms and its relationship to professors' conceptions of effective teaching. *British Journal of Education Technology*, 45(1), 83-96. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12001>
- Gibbs, G., & Coffey, M. (2004). The impact of training of university teachers on their teaching skills, their approach to teaching and the approach to learning of their students. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 5(1), 87-100. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1469787404040463>
- Giovannelli, M. (2003). Relationship between reflective disposition towards teaching and effective teaching. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 96(5), 293-309.
- Gist, C. D. (2014). A culturally responsive counter-narrative of effective teaching. *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, (9), 1009-1014. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11422-013-9537-0>
- Gottschalk, L. (1951). *Understanding History*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Guo, F. Q. (2003). Student Engagement: A topic of history and reality. *Teacher Education Research*, (03), 55-61.
- Herring, M., Curran, C., Stone, J., Davidson, D., Ahrabi-Fard, I., & Zhbanova, K. (2015). Emerging qualities of effective teaching: Embracing new literacies. *The Educational Forum*, 79(2), 163-179. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2015.1006405>
- Hu, X. H., & Guo, F. Z. (2011). Participatory teaching practice in the Ideological and Political Theory Teaching Reform Exploration. *Ideological and Political Education Research*, 5, 32-35.
- Ji, H. J. (2013). *Research on the effectiveness of ideological and political education in universities from the perspective of informatization* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from [http://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?QueryID=8&CurRec=1&recid=&filename=1013339322.nh&dbname=CDFD1214&dbcode=CDFD&pr=&urlid=&yx=&uid=WEEvREcwSIJHSldRa1FhcTdWYVl1QkozMUVzRDhpUmo3TkovSXpRVmhmOD0=\\$9A4hF\\_YAuvQ5obgVAqNKPCYcEjKensW4ggI8Fm4gTkoUKaID8j8gFw!!&v=MDQ2NjRS THlmWU9ab0Z5N21XN3pJVkYyNkhiQzdGOUxPclpFYiBJUjhlWDFMdxhZUZdEaDFUM3FUcldNMU ZyQ1U=](http://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?QueryID=8&CurRec=1&recid=&filename=1013339322.nh&dbname=CDFD1214&dbcode=CDFD&pr=&urlid=&yx=&uid=WEEvREcwSIJHSldRa1FhcTdWYVl1QkozMUVzRDhpUmo3TkovSXpRVmhmOD0=$9A4hF_YAuvQ5obgVAqNKPCYcEjKensW4ggI8Fm4gTkoUKaID8j8gFw!!&v=MDQ2NjRS THlmWU9ab0Z5N21XN3pJVkYyNkhiQzdGOUxPclpFYiBJUjhlWDFMdxhZUZdEaDFUM3FUcldNMU ZyQ1U=)
- Kang, Y., & Fang, J. B. (2014). Ideological and political theories courses in social practice teaching effect investigation and analysis—A case study of Northwest A & F University. *Heilongjiang Education (Higher Education Research & Appraisal)*, 10, 10-11.

- Kuijpers, J. M., Houtveen, A. A. M., & Wubbels, Th. (2010). An integrated professional development model for effective teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(8), 1697-1694. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.06.021>
- Li, G. J. (2014). Teaching ideological and political theories of Chinese traditional culture into. *Ideological and Political Education Research*, 7, 65-69.
- Li, J. G. (2009). Three-dimensional look ideological and political theories classroom teaching Effectiveness. *Journal of Inner Mongolia Normal University(Educational Science)*, 1(1), 13-116.
- Li, W. H. (2014). Vigorously explore the ideological and political theory course reform of teaching methods. *China Higher Education*, 1, 4-6.
- Liao, Y. J. (2014). The improvement of the ideological and political theories courses effectiveness using four-in onemode. *Journal of Hunan University of Science and Engineering*, 9, 89-92.
- Liu, C. (2014). Research on effective teaching mode based on activity theory under the network environment. *Applied Mechanics and Materials*, 556-562. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4028/www.scientific.net/AMM.556-562.5466>
- Liu, H. Y. (2013). *Ideological and Political Theory and Practice of Teaching Handbook*. Nanchang: Jiangxi People Publishing.
- Liu, H. Z. (2013). *Study on mechanism of college environment and students' motivation on regulating self-determination involvement* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from [http://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?QueryID=16&CurRec=1&recid=&filename=1014036330.nh&dbname=CDFD1214&dbcode=CDFD&pr=&urlid=&yx=&uid=WEEvREcwSIJHSlDRa1FhcTdWYVl1QkozMUVzRDhpUmo3TkovSXpRVmhmOD0=\\$9A4hF\\_YAuvQ5obgVAqNKPCYcEjKensW4ggI8Fm4gTkoUKaID8j8gFw!!&v=MDc3MTExVDNxVHJXTTFGckNVUkx5ZlIPWm9GeTduVTdyQlZGMjZHck83R05MUHI1RWJQSVI4ZVgxTHV4WVM3RGg=](http://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?QueryID=16&CurRec=1&recid=&filename=1014036330.nh&dbname=CDFD1214&dbcode=CDFD&pr=&urlid=&yx=&uid=WEEvREcwSIJHSlDRa1FhcTdWYVl1QkozMUVzRDhpUmo3TkovSXpRVmhmOD0=$9A4hF_YAuvQ5obgVAqNKPCYcEjKensW4ggI8Fm4gTkoUKaID8j8gFw!!&v=MDc3MTExVDNxVHJXTTFGckNVUkx5ZlIPWm9GeTduVTdyQlZGMjZHck83R05MUHI1RWJQSVI4ZVgxTHV4WVM3RGg=)
- Liu, Y. Q., & Zhou, X. Y. (2010). *Open Teaching Theory: Ideological Studies Class Open New Mode of Teaching Political Theories*. Chengdu: Bashu Publishing House.
- Ma, C. Y., & Zhang, X. F. (2009). *Ideological and Political Theories Teaching Research thematic*. Beijing: China Society Publishing House.
- Min, Y. X. (2012). *Research on the Effectiveness of Ideological and Political Education as a Whole*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.
- Peng, F. Z. (2013). Ideological and political theories course participation teaching mode innovation—Taking “An introduction to Mao Zedong Thought and theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics” course as an example. *Ideological and Political Education Research*, 6, 60-63.
- Plummer, K. (1983). *Documents of Life: An Introduction to the Problems and Literature of a Humanistic Method*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- School of Marxism Studies. (2016, June 13). *Curriculum introduction*. Retrieved from <http://marx.cueb.edu.cn/jxgl/kcjj/index.htm>
- Schumacher, G., Grigsby, B., & Vesey, W. (2015). Determining effective teaching behaviors through the hiring process. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 29(1), 139-155. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-04-2013-0071>
- She, S. H. (2009). Actively promote the ideological and political theory course teachers' professional development. *Ideological and Political Education Research*, 3, 54-59.
- She, S. H. (2012). Thoughts on ideological and political theory course teaching experience. *Studies in Ideological Education*, 4, 54-58.
- Shen, Z. H. (2000). Meaning, frameworks, methodologies. *Jiangxi Social Sciences*, 12, 153-157.
- Shen, Z. H. (2008). *Ideological and Political Education Effectiveness* (2nd ed.). Wuhan: Wuhan University Publishing House.
- Sheng, X. E. (2009). Ideological and political theory teaching effectiveness and evaluation. *Leading Journal of Ideological & Theoretical Education*, 1, 75-78.
- Sheng, Z. H. (2002). Three topics of research on the effectiveness of ideological and political education. *Ideological & Theoretical Education*, 1, 22-24.

- Song, Z. C. (2012). *Research on the effectiveness of ideological and political education in universities from the perspective of informatization* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from [http://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?QueryID=4&CurRec=1&recid=&filename=1013231715.nh&dbname=CDFD1214&dbcode=CDFD&pr=&urlid=&yx=&uid=WEEvREcwSIJHSldRa1FhcTdWYVIIQkozMUVzRDhpUmo3TkovSXPpRVmhmOD0=\\$9A4hF\\_YAUvQ5obgVAqNKPCYcEjKensW4ggI8Fm4gTkoUKaID8j8gFw!!&v=MDkwNDBGckNVUkx5ZlIPWm9GeTdtVmJyQlZGMjZiYkc3SDliTnFwRWJQSVI4ZVgxTHV4WVM3RGgxVDNxVHJXTTE=](http://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?QueryID=4&CurRec=1&recid=&filename=1013231715.nh&dbname=CDFD1214&dbcode=CDFD&pr=&urlid=&yx=&uid=WEEvREcwSIJHSldRa1FhcTdWYVIIQkozMUVzRDhpUmo3TkovSXPpRVmhmOD0=$9A4hF_YAUvQ5obgVAqNKPCYcEjKensW4ggI8Fm4gTkoUKaID8j8gFw!!&v=MDkwNDBGckNVUkx5ZlIPWm9GeTdtVmJyQlZGMjZiYkc3SDliTnFwRWJQSVI4ZVgxTHV4WVM3RGgxVDNxVHJXTTE=)
- Tang, J. B. (2010). Student engagement: important initiatives to improve the ideological and political theory courses effectiveness. *Journal of Henan Institute of Science and Technology*, 6, 41-43.
- Tang, J. B., & Wu, Z. M. (2010). Students' participate explore issues on ideological and political theories teaching. *Journal of Chongqing University of Science and Technology (Social Sciences Edition)*, 16, 141-143.
- Tang, L. S. (2010). *Ideological and Political Theories Teaching in Integrated Case Teaching*. Beijing: Renmin University of China Publishing House.
- The State Council of the People's Republic of China. (2015). *The Issuance of World-class Universities and First-class Disciplines overall program*. Retrieved January 7, 2016, from [http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2015-11/05/content\\_10269.htm#](http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2015-11/05/content_10269.htm#)
- Tian, Q. H. (2015). *Ideological and Political Education Teaching Reform Book at Police Colleges*. Beijing: China Police University Publishing House.
- Travers, R. M. W. (1969). *An Introduction to Educational Research*. London: Collier-Macmillan.
- Wang, B. L. (2011). *Innovation of Teaching Methods of Ideological and Political Theories*. Beijing: Beijing Normal University Publishing Group.
- Wang, H. B. (2013). Take mission and improve the effectiveness of IPTCT. *China Higher Education*, 22, 38-41.
- Wang, L. L., & Fan, M. F. (2016). How micro-courses can improve the effectiveness of ideological and political theories curriculum teaching through teaching design in China. *Asian Social Science*, 12(8), 219-229. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ass.v12n8p219>
- Wang, R. F. (2013). *Moral Logic—Logical Thinking Process of Political Education Effectiveness Research*. Shanghai: East China University of Science and Technology Press.
- Wang, X. L. (2013). *Research on practice teaching of ideological and political theory course in our universities* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from [http://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?QueryID=12&CurRec=2&recid=&filename=1014137232.nh&dbname=CDFD1214&dbcode=CDFD&pr=&urlid=&yx=&uid=WEEvREcwSIJHSldRa1FhcTdWYVIIQkozMUVzRDhpUmo3TkovSXPpRVmhmOD0=\\$9A4hF\\_YAUvQ5obgVAqNKPCYcEjKensW4ggI8Fm4gTkoUKaID8j8gFw!!&v=MTUxNDFYMUx1eFlTN0RoMVQzcVRyV00xRnJDVVJMeWZZT1pvRnk3blVyek1WRjI2R3JLN0dkUFBYwKViUEISOGU=](http://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?QueryID=12&CurRec=2&recid=&filename=1014137232.nh&dbname=CDFD1214&dbcode=CDFD&pr=&urlid=&yx=&uid=WEEvREcwSIJHSldRa1FhcTdWYVIIQkozMUVzRDhpUmo3TkovSXPpRVmhmOD0=$9A4hF_YAUvQ5obgVAqNKPCYcEjKensW4ggI8Fm4gTkoUKaID8j8gFw!!&v=MTUxNDFYMUx1eFlTN0RoMVQzcVRyV00xRnJDVVJMeWZZT1pvRnk3blVyek1WRjI2R3JLN0dkUFBYwKViUEISOGU=)
- Wang, Y., Wang, G., & Wang, Y. G. (2014). The utility of network teaching platform to promote ideological and political theories teaching reform top forum. *Leading Journal of Ideological & Theoretical Education*, 2, 140-141.
- Xing, X. H. (2009). Effectiveness studies of ideological and political theory based on structural equation modeling. *Academic Forum*, 7, 45-48.
- Yang, H. Z. (2013). *Ideological and political education effectiveness research of contemporary college students* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from [http://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?QueryID=0&CurRec=1&recid=&filename=1014149606.nh&dbname=CDFD1214&dbcode=CDFD&pr=&urlid=&yx=&uid=WEEvREcwSIJHSldRa1FhcTdWYVIIQkozMUVzRDhpUmo3TkovSXPpRVmhmOD0=\\$9A4hF\\_YAUvQ5obgVAqNKPCYcEjKensW4ggI8Fm4gTkoUKaID8j8gFw!!&v=MTk3MThNMUZyQ1VSTHlmWU9ab0Z5N21WN3ZPVkYyNkdySzhGOWZNCvPFYIBJUjhlWDFMdxhZUzdEaDFUM3FUcl=](http://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?QueryID=0&CurRec=1&recid=&filename=1014149606.nh&dbname=CDFD1214&dbcode=CDFD&pr=&urlid=&yx=&uid=WEEvREcwSIJHSldRa1FhcTdWYVIIQkozMUVzRDhpUmo3TkovSXPpRVmhmOD0=$9A4hF_YAUvQ5obgVAqNKPCYcEjKensW4ggI8Fm4gTkoUKaID8j8gFw!!&v=MTk3MThNMUZyQ1VSTHlmWU9ab0Z5N21WN3ZPVkYyNkdySzhGOWZNCvPFYIBJUjhlWDFMdxhZUzdEaDFUM3FUcl=)
- Zha, Z. H. (2011). Ideological and political theories teaching effectiveness analysis. *Studies in Ideological Education*, 4, 35-39.
- Zhang, L. Q., & Peng, P. (2014). Measures on improve the "Contemporary World Economy and Politics" classroom teaching effectiveness. *Study Monthly*, 2, 88-89.
- Zhang, S. N. (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.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.13613/j.cnki.qhda.001418>

- Zhang, X. F. (2011). *Study on teaching effectiveness of colleges or universities ideological and political theories courses* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from [http://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?QueryID=2&CurRec=1&recid=&filename=1013127592.nh&dbname=CDFD1214&dbcode=CDFD&pr=&urlid=&yx=&uid=WEEvREcwSlJHSldRa1FhdXNXZjNIOFB2SFIXK3g0a0xYVFN6WmZtenFadz0=\\$9A4hF\\_YAuvQ5obgVAqNKPCYcEjKensW4ggI8Fm4gTkoUKaID8j8gFw!!&v=MDQ4MjdTN0RoMVQzcVRyV00xRnJDV VJMeWZZT1J1RmlEbVZMdlBWRjI2SGJLNkdkVEZyWkViUEISOGVYMUx1eFk=](http://www.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?QueryID=2&CurRec=1&recid=&filename=1013127592.nh&dbname=CDFD1214&dbcode=CDFD&pr=&urlid=&yx=&uid=WEEvREcwSlJHSldRa1FhdXNXZjNIOFB2SFIXK3g0a0xYVFN6WmZtenFadz0=$9A4hF_YAuvQ5obgVAqNKPCYcEjKensW4ggI8Fm4gTkoUKaID8j8gFw!!&v=MDQ4MjdTN0RoMVQzcVRyV00xRnJDV VJMeWZZT1J1RmlEbVZMdlBWRjI2SGJLNkdkVEZyWkViUEISOGVYMUx1eFk=)
- Zhang, Y. C. (2014). *Education Course Teaching Quality Monitoring System of Ideological and Political Theories*. Beijing: Economic Science Press.
- Zhang, Y. G., & Li, D. F. (2012). *Ideological and Political Theory Teaching Case Studies*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.
- Zhang, Y. Y. (2014). Path improvement of the ideological and political theory course effectiveness—Based on Marxist Era perspective. *Ideological and Political Education Research*, 9, 71-74.
- Zheng, M. Z. (2013). *Higher Ideological and Political Theory Teaching Effectiveness Research*. Shenyang: Northeastern University Press.
- Zheng, Y. T., & Hu, M. H. (2009). The establishment and development of ideological and political education. *The Party Building and Ideological Education in Schools*, 1, 27.
- Zhou, C. M. (2012). *Ideological and Political Theory Teaching Reform under the View classroom inquiry*. Chongqing: South West Jiaotong University Press.
- Zhou, G. Q. (2012). *One body and Two Wings Teaching Mode and Methods Research on Ideological and Political Theories Course at Art Colleges*. Guangzhou: Zhongshan Sun Yat-Sen University Press.

### 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/4.0/>).