
Integration of Guzheng Teaching and Ideological-Political Education in Higher Vocational Colleges: Practice and Exploration

Meng Guo

Shaanxi Artistic Vocational College, Xi'an 710054, Shaanxi, China

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Abstract: The educational orientation of higher vocational institutions is currently undergoing a profound transformation, within which the significance of ideological and political education has become increasingly prominent. In the context of music education in these institutions, Guzheng instruction serves not only as a crucial pathway for cultivating students' musical skills but also as a vital vehicle for inheriting and promoting China's excellent traditional culture. Traditional Guzheng teaching has predominantly emphasized performance technique training, often overlooking the integration of ideological and political education. This oversight hinders students' comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the cultural connotations and spiritual values embedded within Guzheng art during the learning process. Consequently, integrating ideological and political education into Guzheng teaching holds significant importance.

Keywords: Music education in higher vocational institutions; Guzheng teaching; Integration of ideological and political education

Online publication: September 26, 2025

1. Analysis of the current integration of Guzheng teaching and ideological and political education in higher vocational institutions

With the deepening advancement of the "Curriculum Ideology and Politics" concept, research on the integration of Guzheng teaching and ideological and political education in higher vocational institutions has gradually become a focus. Scholars have conducted explorations and practices from various perspectives. A portion of the research focuses on identifying ideological and political elements within Guzheng teaching. Some scholars point out that Guzheng repertoire contains rich historical and cultural connotations. Through in-depth explanation and analysis of these pieces, students can be guided to understand history, appreciate culture, and cultivate national pride and cultural confidence. Regarding the innovation of teaching methods, it is noted that situational teaching methods are currently predominant in Guzheng instruction. This involves creating historical or life scenarios related to the Guzheng repertoire, allowing students to perceive and understand the ideological and political connotations within these contexts. Investigations reveal a continuous emergence of practical case studies on the integration of ideological and political elements with Guzheng teaching. Some higher vocational institutions have integrated ideological and political education into various aspects of Guzheng

teaching by organizing Guzheng cultural festivals, offering specialized Guzheng courses with ideological and political characteristics, and other means. However, current research also exhibits several shortcomings. Firstly, the exploration of ideological and political elements often lacks depth, remaining superficial, and fails to fully leverage the educational function of Guzheng teaching in fostering ideological and political awareness. Secondly, in teaching practice, the methods and models for integration are insufficient, lacking systematization and practicality, which makes broader application and promotion difficult. Thirdly, the content of Guzheng teaching in some higher vocational institutions is somewhat outdated. Some selected pieces in textbooks, while classic, are dated and lack a strong connection to modern social life, making it difficult to resonate with students and leading to a gradual decline in their interest in learning the Guzheng. Fourthly, teaching methods remain relatively singular. Teachers still primarily rely on traditional oral instruction and demonstration, with a focus on teacher demonstration and student imitation, resulting in limited classroom interaction ^[1].

2. The significance and value of integrating Guzheng teaching with ideological and political education in higher vocational institutions

2.1. Promoting students' holistic development

2.1.1. Cultivating students' moral character and values

Guzheng repertoire contains rich ideological and political elements. Taking the classic piece "Three Variations on the Plum Blossom" as an example, this composition uses the plum blossom as its theme. Through its beautiful melody and unique performance techniques, it portrays the resilient image of the plum blossom blooming alone and braving the frost and snow in the harsh winter. During the teaching process, instructors guide students to deeply understand the connotation of the work, enabling them to grasp the qualities of perseverance and noble integrity symbolized by the plum blossom. This inspires students to maintain firm beliefs and tenacious willpower when facing difficulties and setbacks, thereby cultivating their indomitable moral character.

2.1.2. Enhancing students' cultural literacy and aesthetic ability

As a traditional Chinese instrument, the Guzheng carries profound historical and cultural substance. Integrating ideological and political education into Guzheng teaching can guide students to deeply understand the cultural connotations inherent in Guzheng art, thereby enhancing their cultural literacy. In the process of learning the Guzheng, students must not only master performance skills but also understand the historical origins, developmental trajectory, and stylistic characteristics of different schools of Guzheng. By studying Guzheng culture, students gain exposure to China's long history and splendid culture, broadening their cultural horizons and enriching their reservoir of cultural knowledge. The unique aesthetic value of Guzheng art can effectively enhance students' aesthetic abilities. During performance, the Guzheng's diverse and rich timbre can express a variety of emotions and artistic conceptions, allowing students to continuously improve their aesthetic creativity ^[2].

2.1.3. Strengthening students' innovative spirit and practical ability

Integrating ideological and political education into Guzheng teaching in higher vocational institutions can provide students with more opportunities for innovation and practical platforms, effectively enhancing their innovative spirit and practical abilities. During teaching, instructors can guide students to interpret and perform Guzheng repertoire from an ideological and political perspective. Students are encouraged to rearrange or create new works based on traditional Guzheng pieces, integrating contemporary social values and the spirit of the times, thereby endowing the works with new connotations and vitality. By organizing students to participate in Guzheng performance (practical activities), they can practice their performance skills and stage presence. Simultaneously, this cultivates teamwork spirit and communication skills, improves their practical abilities and overall quality, and allows students to experience their own value and responsibility in practice.

2.2. Promoting the reform of Guzheng teaching

2.2.1. Enriching teaching content and forms

Integrating ideological and political education into Guzheng teaching brings new expansions to the teaching content. Traditional Guzheng teaching content primarily revolved around performance techniques and repertoire study. After integration, the teaching content is enriched. When selecting repertoire, teachers pay more attention to the ideological and political connotations within the pieces. For example, “General’s Command”, with its majestic momentum and stirring melody, showcases the bravery and patriotic spirit of ancient soldiers. During teaching, instructors not only impart performance skills but also delve into the historical stories, cultural background, and conveyed spiritual (connotations) behind the repertoire. This enables students to learn about scenes of ancient warfare and the patriotic sentiments of soldiers while acquiring skills, broadening their cultural horizons, enriching their knowledge reserve, and enhancing their attention to and reflection on real life. In terms of teaching forms, activities such as Guzheng culture lectures can be held, inviting experts to explain the historical development, cultural connotations of the Guzheng, and its integration points with ideological and political education, allowing students to understand Guzheng art from a broader perspective. Organizing students to watch or participate in Guzheng concerts or skill competitions can guide them to analyze the ideological and political elements within excellent works, improving their aesthetic and ideological-political literacy.

2.2.2. Improving teaching quality and effectiveness

Firstly, from the perspective of student learning motivation, the positive values and spiritual power conveyed by ideological and political education can stimulate students’ intrinsic motivation for learning Guzheng. When students understand the profound cultural heritage and national spirit carried by Guzheng art, they develop a stronger interest and enthusiasm for learning it. For instance, by learning “Evening Song of the Fishing Boat”, students can feel the ancient working people’s yearning for a better life and their praise for nature. This emotional resonance can inspire students’ love for the Guzheng, making them more actively engaged in learning, thereby improving their learning initiative and proactiveness. Secondly, integration helps enhance the depth of student learning. In traditional Guzheng teaching, students often focused only on training performance techniques, neglecting the understanding of the work’s (connotations). After integration, while learning performance techniques, students pay more attention to exploring the emotions, thoughts, and cultural connotations embodied in the works.

2.3. Positive impact on campus culture construction

2.3.1. Creating a favorable campus cultural atmosphere

The integration of Guzheng teaching and ideological and political education in higher vocational institutions can bring a strong cultural atmosphere to the campus. As a traditional Chinese instrument, the Guzheng’s unique timbre and beautiful melodies attract students’ attention and stimulate their interest in traditional culture. Holding activities such as Guzheng concerts and cultural lectures on campus allows students to experience the charm of Guzheng art up close, creating an artistic campus environment. During concerts, students performing classic Guzheng pieces can be subtly influenced by cultural influence, enhancing their own cultural literacy and aesthetic standards.

2.3.2. Inheriting and promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture

Integrating ideological and political education into Guzheng teaching enables students to understand the cultural connotations of Guzheng art more deeply, strengthening their sense of identity and belonging to excellent traditional Chinese culture. By learning about the historical origins, developmental trajectory, and stylistic characteristics of different schools of Guzheng, students can understand China’s long history and splendid culture, and experience the unique charm of excellent traditional Chinese culture. In the process of learning the Guzheng, students not only master performance skills but also learn about the close connections between the Guzheng and other art forms such as poetry, painting, and calligraphy, appreciating the diversity and comprehensiveness of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

3. Exploring pathways for integrating Guzheng teaching and ideological and political education in higher vocational institutions

3.1. Integration of teaching content

3.1.1. Exploring ideological and political elements in classic repertoire

The teaching of classic Guzheng pieces offers opportunities to explore their rich ideological and political connotations. For example, “Spring River Flower Moon Night”, with its graceful and melodious tune, depicts the enchanting scenery of a spring night on the river in Jiangnan. During instruction, teachers can guide students to delve into the creative background of the piece, helping them appreciate the ancient literati’s admiration for the nation’s landscapes, thereby stimulating national pride and patriotic sentiment. Another example is “Winter Crows Playing in the Water”, which showcases the unique musical style and cultural customs of the Chaoshan area. By explaining the regional cultural characteristics reflected in the piece, teachers can enhance students’ identification with local culture and foster their awareness of inheriting and promoting excellent local traditional culture.

3.1.2. Infusing historical and cultural knowledge

The Guzheng boasts a long history. Integrating knowledge about its development into teaching provides a valuable opportunity for ideological and political education. Instructors can explain how the Guzheng evolved from the “Se” of the Warring States period, undergoing millennia of inheritance and innovation, with distinct developmental characteristics in different dynasties. For instance, the Guzheng held a significant position in the court music of the Tang Dynasty, reflecting the prosperous cultural scene of the time. Through such historical explanations, students can recognize the depth and continuity of excellent traditional Chinese culture, building cultural confidence. Simultaneously, introducing the exquisite craftsmanship of ancient Guzheng making, such as the meticulous selection of materials and complex production processes, highlights the artisans’ spirit of striving for excellence, guiding students to maintain focus and dedication in their own Guzheng practice^[3].

3.2. Integration of teaching methods

3.2.1. Application of the storytelling approach

Using the teaching of the Guzheng piece “Eternal Regret at Lin’an” as an example, which is based on the story of the Southern Song patriotic general Yue Fei and embodies profound patriotic sentiment and national integrity. During instruction, the teacher introduces the historical story of Yue Fei’s loyal service to the country. Through vivid storytelling, students’ admiration for Yue Fei and indignation towards treacherous officials are stimulated, creating strong emotional resonance. After students gain a deep understanding of the piece’s background, the teacher guides them to listen to a performance video of “Eternal Regret at Lin’an”, allowing them to perceive the complex emotions such as grief, indignation, helplessness, and determination expressed in the music. During the listening process, the teacher poses timely questions and organizes group discussions, where students share their views and feelings.

3.2.2. Practice of project-based learning

In the project design and planning phase, the teacher determines the project theme based on teaching objectives and ideological-political education requirements. Centering on this theme, specific project tasks are designed. For instance, students, working in groups, create a Guzheng piece with contemporary characteristics, integrating ideological and political elements such as socialist core values. In this stage, the teacher clarifies the project’s goals, tasks, timeline, and evaluation criteria. During the implementation phase, students collaborate in groups, dividing tasks for activities like data collection, repertoire analysis, and rehearsal. While gathering information, students deeply research the development history of Guzheng art, characteristics of different schools, and contemporary music trends, while also paying attention to social issues and the spirit of the era to find inspiration for their composition. During rehearsals, students continuously adjust performance techniques and expressive methods, improving their playing skills and enhancing teamwork. In the

project presentation and evaluation phase, students showcase their outcomes through concerts, video presentations, etc.

3.2.3. Utilization of the situational teaching method

The situational teaching method involves creating vivid and imaginative scenarios, allowing students to feel and understand ideological and political content within specific contexts, thereby improving learning outcomes. In Guzheng teaching, instructors can use multimedia resources to create scenarios. When teaching the piece “Lin Chong Flees at Night”, the teacher can assign students to role-play characters like Lin Chong and Gao Qiu. By simulating the scene where Lin Chong is framed by Gao Qiu and forced to flee, students personally experience Lin Chong’s anguish, helplessness, and spirit of resistance. Through role-playing, students gain a deeper understanding of the darkness and oppression of feudal society and the struggle between justice and evil. The teacher guides students to reflect, prompting them to think about and comprehend the ideological and political content within the scenario.

3.3. Integration of teaching evaluation

3.3.1. Constructing a teaching evaluation index system integrated with ideological and political education

Constructing such an evaluation index system requires adhering to the principle of comprehensiveness. The system should cover students’ performance in multiple aspects, including Guzheng performance knowledge and skills, ideological-political literacy, cultural understanding and inheritance, and innovation ability, providing a comprehensive reflection of learning outcomes and overall competence. Regarding Guzheng performance knowledge and skills, it should assess not only the mastery of musical techniques but also the ability to apply performance skills to pieces of different styles. Specific indicators can be divided into four dimensions: Knowledge and Skills, Ideological-Political Literacy, Cultural Literacy, and Comprehensive Ability. The Knowledge and Skills dimension include the accuracy and proficiency of Guzheng performance techniques, the ability to grasp rhythm and intonation in repertoire, and the understanding and application of musical expressiveness. The Ideological-Political Literacy dimension covers the mastery of ideological-political theoretical knowledge, the ability to express the ideological-political emotions embedded in the works during performance, and the demonstration of correct values in learning and daily life. The Cultural Literacy dimension assesses the understanding of Guzheng’s historical and cultural knowledge, the ability to understand and interpret Guzheng works from different cultural backgrounds, and the sense of identity and pride in excellent traditional Chinese culture. The Comprehensive Ability dimension evaluates the unique creativity and individuality displayed in performance, stage performance capability, and the ability to handle unexpected situations on stage.

3.3.2. Adopting diversified teaching evaluation methods

Employing diversified teaching evaluation methods ensures the objectivity and fairness of assessment. A combination of process-oriented evaluation and outcome-oriented evaluation can be adopted. Process-oriented evaluation focuses on students’ performance during the Guzheng learning process, such as classroom participation, practice attitude, cooperation skills, and the understanding and application of ideological-political elements. It captures individual student growth through methods like classroom observation records, learning logs, and peer assessment within groups. Outcome-oriented evaluation focuses on the final learning outcomes, assessed through performance examinations, work presentations, etc.

4. Conclusion

While this study has achieved certain outcomes, it still possesses limitations. The research scope is somewhat confined, primarily focusing on specific higher vocational institutions. The investigation into the integration of Guzheng teaching and ideological and political education across different regions and various types of higher vocational colleges is not sufficiently comprehensive. It fails to fully account for the impact of disparities in teaching resources, faculty expertise, and student characteristics among institutions on the effectiveness of integration. Future research should aim to broaden

its scope to include a wider range of higher vocational institutions from diverse regions and of different types. This will allow for a deeper investigation into the distinctive characteristics and challenges encountered by various colleges during the integration process, ultimately leading to the summarization of more universally applicable integration models and methodologies ^[4].

Funding

2025 Vocational Education Teaching Reform Research Project of the Shaanxi Society of Vocational and Technical Education (Project No.: 2025SZX538)

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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