Scientific Research Publishing

Open Journal of Applied Sciences, 2026, 16(11), 4714-4722
https://www.scirp.org/journal/ojapps
ISSN Online: 2165-3925
ISSN Print: 2165-3917

An Innovative Path for Curriculum Ideological and Political Education in the Tour Leader Practice Course Empowered by the Xuexitong Platform

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How to cite this paper: Hao, J.Y. (2026) An Innovative Path for Curriculum Ideological and Political Education in the Tour Leader Practice Course Empowered by the Xuexitong Platform. *Open Journal of Applied Sciences*, **16**, 4714-4722.
https://doi.org/10.4236/ojapps.2026.1611260

Received: October 9, 2026
Accepted: November 22, 2026
Published: November 25, 2026

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Abstract

The outbound tourism course Tour Leader Practice is a practice-oriented teaching course for the application-oriented undergraduate tourism management major. In the process of teaching, we identified many difficulties in integrating ideological and political education into the course: the integration of ideological-political content with professional content is "forced"; constrained by objective conditions, it is disconnected from real production-education scenarios; and the course evaluation system is unitary while the process is hard to quantify. Guided by the "patriotic sentiment + international competence + professional responsibility" objective orientation required by curriculum ideological and political education, and drawing on cooperation with leading culture-tourism enterprises and the "Xuexitong" teaching platform, this paper redesigns and improves the teaching process. It should be noted that the innovative design scheme and evaluation approach proposed in this paper are still only a framework and need to be further piloted, trialed, and implemented in classroom teaching; the effect judgments mentioned in the paper are all expected effects and still need to be verified through teaching practice. It is also hoped that this pilot scheme can provide a practical reference model for the ideological and political construction of foreign-related courses in the tourism management major.

Keywords

Tour Leader Practice, Curriculum Ideological and Political Education, Teaching Innovation

1. Background of the Construction of Curriculum Ideological and Political Education and Its Educational Orientation

Tour Leader Practice is a core skills course of the tourism management major and corresponds directly to the competency requirements of the outbound tour leader post. When students take Chinese tourists abroad, they are not only tour guides but also a window for "showcasing China's image" overseas and envoys of people-to-people exchanges between China and other countries. This particularity determines that the course cannot be offered separately as one that teaches operational skills only; the whole course should imperceptibly assume the function of value guidance [1], and the tour leaders it produces should have solid professional skills, cultural confidence, awareness of law and compliance, and a sense of responsibility for cross-border work.

As the culture-tourism industry now pursues high-quality development, the requirements for outbound tourism talent differ from those in the past. [2] A traditional tour leader needed only to handle entry and exit formalities; today's tour leader must be a cross-cultural service provider and a cultural communicator, and must also be able to control risks. Feedback from employers shows that some newly recruited tour leaders have a shallow understanding of destination cultures, an insufficiently firm cultural stance in foreign-related services, and a weak sense of responsibility when emergencies occur. These problems force us, in teaching, to place professional quality and value shaping on an equal footing with skills training. The ideological and political construction of this course centres on the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and takes "cultivating new-era outbound tour leaders who can serve, understand culture, observe rules, and have a sense of commitment" as its core orientation, which is also consistent with the positioning of the tourism management major in cultivating applied talents.

2. Real Problems in Current Curriculum Ideological and Political Teaching

Based on teaching practice and teaching-research surveys in recent years, we found that the ideological and political construction of this course faces three practical problems that directly affect the effectiveness of education:

2.1. Fragmented Integration of Ideological-Political Elements: The "Forced Implantation" Phenomenon

Tour Leader Practice is a highly practical course, yet the integration of ideological-political content is generally scattered and often forcibly inserted. [3] Teachers occasionally insert a few patriotic slogans or recite several policy provisions, which do not connect with the real foreign-related scenarios of tour leading. Sometimes, while explaining a skill, a teacher suddenly inserts a piece of ideological-political content, which interrupts the coherence of professional teaching; students also feel that such content has nothing to do with the tour-leading work they will do

in the future, so it is difficult to improve professional ability and value guidance together.

2.2. Disconnection from Production-Education Integration Scenarios: Lack of Concrete Practice Carriers

Ideological-political education used to be delivered mainly as theory in the classroom, with insufficient real tour-leading cases from school-enterprise cooperation and a lack of resources such as simulated training scenarios, so ideological-political education remained at the verbal level. [4] Students had no opportunity to experience in real foreign-related service scenarios what "the tour leader as a cultural envoy" really means; value guidance floated on the surface and could not turn into conscious awareness in students' professional behaviour.

2.3. A Unitary Evaluation System: The Effect of Ideological-Political Education Is Hard to Quantify

Traditional course assessment mainly looks at written examination scores and practical skills, and provides no implementable observable indicators for such ideological-political dimensions as students' professional quality, value cognition, and cultural stance in foreign-related services. [5] This makes it impossible either to effectively test the actual effect of ideological-political education or to use the results in turn to drive the optimization of teaching. We previously tried group role-playing for scenario simulation, but the effect was only average: many students did not participate actively, and introverted students were even somewhat resistant. The training process relied heavily on teachers' subjective judgment and lacked unified assessment criteria; whether students' service language was standardized, whether their bottom-line awareness was sufficient, and how well they communicated all lacked quantifiable assessment indicators. Teachers find it difficult to accurately identify students' shortcomings in professional cognition, and formative evaluation cannot be put into practice.

3. Innovative Practice Paths for Curriculum Ideological and Political Teaching

In response to the problems described above, in terms of production-education integration, platform building, and multi-dimensional evaluation, we designed a systematic improvement scheme, hoping to truly integrate ideological-political elements with professional teaching.

3.1. Coupling Job Tasks with Scenarios: Solving the Fragmentation and Forced Implantation of Ideological-Political Education in the Tour Leader Practice Course

How can the problem of scattered ideological-political elements that are disconnected from professional teaching be solved? We adopted the idea of "managing the whole process and entering through scenarios" to make a systematic improvement: we sorted out one by one the 12 main work links of a tour leader, from "pre-

departure qualification review, outbound clearance and leading the tour, and interaction with guests abroad, to self-summary after returning home", and matched such ideological-political points as "strengthening the awareness of foreign-related rule of law, fulfilling the mission of safeguarding the national gateway, and enhancing the awareness of proactively presenting Chinese culture abroad" to each professional skill training link, so that ideological-political content is no longer slogan-style rhetoric divorced from practical content, but flows naturally along with professional teaching.

We then drew on the real group-leading experience of partner culture-tourism enterprises to accumulate cases and transformed ideological-political requirements into operational exercises that can be simulated and practised. While practising tour-leading skills, students gradually develop corresponding inner value awareness, which avoids inserting ideological-political requirements abruptly halfway through a skill explanation and creating a sense of fragmentation. This also helps to adjust the design of classroom interaction: we make full use of class activities on Xuexitong, such as thematic discussions and scenario-based quick answers, and guide students to proactively share the positive value choices they made when acting as tour leaders, thus turning ideological-political education from one-way indoctrination by teachers into students' own construction of professional cognition, and letting students gradually realize that these ideological-political requirements are, in fact, important capabilities they must possess for future tour-leading work.

3.2. Building a Multi-Dimensional, Scenario-Based Education System Based on School-Enterprise Collaboration and the Xuexitong Platform

The first layer introduces a "case library of real enterprise tour-leading ideological-political cases". Together with partner culture-tourism enterprises, we selected real tour-leading cases such as "overseas cultural exchange" and "handling foreign-related compliance issues", organized them into the structure of "scenario—problem—value guidance" as teaching content, replacing purely ideological-political lecturing and directly presenting students with scenarios in which frontline practitioners actually face value choices.

The second layer takes the "class activities" module of "Xuexitong" as a carrier, naturally combining ideological-political content with various learning interactions, so that students are willing to "learn" and gain experience:

1) Thematic discussion activity. A discussion topic is posted in the "class activities" module of Xuexitong, and students participate through the learning app, which overcomes the previous awkward situation of an inactive classroom atmosphere in which few students took the initiative to answer. Discussion raises students' willingness to participate and allows ideological-political elements to be reflected in the discussion.

2) Group task activity. Students are divided into "tour-leading groups" and work together in the group collaboration space of Xuexitong, dividing the work

and jointly polishing the content, which also cultivates their sense of teamwork, and is expected to be more efficient than the previous role-playing approach, with better student participation and better ideological-political education outcomes.

3) Immersive interactive quick-answer activity in class. Based on the quick-answer function of Xuexitong, students are given on-site problems arising in various foreign-related situations in a tour leader's outbound work and answer in real time, thereby strengthening, through this competition, their awareness of national gateway security and their capacity for cultural communication, with ideological-political points well embedded in the skill-based answering process.

4) Anonymous opinion voting. For some controversial professional scenarios, a voting activity is posted on Xuexitong; students can submit their choices anonymously, and teachers respond to the value choices in light of industry norms and principles, which accommodates the willingness of introverted students to speak up and engages the majority of students in ideological-political interaction.

This scheme uses the built-in class activity functions of Xuexitong and requires no additional complex system to combine ideological-political elements with professional interaction. [6] It is expected that this will increase students' enthusiasm for participation and solve the problems of narrow coverage and rigid, generalized content in traditional classroom ideological-political interaction.

The third layer is to take ideological-political education beyond the classroom. We have signed student on-the-job practice cooperation agreements with international travel agencies qualified for outbound tourism and, under current conditions, strive every semester to secure as many opportunities as possible for students to join tour groups. In the real service experience of assisting outbound tourists with customs clearance, handling check-in formalities, and dealing with emergencies, students appreciate the working responsibility of a tour leader as a "people-to-people envoy", so that the ideological-political ideas learned in class are transformed into conscious practice in real posts.

3.3. Building a Multi-Dimensional Evaluation System of "Scenario Scoring + Joint School-Enterprise Assessment"

First, we broke away from the previous reliance on teachers' subjective scoring and turned to the full-process data trail of Xuexitong before and after class, incorporating such behavioural data as students' participation in ideological-political thematic discussions in class, their enthusiasm in quick answers, and their check-in rate for after-class practical training into the scope of process-based evaluation.

Second, we formulated a scientific quantitative evaluation form for scenario-simulation training, decomposing one by one the ideological-political elements involved in scenario activities when students participate in outbound simulation training, with each item corresponding to a clear ideological-political element and being quantifiable, thus avoiding the scoring discrepancies caused by subjective judgment in group scenario role-playing. [7]

Finally, we designed an "enterprise mentor joint assessment" approach, in

which senior tour leaders of the partner culture-tourism enterprises who guide students' on-the-job practice score the professional quality that students demonstrate in the practice sessions, and the evaluation results of both school and enterprise are added together (synthesized by weight).

To make the evaluation results more objective, the content of ideological-political evaluation is decomposed into three sub-dimensions—patriotic sentiment, international competence, and professional responsibility—each assigned a weight, as shown in the table below:

Ideological and political evaluation dimensions	Weight	Observable behavioural indicators (competence-based evidence)
Patriotic sentiment	30%	Able to proactively safeguard the national image and the interests of tourists.
International competence	35%	Familiar with the whole workflow of a tour leader abroad and acts as an envoy of cultural exchange between China and other countries.
Professional responsibility	35%	Familiar with the provisions of industry laws and regulations, holds the compliance bottom line, practices lawfully, and remains honest and self-disciplined.

3.4. Teaching Example: The Node of "Handling Emergencies during an Overseas Itinerary"

The following takes the node of "handling emergencies during an overseas itinerary", one of the 12 work nodes in the tour leader workflow, to illustrate the whole teaching design.

The practical task is arranged as follows: a group member suddenly develops acute gastroenteritis during free time abroad on the trip, and the tour leader must reach the scene within the limited time available to organize handling, arrange medical care, adjust the itinerary, and report information. Students receive a task package in the "Tour Leader Practice" course on Xuexitong, which contains destination hospital information, an excerpt from the Travel Medical Insurance, the travel agency's emergency response plan, and a voice message simulating a tourist asking for help. This task has three value objectives. For patriotic sentiment, the requirement is to put the guest's health first and protect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese guests; for international competence, the requirement is to respect the local medical and health services and medical-seeking customs of the destination and to use appropriate "cross-cultural" language; for professional responsibility, the requirement is to report level by level according to the emergency plan and not to promise expenses beyond the prior authorization.

The supporting Xuexitong activities consist of four stages: before class, micro-lectures and a pre-class test are pushed to students for preview, verifying their mastery of the medical treatment process and insurance clauses; in class, scenario-based quick answers are used to pose the ranking question of "whom to contact first"; after class, students work in groups in the collaboration space and submit a handling timetable; and finally, anonymous voting is used to collect their choices

on the scenario in which "the local hospital requires a deposit in advance but the pre-authorized amount given by the travel agency is insufficient", after which the teacher comments in accordance with industry norms and standards.

The evaluation of this node rests entirely on observable behaviours: whether the emergency handling process is compliant corresponds to professional responsibility; whether the guest's personal health is given priority during handling corresponds to patriotic sentiment; and whether communication with the simulated counterpart conforms to local medical-seeking customs corresponds to the international competence dimension. The three items are aggregated into an ideological-political score according to the weights listed in the table above.

The other 11 nodes follow the same logic and structure: first the job task is stated, then it is decomposed into the three value dimensions, then mapped to the corresponding tasks on Xuexitong, and finally to specific behavioural evaluation. Training on Xuexitong is only part of the learning; through on-the-job practice, students can truly appreciate the difference between being in a real scenario and ordinary classroom exercises, and can ask industry mentors for correction.

4. Main Innovations of the Curriculum Ideological and Political Reform in This Course

The first innovation is to break the previous dilemma of "two skins" in which ideological-political education and teaching content are separated, and to match the 12 job nodes in the whole process of tour leading one by one with such ideological-political points as patriotic sentiment, international competence, and professional responsibility, so that students can comprehend the essentials of these ideological-political elements with thorough understanding in learning and practice.

The second is that school-enterprise collaboration solves the problem of disconnection from production-education integration scenarios. Ideological-political education is brought back from "verbal preaching" to real on-the-job practice scenarios, allowing students to grow through practice.

The third is to establish a "traceable and quantifiable" multi-dimensional evaluation system: with the full-process behavioural data "trail" of Xuexitong plus the dual assessment by school and enterprise mentors, the bias of the previous teachers' subjective scoring is avoided.

5. Research Limitations and Applicable Boundaries

This scheme faces two practical limitations during implementation that need to be stated.

The first limitation is that students do not have equal access to on-the-job practice opportunities in enterprises. On-the-job practice requires partner culture-tourism enterprises to have a certain "absorptive capacity", and the number of "real tour-leading" practice opportunities available each semester is limited. This makes students' score bases in enterprise mentor assessment inconsistent, and

also means that the scenario-based education part of the scheme cannot reach every student.

The second limitation is probably the "social desirability" type of answer. In thematic discussions or anonymous voting, when confronted with topics such as patriotic stance or foreign-related clauses, some students may give answers that cater to teachers' expectations rather than expressing their true views. If such answers are scored, the ideological-political dimension will be overestimated, and the evaluation results will not reflect students' true views.

These two points limit the scope of application of the scheme and also remind us to remain cautious when using evaluation scores. Unequal access to on-the-job practice means that joint school-enterprise assessment can only serve as evidence for individual students and cannot be used for "horizontal" comparison across the whole class; concern about "social desirability" answers warns us to use discussions and voting mainly for teaching-effect feedback rather than as the main source of competence scores. These two issues are what future pilot trials of the scheme must focus on and resolve.

6. Conclusion

The innovative design schemes proposed by this course reform present only the effects we expect to achieve; how effective the teaching reform actually is still depends on the concrete practice of teaching in the next stage. Future course development will continue to align with the latest job standards for foreign-related tour leaders in the industry, update the frontline tour-leading ideological-political case library, and turn the new real scenarios that keep emerging in the culture-tourism industry into vivid teaching materials for the classroom, striving to "blaze a trail" and "gain experience" for the ideological and political construction of foreign-related majors in tourism management, so that every outbound tour leader who walks out of the classroom can, in future global tour-leading itineraries, become a storyteller of Chinese culture who tells China's story well, a solid pillar of lawful and compliant operation at the national gateway, and a bridge of heart-to-heart connection among people at home and abroad.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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