https://doi.org/10.37420/j.adr.2024.047

Objective Management and Key Results Assessment: A Study on Reforming Academic Evaluation Methods in Ideological and Political Education for Art and Design Courses

Qi Song[1*], Min Huang[1], Bingjie Sun[2], Riyang Li[3]
1 Guangdong University of Finance and Economics, Guangdong, China
2 Foshan University, Guangdong, China
3 Guangdong Polytechnic, Guangdong, China
***Corresponding author, E-mail: songqi@gdufe.edu.cn**

Abstract:
This study focuses on integrating ideological and political education into art and design courses by incorporating the OKR (Objectives and Key Results) approach. It explores effective pathways to establish a closed-loop system connecting teaching objectives, task tracking, and key academic assessments. From the perspectives of teaching management and academic evaluation, the research seeks to identify opportunities for the development and innovation of ideological and political education within art and design courses.

Keywords:
Objective Management, Key Results Assessment, Ideological and Political Education, Art and Design, Academic Evaluation

1. Research Status

1.1 Widespread Application of Objective Management in Teaching, but Limited Localized Research

Teaching has long been one of the most prominent fields for the application of objective management. Over the past several decades, objective management has undergone five major iterations (or four, according to some perspectives), with models such as SMART and KPI playing significant roles in educational contexts. For instance, the SMART principle has been applied to the architectural design of intelligent teaching functions (Liu Chen et al., 2018; Zhu Guanhua, 2019), enhancing students' comprehensive abilities in online and blended learning environments (Chen Ji, 2020; Cao Henglin, 2021), and monitoring teaching effectiveness and quality (Wang Ji et al., 2017; Hao Hongyi et al., 2020). Similarly, KPI is frequently used in managing administrative affairs in teaching, assessing teacher performance (Yu Wen et al., 2019; Yang Yingchuan, 2020; Sun Tao et al., 2020), and standardizing teaching quality (Zheng Huaguang et al., 2017).

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

With evolving times and environments, OKR (Objectives and Key Results) has emerged as the most prominent tool in the field of objective management. However, its integration into education, particularly in the context of new teaching paradigms such as ideological and political education in specialized courses (e.g., art and design) at regional universities (e.g., Guangdong), remains scarce and underexplored.

1.2 The Complementary Necessity Between Art and Design Curriculum Ideology and Objective Management with Key Results Evaluation

On one hand, since 2004, the Chinese government has issued policies to strengthen and improve moral education for minors and ideological-political education for college students. Shanghai has led three phases of reform exploration, culminating in the concept of "curriculum-based ideological and political education" in 2014. Today, this concept has become a central theme in China's higher education. However, in art and design programs, due to the lack of theoretical and action-oriented research, teaching objective management remains loosely structured, and academic evaluation methods are relatively traditional. This has led to a one-dimensional approach to the construction and implementation of ideological and political content in these courses, highlighting the urgent need for innovation and improvement.

On the other hand, over the past two decades, OKR has gained recognition for its structured, focused, collaborative, agile, and growth-oriented characteristics, enabling clear and rapid goal development. As a cutting-edge and highly compatible objective management model, OKR has proven effective in clarifying goal directions, providing valuable insights for professional curriculum ideology aimed at the fundamental task of "cultivating virtue and fostering talent." Moreover, OKR's high compatibility with key results evaluation aligns seamlessly with the critical needs of academic evaluation in art and design curriculum ideology.

Based on the above, integrating the cutting-edge OKR framework into ideological and political education within art and design courses enables the exploration of goal tracking and key results evaluation. By setting challenging goals and fostering individual commitment, this approach seeks to reform academic evaluation methods, promoting the comprehensive development and learning efficacy of art and design students. This approach aligns with the objective development trends in higher education while addressing the regional and institutional developmental needs.

2. Research Significance

2.1 Expanding the Boundaries of Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education to Foster Dynamic and Diverse Research

For a long time, professional courses and ideological and political education in universities have been treated as separate entities, often described as "two skins" that fail to integrate. In the process of talent cultivation, the originally interconnected aspects of knowledge dissemination, value shaping, and skill development have become fragmented. In the context of a rapidly evolving global and domestic ideological landscape, coupled with the dynamic exchange of ideas facilitated by the internet, aligning professional courses with ideological and political theory education has emerged as a core element throughout the talent cultivation process. Under the guiding objective of "cultivating virtue and fostering talent," the innovative introduction of goal tracking

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

and key result evaluation into the academic assessment methods of art and design courses serves to enrich the concept of curriculum-based ideological and political education. It provides theoretical support and practical guidance to extend beyond the narrow perceptions traditionally confined by "design practice" and "strictly serious ideological education." This research contributes to redefining the conceptual boundaries of ideological and political education in art and design courses.

2.2 Clarifying the Development Priorities and Innovation Directions of Ideological and Political Education Model in Finance-Focused Universities

From a disciplinary perspective, art and design programs are characterized by their interdisciplinary, diverse, and innovative nature, with a strong emphasis on practical application. Observations of student learning behaviors reveal traits such as concrete thinking, emotional responsiveness, fragmented focus, and nonlinear reasoning. These characteristics make traditional ideological education, which is predominantly abstract and didactic, less effective. Consequently, curriculum-based ideological and political education with greater integration and expansiveness has become the primary avenue for moral and ethical education in art and design programs. However, due to the lack of theoretical and practical research, art and design curriculum ideology often remains limited to repackaging and rediscovering ideological elements or presenting them through visual effects, resulting in a one-dimensional approach to content development.

The author’s university is a comprehensive institution specializing in social sciences and finance. Guided by the fundamental mission of higher education to “cultivate virtue and nurture talent” and the core design philosophy of “human-centeredness,” the study seeks to leverage the strengths of economic and management disciplines in finance-focused universities to explore academic assessment reform in ideological and political education for art and design courses. By incorporating the concepts of goal tracking and key result evaluation (OKRs), and employing methods such as setting challenging objectives and fostering individual commitment, the research aims to promote students’ holistic development and enhance their learning efficacy. This study provides valuable insights into the development priorities and innovative directions for integrating ideological and political education into art and design curricula in finance-oriented universities.

2.3 Establishing an Academic Assessment Framework Focused on Goal Tracking and Key Result Evaluation to Advance Theoretical Exploration

The core of this research lies in developing an academic assessment framework for art and design curriculum ideology, based on goal tracking and key result evaluation, which integrates causality into teaching. This framework aims to unify instructional design while advancing the theoretical exploration of goal setting, task tracking, and experiential learning within the fields of ideological education, education management, and design studies. On one hand, this initiative enriches the theoretical dimensions of curriculum-based ideological and political education, reflecting a scientific approach to its conceptual development. On the other hand, by aligning hierarchical goal setting and key result tracking with the principles of teaching, it fosters the creation of an academic assessment approach tailored to the distinctive characteristics of art and design curriculum ideology. This represents an innovative contribution to the field, blending theoretical rigor with practical applicability.

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

3. Research Content

To address the relatively one-dimensional educational outcomes of ideological and political education in art and design courses, this study integrates the concept of goal management, represented by OKR, to reform teaching practices. The approach creates a strong correspondence and high compatibility between teaching goal setting, task tracking, and key academic evaluations, forming a closed-loop system. By emphasizing key academic outcome evaluations, the reform effectively stimulates students' intrinsic motivation, enhances learning efficiency, and improves the overall educational outcomes of ideological and political education in art and design courses. From the perspectives of teaching management and academic evaluation, this study explores the possibilities for the development and innovation of ideological and political education in such courses.

3.1 Establishing a Holistic Understanding of the "Cause and Effect" Approach in Ideological and Political Education for Art and Design Courses

On one hand, ideological and political education in professional courses started as a pilot initiative in Shanghai and was later promoted nationwide. Unlike traditional ideological courses that emphasize “demonstrative leadership,” professional course-based ideological education focuses on the subtle and implicit educational effects, often referred to as "hidden education." On the other hand, goal management, originating from successful corporate practices, has received significant attention from academia and has been widely applied in teaching. It is typically used to set learning objectives and design tasks based on the nature of teaching and the essence of goal management.

As a teaching form, ideological and political education must follow educational principles. Therefore, any reform in academic evaluation for art and design ideological and political education must begin with revising teaching objectives. This process adheres to a "cause and effect" logic: setting clear teaching objectives first, followed by implementing multidimensional task-driven processes and robust progress management and evaluations. In practice, this requires fostering a unified understanding among art and design educators through teaching-focused meetings, collective lesson planning, and course exhibitions, ultimately achieving a shared and clear consensus.

3.2 Building a Goal Management System for Art and Design Ideological and Political Education

On the one hand, the teaching model of ideological and political education in the new era has moved beyond the traditional "teaching–receiving" framework. Within the context of ideological and political education in the curriculum, the relationship between educators and learners is characterized as "guidance–engagement." Teachers not only lead students in values-based guidance and knowledge transmission but are also influenced by students in the process. This reciprocal dynamic is especially critical in the rapidly evolving and iterative field of art and design, where teachers and students must engage in mutual learning, collaborative progress, and joint development within the framework of ideological and political education. On the other hand, OKR is a leading method in the field of goal management. It emphasizes a dual-track approach of top-down and bottom-up processes when setting hierarchical goals, fostering collective input from grassroots

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

levels, and inspiring individual initiative and creative motivation. The OKR framework is characterized by its structured, focused, collaborative, agile, and growth-oriented logic, making it highly adaptable. These attributes align closely with the interdisciplinary and innovative nature of art and design disciplines, establishing a strong correlation between the two.

Therefore, this study proposes designing a teaching goal system for ideological and political education in art and design courses based on multiple layers: the overarching goal of "cultivating virtue and nurturing talent," the university's strategic goal of becoming a "first-class finance-focused university in the Bay Area," and the school's vision of establishing a "leading design school in the Bay Area." These alignments set the coordinates for subsequent formative, summative, qualitative, and quantitative evaluation mechanisms.

3.3 Establishing a Key Academic Outcome Evaluation Mechanism

Art and design students often exhibit weaker logical thinking but stronger emotional and intuitive reasoning, frequently presenting as highly individualistic. This study incorporates goal tracking and key outcome evaluation concepts, encouraging students to participate in setting and monitoring their goals. Empowering students in this way fosters self-directed learning and personal development.

In academic evaluation, the approach is primarily based on OKR, observing teaching progress, the frequency of information updates, and the completion rates of key tasks. Each level of objectives is measured against at least two key academic outcomes. These outcomes are tracked throughout daily teaching, promoting continuous innovation and improvement among students to achieve expected and challenging objectives. This process fosters students' commitment and aligns their goals with the fundamental mission of ideological and political education in professional courses.

3.4 Critical Issues to Consider During Research

Balancing Student Empowerment: As students' perspectives and societal contexts evolve, the goals of ideological and political education must reflect contemporary values, institutional visions, and the specific interests of art and design students. However, the divergent and fragmented thinking typical of art and design students may result in varied or conflicting expectations for shared goals. Excessive empowerment could disrupt or hinder the teaching process.

Setting Appropriate OKR Levels and Quantity Limits: The overarching goal of ideological and political education, "cultivating virtue and nurturing talent," is an abstract and non-quantifiable concept. OKR-based reforms must carefully manage the relationship between course objectives and this overarching goal, strictly controlling the number of OKRs. When designing key results (KR), both qualitative (phases, modules, relevance) and quantitative (measurable metrics) aspects must be balanced. Scoring methods should be simple yet effective.

Linking OKRs to Academic Evaluation: In OKR-driven teaching, the primary focus of progress tracking is not on punitive or reward-based measures but rather on aligning efforts with educational goals and boosting confidence. Unlike KPI, OKRs maintain a loose coupling with formal evaluations, forming a nonlinear relationship. Significant consideration and processing are required to translate OKR progress into academic

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

performance outcomes effectively.

4. Implementation of the Plan and Reform Outcomes

This study differs from the traditional focus of ideological and political education in art and design courses, which typically emphasizes the re-exploration of ideological elements, the exploration of implementation paths, and the display of case results. Instead, this research focuses on the enhancement of the overall impact of ideological and political education in art and design courses from the perspective of goal management, specifically through the use of goal tracking and key academic results evaluation. The implementation of the plan is carried out in three stages:

Firstly, the study begins by applying goal management methods in the field of education, using the highly compatible OKR framework. This approach integrates the fundamental goals of cultivating moral integrity and the core socialist values into the curriculum, constructing a unified framework for goal setting, task tracking, and academic evaluation. Secondly, the study examines the development trends of course-based ideological education, the socio-economic development needs of the Greater Bay Area, and the characteristics of finance-oriented universities. It investigates the specific mechanisms for goal management and academic evaluation within art and design courses. From the perspective of the OKR framework, this involves analyzing the goals of art and design courses and constructing a goal management system that aligns with the fundamental objectives of moral education, regional development needs, and institutional or professional goals. By setting levels and quantities for key academic results, and considering both qualitative and quantitative evaluation, the system ensures an organic connection between goal setting, task tracking, and key academic results evaluation.

This research expands the connotations and extensions of course-based ideological education in art and design programs, enriching the research perspectives and application scenarios of ideological and political education teaching in art and design. It also contributes to the integration of cross-disciplinary approaches within the design disciplines, promoting the comprehensive development and learning efficiency of art and design students. The study not only re-explores and redefines the professional content of the courses, guiding students to reflect on the relationships between history, reality, and development, but also immerses them in cultivating values by encouraging them to align their learning objectives with broader societal goals. Furthermore, through methods such as peer support, collaboration between undergraduates and master's students, and school-enterprise partnerships, the research fosters a broader exploration of design through key academic results evaluation. Students are encouraged to apply their knowledge and skills to serve economic development and societal needs, thus achieving the unified goals of moral cultivation, education, and empowerment.

In the preliminary research and the reforms carried out over the past three years, the research team, guided by the effective implementation of ideological and political education goal management and key results evaluation, has helped students remain engaged with issues such as the seasonal challenges of local cultural tourism, the status of volunteer activities for aging rural populations, and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. These initiatives have led to substantial achievements in both in-class and extracurricular creative outputs. Students have won multiple honors, including the silver award at the "Internet+" College

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition and the "Challenge Cup" College Student Extracurricular Academic Science and Technology Works Competition at both the university and provincial levels. The teaching team has received numerous recognitions, including the university's first ideological and political education Demonstration Major, excellent teaching cases in ideological and political education at Guangdong University of Finance and Economics, and several other awards. Many faculty members have been granted prestigious honors such as the first-class undergraduate teaching quality and teaching reform projects, online open course application projects, Guangdong Province's Graduate Education Innovation Program, and the university's annual teaching quality excellence awards. The principal investigator of this study, Song Qi, led the team in November 2024 to successfully secure approval for the Ministry of Education's first batch of the "Dual-Leadership" Teacher Party Branch "Strengthening the Nation" Special Action Team for universities, laying a solid foundation for extending the impact of party-led ideological and political education in the next phase of societal outreach.

Funding

This paper is supported by the following funding projects:

1. 2021 Guangdong Province Higher Education Teaching Quality and Teaching Reform Project: "Research and Practice on the Reform of Academic Evaluation Methods for Ideological and Political Education in Art and Design Courses" (Yue Jiao Gao Han [2021] No. 29)

2. 2024 Guangdong Province Graduate Education Innovation Program: "Research and Practice on Teaching Reform in Design Master's Courses under Inquiry-Based Learning Scenarios" (2024JGXM_75)

3. 2023 Guangdong Province Philosophy and Social Science Planning Project: "Research on the Design of Elderly Volunteer Services in Rural Cultural Facility Management Systems" (GD23CYS19)

References

[1]Hu, C. (2023). Research on the construction of academic evaluation indicators for students in application-oriented undergraduate universities. Vocational and Technical Education, 44(26), 75-80.
[2]Sun, L., & Chen, T. (2022). University teaching project governance: Logical dilemmas, special issues, and risk prevention. Jiangsu Higher Education, (03), 43-48.
[3]Sun, H., Cai, Y., Li, X., et al. (2022). Outcome-oriented learning activity teaching design. Higher Education Development and Evaluation, 38(06), 99-111, 123-124.
[4]Qiao, Z., Li, Y., & Shen, T. (2024). Research on the empathetic teaching model and design practice of ideological and political education in art courses: A case study of architectural culture and industrial heritage innovation design. Packaging Engineering, 45(S1), 494-497, 529.
[5]Xu, Z. (2024). Cultivating college students' values under the "big ideological and political education" framework: Innovation and practice of ideological and political education in art theory courses. Jiangsu Higher Education, (05), 102-105.
[6]Zhao, P., & Jiang, N. (2023). Research on the innovative path of integrating ideological and political education into social practice teaching in the context of the new liberal arts: A case study of the social practice

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

teaching innovation in the "Cultural Display Design" course. Chinese University Teaching, (11), 65-68.
[7]Zhao, W. (2022). Research on teaching strategies and practices of ideological and political education in art courses. Chinese Education Journal, (12), 157-158.
[8]Liu, J. (2024). Research on the design of teaching models for ideological and political education reform from the perspective of industry-education integration: A case study of the Smart Health and Elderly Care Services and Management program. Public Relations World, (20), 157-159.

© 2024 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)