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Application and Practice of Project-Based Teaching Method in the Course "Youth Social Work"

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ABSTRACT
The integration of project-based teaching methods and the concept of life education provides a new theoretical perspective and practical framework for the reform of the "Youth Social Work" course. This study is based on the four-dimensional relationships of "self, others, environment, and spirituality", combined with digital teaching methods, to systematically construct a curriculum teaching model characterized by value-driven and technology-enabled approaches. The aim is to explore innovative paths for the deep integration of professional knowledge transfer and the construction of life meaning through hierarchical teaching design and multidimensional collaborative mechanisms, providing theoretical support for the transformation of social work education.

KEYWORDS
Project-based teaching method; youth social work; life education; digital empowerment

The "Youth Social Work" course is one of the key courses for training professionals in social work, aiming not only to impart professional knowledge but also to cultivate students' practical abilities and sense of social responsibility. However, traditional teaching models often fail to meet the needs for improving students' comprehensive qualities, particularly in the areas of life education awareness and digital skills. The project-based teaching method, as a practice-oriented teaching model, can stimulate students' interest in learning and practical abilities through the design and implementation of specific projects. At the same time, the integration of life education concepts provides deeper value guidance for course teaching, helping students better understand the relationships between self, others, environment, and spirituality, thereby promoting their holistic development. This paper explores innovative paths for the teaching model of the "Youth Social Work" course based on the "four-dimensional relationship" framework, combining project-based teaching methods and digital empowerment tools, aiming to support curriculum reform and promote the transformation and development of social work education.

1 Educational Implications of the Four-Dimensional Relationships in Life Education

1.1 Value Orientation of the Self-Dimension

The education of the relationship between individuals and themselves fundamentally aims to cultivate "the awareness of the observer". Youth social workers often fall into the dilemma of being "confused by their own involvement", such as perceiving the resistance of service recipients as a lack of personal ability or unconsciously projecting their original family traumas onto their work. This ambiguity in self-awareness can lead to professional burnout. The deeper value of education lies in teaching students to establish a "third perspective"—just as one must not only see their expression in the mirror but also be aware of the emotional mechanisms behind it. When students realize that "my dislike for internet-addicted youths may stem from my rebellious memories of being controlled in childhood", this awakening can break the thinking pattern of "the problem lies with the other", leading to a true understanding that the starting point of helping others is continuous self-examination.

1.2 Practical Demands of the Other-Dimension

The education of the relationship between individuals and others centers on breaking the cognitive limitations of "emotional isolation". Many students equate empathy with "putting oneself in other's shoes", but in real scenarios, there often exist multiple conflicting positions. For example, when addressing school bullying, one must understand the trauma of the victim, gain insight into the psychological deficiencies of the perpetrator, and consider the group pressure on bystanders. The deeper significance of education reveals that true empathy is not emotional replication but the ability to construct a multidimensional cognitive grid. This requires students to perceive the emotional temperature of

individuals in specific situations while also stepping out of specific roles to see the cold logic of systemic structures. When students become aware that "the bullying student is actually mimicking the way his father treats his mother", they break through the black-and-white moral judgments and begin to understand the complex nature of human behavior.

1.3 Ecological Perspective of the Environment-Dimension

The education of the relationship between individuals and the environment fundamentally aims to cultivate the insight of "seeing the abyss through the cracks". Novice workers easily fall into the trap of "treating symptoms rather than causes", such as simply attributing youth crime to personal moral issues. The deeper value of education lies in revealing the immersive influence of the environment on individuals: how the monitoring blind spots of dark alleys become breeding grounds for crime, and how the layout of benches in community squares affects the quality of intergenerational communication. When students understand that "the youth stealing from the convenience store is actually treating the narrow aisle between shelves as the only private space he can control", they begin to view problems from an ecological perspective—physical space is not merely a container for behavior but also an invisible hand shaping behavior patterns.

1.4 Ethical Tension of the Spirituality-Dimension

The "individual and spirituality" dimension confronts the most tangled issues in social work: how to choose when rules, human feelings, and reality conflict? Just like an old farmer facing drought must decide whether to water seedlings or protect rice seedlings first. In teaching, real case studies are used to train students: for example, discovering that a left-behind youth is stealing to pay for school fees—should one report it or help him find financial aid? Through the "three-step choice method"—Firstly, consider the legal bottom line; Secondly, listen to the thoughts of the parties involved; Thirdly, think about the long-term impact—students learn to find balance in gray areas. There was a student facing such a dilemma: when helping a disabled girl apply for assistance, he found that her family's actual conditions exceeded the threshold, but the girl's prosthesis urgently needed replacement. Ultimately, he chose to guide the girl to make handicrafts to sell, thus adhering to policy boundaries while solving the problem. This is akin to finding a path in the mountains, one cannot charge straight over a cliff nor sit and wait for rescue, one must navigate around the rocks to find a gap.

2 Four-Dimensional Guiding Curriculum Design System

2.1 Teaching Implementation Path for the Self-Dimension

When cultivating students' self-awareness abilities, the key lies in utilizing existing technologies to create mechanisms for continuous reflection. By leveraging the assignment submission feature of the "Learning Pass" platform, a "Growth Observation Journal" project can be designed: students upload a text each week, documenting typical events encountered while serving youth, focusing on describing "why I handled it this way at that time" and "whether there are different choices in hindsight". For instance, a student recorded, "I was impatient when persuading a truant student to return to school", and the teacher, through the annotation feature, questions: "Was your impatience due to recalling your own rebellious experiences?" Such guidance forces students to confront their subconscious self-projections. AI tools play a foundational role in this process—when students input "How to improve communication skills", the system provides a standard communication steps framework but intentionally omits specific situational response strategies, requiring students to supplement and refine based on their own cases.

2.2 Innovation of Collaborative Mechanisms for the Other-Dimension

The core of cultivating interpersonal understanding abilities is breaking the limitations of a single perspective. Utilizing the group discussion feature of "Learning Pass", a "Role Blind Box" training can be designed: after the teacher uploads cases of family conflicts, school bullying, etc., the system randomly assigns identity tags (such as "dominant mother", "silent father", "rebellious daughter"), and students must propose solutions from the assigned identity within 24 hours. AI tools will extract keywords from each group's proposals to generate comparative charts; for example, the high-frequency words from the "parent group" might be "rules", "grades", while the "children group" focuses on "freedom", "being understood". When students see this visualization of cognitive gaps on the screen, they can intuitively feel how positional differences distort problem recognition. In advanced training, the teacher requires the same student to handle the same case from different identities, comparing changes in their proposals through the platform's historical record feature.

2.3 Ecological Teaching Design for the Environment-Dimension

The focus of cultivating students' environmental insight lies in teaching them to discover educational clues in ordinary things. Through the questionnaire survey module of "Learning Pass", a "Community Detective" project can be conducted: students take photos of common youth hangouts such as convenience stores and bus stops, labeling details like "blind spots blocked by shelves" and "step heights leading to gathering risks". AI tools will integrate this information to generate safety hazard heat maps, guiding students to discover: minor defects in the physical environment often lead to behavioral problems, such as how monitoring blind spots can easily encourage smoking behavior. In advanced tasks, students are required to compare photos of the same location taken at different times, analyzing how environmental changes affect youth activity patterns.

2.4 Value-Driven Model for the Spirituality-Dimension

The course trains students to handle ethical dilemmas through real-life scenarios. Situational simulation methods: setting up role-playing of real case studies, such as having students portray "the teacher who discovers a student stealing money for medicine", "the sick family member", and "the school leader", to experience the contradictions of different positions during debates. When the student playing the teacher insists "must report it", the "family member" crying out their dilemma forces them to consider: "Is there a more humane solution beyond the rules?" Comparative analysis of cases: providing different handling options for similar incidents, such as comparing "directly punishing the student who stole money" and "organizing a charity sale to help him repay", guiding students to discuss which approach maintains rules while preserving kindness. Value visualization exercises: having students use three items (such as a gavel, grandmother's fan, and soil from the field) to represent "law, emotion, reason", explaining how to use these elements to resolve cases of early marriage and school dropout— "using the gavel to uphold the bottom line, the fan to soothe emotions, and finally discussing skill training plans on the field".

3 Guarantee Mechanisms for Teaching Implementation

3.1 Basic Technical Support

The basic technical support for teaching implementation should be based on the principles of "usable and sufficient". In terms of hardware, the focus is on ensuring the stable operation of basic classroom equipment: organizing student volunteers at the beginning of each semester to check projectors, audio equipment, etc., establishing a "device health record" and categorizing faults with red, yellow, and green labels to ensure faulty equipment is repaired within 48 hours. In terms of network, a "wired + wireless" complementary model is adopted: providing wired network interfaces in classrooms to support teaching demonstrations and deploying wireless extenders in corridor areas to meet mobile teaching needs. In terms of software: establishing a "WeChat + Tencent Docs" combination platform, with teaching assistants creating simple operation manuals (such as "how to take clear case photos with a mobile phone" and "how to insert voice annotations in documents"), regularly pushing updates through group announcements.

3.2 Teacher Skills Training

Teacher capacity enhancement adopts a "layered progression + experience sharing" model. New teachers focus on mastering basic tool applications: through "mixture of experienced and young players" paired learning, such as when recording micro-lessons with a mobile phone, experienced teachers demonstrate how to choose lighting angles and control pace and rhythm to ensure video content is clear and understandable. The focus for key teachers shifts to teaching design: conducting "case analysis workshops"—analyzing excellent teaching videos frame by frame, marking key nodes, and extracting reusable method templates. Subject leaders focus on experience transformation: organizing "field research meetings" to observe teaching effects in community service sites, using mobile phones to capture typical teaching scenes, and editing them into teaching case library materials upon returning to school. Establishing a "problem bank" mechanism: teachers can record teaching difficulties at any time, organizing collective discussions monthly, and storing solutions in a shared document after formation.

3.3 Maintenance of Teaching Resources

Teaching resource management follows the principles of "dynamic updating + localization". Establishing a "three-tier resource screening" mechanism: annually clearing outdated cases and supplementing new service records after desensitization to ensure the case library aligns with social development; at the end of each semester, students select excellent cases, such as community renovation plans and in-depth interview recordings, optimizing them into premium

resources; teaching assistants check resource links monthly to promptly clear invalid files. In terms of localized resource construction: collaboration with township social work stations is needed to collect local typical issues, such as left-behind children's reliance on mobile phones and parent-child conflicts in single-parent families, transforming them into teaching cases to enhance realism. The management of teaching tools emphasizes practicality, with transparent storage boxes categorically storing service toolkits, waterproof notebooks, and portable whiteboards, counted and supplemented weekly. Resource maintenance is akin to "tool upkeep", requiring both regular polishing and flexible adjustments to ensure the resource library remains vibrant and provides solid support for teaching.

4 Conclusion

The application and practice of the project-based teaching method in the "Youth Social Work" course, through the construction of a curriculum design system based on the four-dimensional relationships of life education (self, others, environment, and spirituality), effectively aligns teaching content with students' growth needs. In the process of teaching implementation, the project-based teaching method is task-oriented, comprehensively enhancing students' comprehensive qualities and practical abilities through self-exploration in the self-dimension, collaborative practice in the other-dimension, ecological experience in the environment-dimension, and value guidance in the spirituality-dimension.

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