

A Study on the Practical Path of Integrating “Tracing the Source and Footprints” into Youth Theoretical Lectures in Universities from the Perspective of School-Local Collaboration

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Abstract: Youth theoretical lectures in universities are a crucial link in ensuring the innovative theories of the Party are understood and embraced by the younger generation. Currently, this work faces practical dilemmas such as content disconnection, formal homogenization, and a weak sense of engagement among youth. “Tracing the Source and Footprints”, as a methodology emphasizing the triple coupling of historical logic, theoretical logic, and practical logic, offers a new perspective to solve these problems. This paper, grounded in the macro-perspective of school-local collaboration, deeply explores the intrinsic connection between “Tracing the Source and Footprints” and youth theoretical lectures, and systematically constructs a practical path model covering four key elements: subjects, content, carriers, and collaboration. The study argues that by integrating the theoretical research advantages of universities with the practical resource endowments of localities, and by building a closed-loop framework of “Tracing Regional Resources — School-Local Collaborative Transformation — Youth Theoretical Identification,” we can effectively enhance the depth, warmth, and efficacy of theoretical lectures. This promotes the transition of youth from passive recipients of theory to firm believers and active practitioners, providing a valuable paradigm for ideological and political work in universities in the new era.

Keywords: Youth Theoretical Lectures; Tracing the Source and Footprints; School-Local Collaboration; Practical Path; Ideological and Political Education

1 Introduction: The Proposition of the Era and Practical Dilemmas

The youth are the future of the country and the hope of the nation. Arming the minds of the youth with the Party’s innovative theories is a fundamental task concerning the succession of the Party’s cause. As the main front for youth ideological and political education, universities have achieved significant results in enhancing young people’s identification with and understanding of the Party’s innovative theories by organizing university student lecture groups and conducting micro-lectures. However, with the development of the times and changes in the characteristics of the youth group, the limitations of traditional theoretical lecture models have become increasingly prominent.

It is widely believed in academia that current university theoretical lectures face numerous challenges. First, the disconnection between theory and locality, where the lectures on the Party’s innovative theories lack localized interpretation, making it difficult for youth to perceive the practical logic that “theory is all around us.” Second, the collaborative mechanisms of lecture teams are not sound, and the interactive experience is insufficient. Third, young lecturers themselves have shortcomings of “three inadequacies” and “three lacks”—inadequate theoretical knowledge, insufficient political experience, and limited practical exposure—leading to a lack of appeal, authenticity, and transformative power in their lectures. These issues collectively contribute to the “suspended” and “homogenized” dilemma of lectures, preventing theory from truly resonating with the youth.

Against this backdrop, how to innovate the methodology of theoretical lectures to make them more penetrating and appealing has become an urgent contemporary issue. “Tracing the Source and Footprints,” as a local practical methodology for studying Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, has at its core the construction of a “localized knowledge production paradigm” by following the practical footsteps and theoretical germination of the leader. It breaks through the one-way indoctrination model of traditional theoretical education, forming a dynamic closed loop of “situational cognition—case transformation—two-way empowerment.” Introducing this methodology into youth theoretical lectures in universities and examining it from the perspective of school-local collaboration undoubtedly

edly provides a highly valuable exploratory path to solve the current dilemmas and enhance the quality and effectiveness of lectures. This study aims to systematically elucidate the internal mechanism of their integration and construct a set of operable and replicable practical path models.

2 Theoretical Coupling: The Intrinsic Connection Between “Tracing the Source and Footprints” and Youth Theoretical Lectures

Although “Tracing the Source and Footprints” and youth theoretical lectures belong to different categories, they share a high degree of intrinsic compatibility in terms of methodology and educational function. Their integration is not a simple superposition but a deep-level chemical reaction.

2.1 Methodological Interoperability: Strengthening Theoretical Depth Through Historical Context

The core of “Tracing the Source and Footprints” lies in revealing the fundamental logic of things by tracking their origin and evolution. It requires us to return to the historical scene to understand how theory took root, sprouted, blossomed, and bore fruit in concrete practice. The fundamental task of youth theoretical lectures is to concretize abstract theories and explain their profound connotations in ways that are popular among young people. The common ground between the two lies in their emphasis on starting from a historical dimension and restoring the practical soil where theory was generated through tracing its source.

For example, in the activity of “Tracing the Source and Footprints to Study Thought and Promote Practice,” lecturers unearth practical cases along the leader’s footsteps, combining the historical context of major strategic deployments with their theoretical connotations, thereby enhancing persuasiveness by “explaining great principles through small stories.” This method transforms theory from dogma suspended in the air into a living entity with flesh, blood, and roots. In the process of tracing back through history, youth not only understand “what it is” but also gain insight into “why” and “how,” thus achieving a deep identification with the theory.

2.2 Synergy in Educational Function: Cultivating Youth Mission with a Practice-Oriented Approach

“Tracing the Source and Footprints” is essentially a practical learning process. It cultivates youth’s empirical thinking and problem awareness through field research, field investigations, and other methods. Youth theoretical lectures, especially the peer education model of “youth lecturing to youth,” have the core function of internalizing theory in the heart and externalizing it in action, providing action guidance for youth.

The two form a perfect synergy in educational function. “Tracing the Source and Footprints” provides the most vivid and down-to-earth materials and cases for youth lectures, while youth lectures, in turn, offer an outlet for the dissemination and transformation of the results of tracing. In this two-way interaction, youth are no longer passive recipients of theory but transform into active explorers, thinkers, and disseminators. They deepen their understanding of theory through personal “tracing,” strengthen their confidence in the path through diligent “sourcing,” and reinforce their sense of mission through vivid “lecturing.” This leap from “learning” to “thinking” and then to “lecturing” is the key to cultivating youth as the main force of theoretical dissemination and practice.

3 Path Construction: A Four-Dimensional Model for Integrating “Tracing the Source and Footprints” into Youth Theoretical Lectures

From the perspective of school-local collaboration, systematically integrating the “Tracing the Source and Footprints” methodology into youth theoretical lectures requires the construction of a multi-element, synergistic practical model. This model can be systematically designed from four dimensions: subjects, content, carriers, and collaboration.

3.1 Subject Element: Constructing a Composite Team of “Dual Tutors + Youth Backbone”

High-quality theoretical lectures depend on a high-quality lecture team. The integration of “Tracing the Source and Footprints” places higher demands on the team structure, requiring the construction of a composite subject structure composed of university faculty, local experts, and students.

University Faculty as Theoretical Tutors. University ideological and political education teachers and scholars in related fields are responsible for the in-depth interpretation and academic support at the theoretical level. They help young students clarify the historical context, core tenets, and contemporary value of theories, ensuring the political direction and academic depth of the lectures, acting as the “guiding star” for tracing the source.

Local Experts as Practical Tutors. Researchers from local party history research institutes, senior docents at memorial halls, and outstanding grassroots cadres are the “living dictionaries” of local practice and red resources. They provide vivid first-hand materials, lively practical cases, and down-to-earth public language, serving as the “bridge” connecting theory and practice.

Students as the Main Body of Lecturers. A broad and mobile youth theoretical lecture group should be formed by extensively selecting and cultivating a group of young students with good political quality and strong expressive skills. They are the core force of peer education, effectively delivering the theoretical and practical results guided by the “dual tutors” to more peers through their unique perspectives and discourse systems.

3.2 Content Element: Creating a Three-Dimensional Content Library of “Red Genes + Reform Practice + Youth Struggle”

Content is the soul of a lecture. The application of the “Tracing the Source and Footprints” methodology lies in building a content system that has both historical depth, contemporary warmth, and youthful passion.

Red Gene Library. Systematically sort out the local red historical context, deeply explore the spiritual core behind revolutionary sites and heroic deeds, and extract revolutionary spirits with regional characteristics. Transform static red resources into dynamic educational materials through field investigations and textual research, providing a profound historical foundation for lectures.

Reform Practice Library. Precisely correspond key events and typical experiences from the region’s process of reform, opening up, and modernization with important discourses in the Party’s innovative theories. For example, combine the innovative development of the private economy with the discourse on “Two Healths” (healthy growth of the non-public sector of the economy and healthy growth of those working in this sector), and link the successful practice of ecological governance with the “Two Mountains” theory (lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets), using the “living textbooks” of local development to illustrate the practical power of theory.

Youth Struggle Library. Extensively collect the stories of outstanding local young scientists, entrepreneurial pioneers, and moral role models who have grown and succeeded under the guidance of the Party’s theories. Construct a narrative chain of “theory guiding growth,” allowing youth to see the real power of theory in the stories of their role models, stimulating their internal emotional resonance and conscious action.

3.3 Carrier Element: Innovating Diversified Platforms of “Virtual-Real Integration, Educating People Through History”

Carriers are the channels of lectures. The integration of “Tracing the Source and Footprints” requires us to break the limitations of traditional classrooms and build a diversified carrier matrix that combines online and offline, and integrates history and reality.

Historical Site Carriers. Make full use of “historical sites” such as red education bases, reform demonstration points, and corporate exhibition halls to conduct immersive and experiential “walking lecture classes.” This allows youth to touch history and perceive development through on-site visits, achieving “situational cognition.”

New Media Carriers. Adapt to the media usage habits of youth and build an all-media communication system covering “WeChat, Weibo, Douyin + Bilibili.” Transform the results of tracing the source into cultural products popular among young people, such as short videos, animations, H5 pages, and graphic posts, to achieve precise reach and broad coverage of theoretical communication.

Brand Activity Carriers. Create brand activities such as “Red Study Tour Competitions,” “Theoretical Lecture Arenas,” and “Practical Story Sharing Sessions” to promote learning through competition and action through lectures. These platforms provide opportunities for youth to showcase their talents and exchange ideas, fostering a vibrant atmosphere of friendly rivalry.

3.4 Collaboration Element: Improving School-Local Linkage Guarantees of “Mechanism + Training + Resources”

School-local collaboration is the key to ensuring the smooth operation of the above paths. A set of linkage guarantee mechanisms with clear responsibilities and efficient operation must be established.

Mechanism Collaboration. Establish a joint conference system with the participation of multiple parties, including local government propaganda departments, education administrative departments, university party committees, and red bases. This system will coordinate lecture themes, solve key problems, and jointly evaluate lecture effectiveness, forming a synergistic force.

Learning and Training Collaboration. Regularly organize joint lesson preparation, thematic seminars, and combined training for university tutors, practical tutors, and youth lecturers. Through intellectual collision and sharing, continuously improve the overall quality of the lecture team, ensuring that lecture content is both “connected to the top line” and “grounded in the local context.”

Resource Collaboration. Jointly contribute to the development, transformation, and sharing of resources from tracing the source. Universities leverage their research advantages to theoretically refine local resources, while localities provide practical platforms and create conditions for university teachers and students to conduct research. Both parties build and share a “case database” and “expert resource pool” to maximize resource efficiency.

3.5 Conclusion and Outlook

The analytical framework of “Tracing Regional Resources — School-Local Collaborative Transformation — Youth Theoretical Identification” constructed in this paper aims to provide a systematic solution to the practical dilemmas of youth theoretical lectures in universities. Through the construction of a four-dimensional path covering subjects, content, carriers, and collaboration, we attempt to create a new lecture model that is “rooted in theory, soulful in locality, and resonant with youth.”

The practical value of this model lies in its transformation of theoretical lectures from one-way “indoctrination” to two-way “empowerment.” It not only enhances youth’s localized understanding of the Party’s innovative theories but also cultivates their historical thinking, practical skills, and patriotism. The school-local collaboration mechanism provides solid organizational and resource guarantees for the sustainable operation of this model, offering a replicable sample for similar cities to carry out related work.

Looking ahead, with the rapid development of digital technology, the integration of “Tracing the Source and Footprints” and youth theoretical lectures will have even broader prospects. How to use big data, artificial intelligence, and other technologies to more accurately mine regional resources, more vividly present historical scenes, and more intelligently match youth needs will be a direction worthy of deeper exploration. Ultimately, our goal is to make the Party’s innovative theories a true ideological beacon and guide to action for the growth of youth, inspiring generation after generation to contribute their youthful strength to the journey of achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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