

Party History Education in Colleges and Universities today

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Abstract: *The task of educating students in colleges and universities about the Party's history is facing various challenges. Therefore, in recent years, lecturers have applied diverse teaching methods and activities to enhance the quality of Party history education. As a result, students' knowledge and understanding of the Party and the current nation-building endeavor have noticeably improved.*

Keywords: *Party history education, colleges, universities.*

President Ho Chi Minh once said: "With all the humble spirit of revolutionaries, we still have the right to say: *Ours is truly a great Party*"⁽¹⁾. From its inception, steering the Vietnamese revolution through myriad hardships and challenges to secure independence, the Communist Party of Vietnam remains a linchpin in crafting a Vietnam that stands as a beacon of being "prosperous people, strong country, democratic, equitable, and civilized society". Hence, it becomes imperative to equip the younger generation with the necessary "tools" to comprehend the Party's leadership, and understand the nation's historical struggles, and provide the youth with essential Party history education.

Party history education in colleges and universities plays a vital role in enhancing the knowledge of successive student generations about the Party's historical traditions. This serves to deepen their understanding, instill profound gratitude and pride, foster love for the homeland and peace, and contribute to the building and protection of the Fatherland. In the contemporary context, it is crucial to bolster these contributions, with the torchbearers being the young generations themselves - students undergoing training at colleges and universities.

However, the current state of Party history education in some colleges and universities falls short in certain aspects. One significant issue is that the conveyed content neither resonates nor excites each student. Moreover, the somewhat politically oriented nature of the content prompts lecturers to avoid pressing and sensitive real-world issues that public opinion is

concerned about. Addressing these challenges necessitates a consistent and ongoing effort in Party history communication and education. This aims to heighten awareness and responsibility among colleges and universities, Party members, lecturers, and students to promote the education of the history of the Communist Party of Vietnam, aligning with current practical requirements. Additionally, it contributes to bolstering confidence in the revolutionary path chosen by the Party and President Ho Chi Minh, and trust in the Party's legitimate leadership.

1. Regarding the curriculum

At the time of finishing the general schooling program, students are equipped with basic content about the Party's history, with outstanding historical facts and events. Therefore, the curriculum has been basically unified between educational levels. The continuous expansion of knowledge, coupled with a logical deepening in each content area, prevents students from being overwhelmed by the volume of information they need to navigate.

Based on the general requirements of the Ministry of Education and Training, with consistency on the basic content that needs to be provided to students, the basic requirements are seriously implemented with ensured efficiency and output quality. Within that consistency, the unique characteristics of each major and each college/university need different orientations and expansion. Because, unlike the general schooling levels, the learning environment at colleges and universities has features of vocational training, equipping basic knowledge about different majors. Therefore, the trend of choosing content and the way to analyze the content of each section according to the curricula needs to closely follow the learners, as well as integrating more content related to the history of local Party committees and the history of Party committees of sectors, etc. Thereby, the overall picture of the history of the Communist Party of Vietnam will be recreated truthfully, vividly, objectively and closely to students.

The study of history in general, and the Party's history in particular, not only restores the most authentic past but also draws out experiences and lessons to turn history into scientific knowledge, helping today's generation properly understand the past, the present and accurately forecast the future. Therefore, Party history education at colleges and universities must achieve the goal of students learning the lessons that motivate them to act for justice, for the country, and to improve national pride.

Besides, the content of Party history has a really high ideological and political orientation. These not only are historical events but also have a close relationship with the Party's guidelines and the current development of the country. At the same time, the content of the Party's history includes not only the milestones of the Party's historical journey and struggle activities but also the contributions in all aspects of all Vietnamese people. Thereby, each learner realizes the contribution of the individuals, the sectors, and the localities to the overall collective achievements of the country.

2. Regarding educational methods

Along with innovating educational methods in general, innovating Party history education methods also drew much attention from colleges and universities. Educational method innovation is actively implemented in the direction of increasing skill practice, reducing theory load, connecting theory with reality, increasing interaction and dialogue between lecturers and students, combining traditional education methods with modern educational ones, and creating attraction for learners. Party history education is not only about studying Party history lessons in the classroom but also at colleges and university grounds or in meetings and talks between lecturers and students.

If during formal lessons, the traditional teaching method, i.e. presentation, still has a certain meaning in education, the combination with other methods such as discussion, debate, field trips, etc., is necessary. However, the sources of information approached by students are becoming more and more difficult to control, including information that affects the spirit, self-evolution, and self-transformation of each individual. Sources of books, newspapers, and magazines containing content about the history of the Communist Party of Vietnam are not only published through the official channel. Today, with the assistance of technology, electronic information sites or social networking platforms have also become places to transmit theoretical information. It is an advantageous condition to educate about the Party's history but is also easily taken advantage of to distort it. It is really hard to prohibit or restrict unofficial information channels effectively.

With this perspective, lecturers utilize class hours to present analogous data for analysis, guiding students in a manner that can be likened to equipping them with tools and insights from the Party's history. This helps them evaluate and critique misguided views, transforming each

student into a wellspring of arguments, criticism, and condemnation against erroneous perspectives. Simultaneously, this process serves as the construction of a robust defensive shield and the establishment of a sturdy ideological foundation for the development of students—the forthcoming revolutionary generation.

To assist and provide guidance for students, in recent years, theoretical reading methods have been integrated into the teaching process. This is the lesson emphasized by President Ho Chi Minh in the “Opening speech of the theoretical class of the 1st course at Nguyen Ai Quoc school” that when reading books, newspapers or any information, individuals need to “uphold independent thinking and freedom of thought. When reading documents, we must deeply understand them and do not blindly believe in each and every sentence in the book. If there is a problem that is already thoroughly grasped, then boldly raise it for everybody to understand. For any problem, we must raise the question “why”. Careful consideration is essential to determine its alignment with reality; unquestioning adherence without a critical “eye-opening” perspective is to be avoided at all costs. We must think carefully”⁽²⁾. Regardless of the number of books one might read, the ability to summarize and comprehend fundamental contents is paramount. Without the skill to articulate and debate based on acquired knowledge, achieving high efficiency becomes challenging, leading to potential inaccuracies in understanding the contents. Hence, the timeless lesson of being able to listen, to learn, and to make progress remains indispensable.

Given the current conditions of information technology, it is crucial to prioritize harnessing new forms of communication and making effective use of the Internet and social networks. We should value the diverse and appropriate methods employed in disseminating Party history among lecturers and students, catering to the task requirements. This approach aims to instill patriotism and national pride in the younger generation, concurrently enhancing the effectiveness of Party history education within the current college and university system.

Currently, lecturers and students of colleges and universities are always aware that they are contributing together to maintain the strength and development of the country. To that end, lecturers not only try to convey knowledge content but also act as predecessors to help the next generation. Each person contributes their own efforts to our common development, so everyone recognizes the individual role and responsibility in a group.

That is part of the reason why students are encouraged to enthusiastically participate in all activities of colleges/universities.

3. Regarding extracurricular activities

Apart from official lectures, it is essential to implement rigorous study sessions focusing on Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, Party guidelines and policies, State laws, patriotism, and revolutionary traditions. This effort, along with other diverse forms, must be actualized. Dissemination and educational activities focusing on Party history and revolutionary traditions are incorporated into the celebrations of significant national holidays and sector-specific events. These initiatives align with efforts to revive traditional moral values and draw inspiration from exemplary individuals who demonstrate outstanding deeds. Commemorative activities always carry their own conditions and meanings. Meanwhile, as students are active, curious and also like to manifest their understanding, it is necessary to promote the combination of communication and education for students through organizing fun and cultural activities, arts, physical education and sports through competitions, sports festivals, art shows, charity activities, such movements as green summer, blood donation, etc., to attract students to participate in wholesome and meaningful activities. Actively enhancing the innovation of content and forms of communication of historical works of the Party Committee and the history of the Communist Party of Vietnam for cadres, lecturers, and students is also one of the important tasks of educating politics, ideology, and Party history.

In addition to exciting activities, reading theoretical books is also a form of extracurricular activity that attracts the attention of students. The works with content about the Party's history do not only appear on library shelves. Recently, activities of instructing the reading and discussions with experts and researchers are encouraging the curiosity of a part of students. These are not just simple words, but behind them, is the stimulation of curiosity, creating each individual's need for understanding. In addition to thematic talks, organizing photo "tours" of historical and cultural heritages and sites, traditional history education programs in general and Party history in particular have had good effects on students.

Extracurricular activities can be interspersed with thorough communication and dissemination of directives, resolutions, etc., of the Party and State to students. It is not only about conveying content but also about guiding and orienting the understanding and realization of new

viewpoints, guidelines and policies of the Party and State. When students understand their value, they will be the force that protects the Party's ideological foundation and strong development.

4. Conclusion

During the nation's era of innovation and development, enhancing the quality of revolutionary ideal education and Party history education stands as an exceptionally vital task. This necessitates decisive leadership, clear direction, and focused attention, coupled with coordinated and synchronized efforts. This comprehensive approach involves integrating various elements such as guidelines, mechanisms, policies, investments in facilities, and the innovation of history education programs and extracurricular activities. Through improving the effectiveness of communication, Party history education has made an important contribution to arousing national pride and the tradition of heroic, resilient, and indomitable struggle of our forefathers' generations. By doing so, it contributes to guiding ideological orientation and upholding traditional historical values in the efforts to construct and safeguard the homeland and the country in this new period. Although the Party history education in colleges and universities still has certain limitations in the quality of content, form, method, etc..., we cannot but recognize the great effectiveness of the Party history education for Party building in particular and building the spiritual and moral foundation of society in general.

Hence, it is imperative to consistently and continuously implement the communication and education of Party history within the framework of colleges and universities, with a long-term commitment. This effort aims to enhance the awareness and responsibility of the college/university community, fostering internal solidarity and unity essential for the successful execution of political, educational, and learning tasks, aligning with the overarching goal of prosperous people, strong country, democratic, equitable and civilized society. Accumulating and innovating experiences in Party history education is an ongoing necessity, ensuring alignment with social reality and maximizing effectiveness in propagating and teaching Party history to the present young generation./.

(1) Ho Chi Minh (2011), *Complete Works*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, Vol. 12, p. 400.

(2) Ho Chi Minh (2011), *Complete Works*, National Political Publishing House Su that, Hanoi, Vol. 11, pp. 98-99.