

An Analysis of Ideological and Political-Professional Education Integration in Chinese Vocational Colleges: Precise Perspective

Lihong Zhong*

Shenzhen University of Information Technology, Shenzhen, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

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Abstract: Taking the concept of “Precise Ideological and Political Education” as the core analytical framework, this paper first clarifies the inherent logical necessity of integration from three dimensions: epistemology, methodology, and axiology. Furthermore, on the basis of in-depth analysis of five practical barriers, “generalization of teaching content, rigidification of teaching methods, superficialization of practical teaching, ossification of evaluation mechanisms, and weakening of teachers’ motivation,” a systematic reform model including “goal layer - core layer - support layer” is constructed. In terms of practical paths, the model proposes to achieve “precision empowerment” through five core measures: “subject reconstruction, content reconstruction, method reconstruction, practice reconstruction, and evaluation reconstruction”: in terms of the support system, it emphasizes the need for four-wheel drive of “organizational coordination, institutional incentives, digital empowerment, and cultural infiltration” to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of integration.

Keywords: Higher vocational colleges; Ideological and Political Theory Courses; Professional education; In-depth integration

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1. Introduction: The Era Proposition and Core Issues

Vocational education, as an educational type most closely linked to economic and social development, its talent training quality is directly related to the strength of national competitiveness. The report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China clearly proposes to “coordinate the collaborative innovation of vocational education, higher education, and continuing education, promote the integration of vocational and general education, industry-education integration, and science-education integration, and optimize the type positioning of vocational education.” Cultivating high-quality workers who not only master exquisite technical skills but also possess family and country feelings, professional ethics, and a sense of responsibility is the core

mission of higher vocational education in the new era. As a key course for China to implement the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, Ideological and Political Theory Courses play an irreplaceable role in this mission.

However, a prominent practical contradiction exists: as a public basic course, the grand narrative system and universal value guidance of Ideological and Political Theory Courses have a certain tension with the highly specialized, concrete learning and life experience of higher vocational students oriented towards specific professional fields. At present, although the construction of “Curriculum Ideology and Politics” has achieved remarkable results at the professional course level, how Ideological and Political Theory Courses themselves can take the initiative to break the “isolated island” state and achieve “in-depth integration” rather than simple “superposition” with professional education remains a difficult and painful point in the reform. The so-called “in-depth integration” means that the teaching objectives, content, methods, practice, and evaluation of Ideological and Political Theory Courses are fully embedded in the professional talent training system, resonating with students’ professional identity, the formation of professional capabilities, and career development planning, so as to achieve a value shaping effect like “salt dissolving in water.” For a long time, the reform of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in higher vocational colleges has mostly focused on the optimization of internal elements, such as the innovation of teaching methods and the construction of teaching resources. Although certain results have been achieved, it has not fundamentally solved the problem of the mismatch between teaching supply and students’ needs. Students generally feel that the content of Ideological and Political Theory Courses is “high, empty, and abstract” and has little connection with their own majors, leading to insufficient learning motivation and greatly reduced teaching effectiveness. This “generalized” teaching model is essentially an extensive operation on the supply side.

Therefore, introducing the concept of “Precise Ideological and Political Education” to promote a profound supply-side structural reform in the teaching of Ideological and Political Theory Courses, realizing the transformation from “extensive irrigation” to “precision drip irrigation”^[1], has become an urgent era proposition. Beyond scattered strategic discussions, this paper aims to, from the perspective of systematic reform, first demonstrate the inherent logical necessity of the integration of Ideological and Political Theory Courses and professional education, then systematically diagnose the deep-seated difficulties currently faced, and finally construct a hierarchical and interlocking integrated path model of “goal - core – support,” hoping to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the connotative development of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in higher vocational colleges in the new era.

2. The internal logic of integration: Three dimensions of inevitability

The integration of Ideological and Political Theory Courses and professional education is not a forced grafting of policies, but stems from the inherent unity of the two in the essence of education, the laws of vocational education, and the requirements of the times. Its inevitability can be explained from three dimensions: epistemology, methodology, and axiology.

2.1. Epistemological dimension: The unity of knowledge imparting and value guidance

Modern educational theory holds that any knowledge contains specific value orientations and cultural genes. The scientific and technological knowledge imparted by professional education is inherently value-neutral,

but its application scenarios, social consequences, and ethical boundaries are full of value judgments. The integration of Ideological and Political Theory Courses and professional education is precisely to reveal this internal connection, enabling students to deeply understand the significance of “why to live” while mastering the skills of “how to make a living”^[2]. For example, when teaching programming technology, it is necessary to simultaneously discuss ethical issues such as data privacy and algorithmic fairness: when learning marketing, it is necessary to integrate value orientations such as honest operation and social responsibility. This integration breaks the separation between instrumental rationality and value rationality, conforms to the complete educational concept of “unity of knowledge and action, and simultaneous cultivation of morality and skills,” and is the unity of truth, goodness, and beauty in the process of knowledge construction.

2.2. Methodological dimension: The inherent requirement of “action-oriented” teaching in vocational education

Vocational education emphasizes “action orientation,” allowing students to “learn by doing” and “do by learning.” If Ideological and Political Theory Courses are separated from students’ “action” field, namely professional learning and practice, they are likely to become empty preaching. Integrating ideological and political education into professional teaching links, such as project tasks, case analysis, and on-the-job internships, so that value guidance can be realized in the process of solving real and complex professional problems, is precisely the inherent requirement of the laws of vocational education^[3]. The teamwork, rigor, pragmatism, and pursuit of excellence experienced by students in completing a technical project, handling a business case, or participating in a production process are far more profound and lasting than the cognition obtained in a purely theoretical classroom. Therefore, integration is the methodological cornerstone for improving the affinity and pertinence of Ideological and Political Theory Courses.

2.3. Axiological dimension: Strategic preparation for addressing future social challenges

The world today is facing profound challenges from the technological revolution and industrial transformation. The development of artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and other fields has brought a series of ethical risks. The future society needs not only technical experts but also citizens who can control technology and have profound humanistic literacy and a strong sense of social responsibility. Higher vocational students are the backbone of the future industrial front line, and their value choices directly affect the direction of technological application. The in-depth integration of Ideological and Political Theory Courses and professional education aims to build a solid value “dike” for students in advance, cultivate their awareness of technological ethics, ecological concepts, and feelings of a community with a shared future for mankind, enabling them to distinguish right from wrong and abide by the bottom line on their future career paths. This is an important strategic investment to address future uncertainties and ensure healthy social development^[4].

3. Deep-seated practical difficulties: Systematic diagnosis from phenomenon to root cause

Although the necessity of integration is obvious, the promotion of practice has been arduous. Its difficulties are systematic and need to be in-depth analyzed from all elements of teaching.

3.1. “Generalization” of teaching content: The “suspended” state from the professional field

This is the core difficulty. The current textbook system of Ideological and Political Theory Courses is highly theoretical and universal. If teachers lack the awareness and ability of active transformation, the teaching content will be disconnected from students’ professional world. Using the same set of teaching plans and cases for almost all majors leads to the failure of teaching content to cut into the cognitive schema and emotional concerns formed by students based on their majors. This “suspended” state makes it difficult for the value discourse of Ideological and Political Theory Courses to be transformed into students’ conscious identification in the professional context, resulting in half the effort in teaching effect ^[5].

3.2. “Rigidification” of teaching methods: The “mismatch” with professional thinking modes

Higher vocational students are good at imagery thinking and practical thinking, and are accustomed to the learning mode of “task-driven” and “outcome-oriented.” However, the traditional teaching method of Ideological and Political Theory Courses still focuses on theoretical indoctrination and conclusion notification, which is “mismatched” with the thinking mode of vocational education. It has not effectively created professional-related simulated scenarios or real tasks, nor has it guided students to use professional thinking to deconstruct ideological and political issues, resulting in the failure of the teaching process to stimulate students’ in-depth cognitive investment and the value guidance remaining at a shallow level.

3.3. “Superficialization” of practical teaching: The “parallel” track with the professional training system

Practical teaching of Ideological and Political Theory Courses (social surveys, volunteer services, etc.) and professional practical teaching (on-the-job internships, skill training) often belong to two “parallel” tracks in terms of goals, content, management, and evaluation, lacking intersection points ^[6]. During students’ internships in enterprises, their professional ethics performance and thinking on the social responsibility of the industry have not been effectively included in the observation and evaluation perspective of Ideological and Political Theory Courses. This phenomenon of “two skins” makes the professional practice link with the greatest educational potential fail to become an effective carrier of ideological and political education, wasting valuable educational resources.

3.4. “Ossification” of evaluation mechanisms: The “decoupling” from the growth of professional literacy

The existing evaluation of Ideological and Political Theory Courses mainly focuses on the final knowledge-based assessment, which makes it difficult to measure the improvement of students’ internal values and the cultivation of professional spirit. The evaluation content is “decoupled” from professional literacy, and the evaluation subject is single (mainly Ideological and Political Theory Course teachers), which cannot reflect students’ ideological and political performance in professional learning and internship practice. This evaluation orientation makes both teachers and students lack sufficient motivation to further promote teaching integration, and the internal motivation for reform is insufficient.

3.5. “Weakening” of teachers’ motivation: The lack of “mechanisms” for interdisciplinary collaboration

Ideological and Political Theory Course teachers generally face barriers in their knowledge structure and have

a limited understanding of non-social science majors. More importantly, there is a lack of stable and efficient interdisciplinary teaching and research mechanisms and incentive mechanisms^[7]. There is a lack of regular communication platforms, cooperation projects, and corresponding achievement recognition methods between Ideological and Political Theory Course teachers and professional course teachers, leading to the “integration” remaining a spontaneous behavior of individual teachers and failing to form a scale effect and institutional achievements.

4. Construction of systematic paths: An integrated model of “goal - core - support”

In response to the above difficulties, scattered reforms that address symptoms rather than root causes are insufficient. It is necessary to carry out top-level design and systematic promotion.

4.1. Goal layer: Precision empowerment, simultaneous cultivation of morality and skills

The ultimate goal of systematic reform is to achieve “precision empowerment,” that is, through accurately docking with students’ professional development needs, the nutrients of ideological and political education are accurately dripped into the root system of students’ professional ability and personality growth, and finally output high-quality technical and skilled talents with “simultaneous cultivation of morality and skills.” This goal governs all reform measures.

4.2. Core layer (Precision implementation): “Five-dimensional reconstruction” of all teaching elements

This is the main part of the model, corresponding to five core elements in the teaching process.

4.2.1. Subject reconstruction: From “isolated lecturer” to “professional-embedded navigator”

- (1) Institutional Embedding: Establish a “professional contact person” system for Ideological and Political Theory Course teachers, where each teacher is fixedly linked to 1–2 professional groups, and regularly participates in their teaching and research activities, revision of talent training programs, academic lectures, and school-enterprise cooperation activities.
- (2) Role Diversification: Encourage Ideological and Political Theory Course teachers to serve as instructors of professional associations, “ideological and political mentors” for students’ scientific and technological innovation competitions, and team leaders for social practice activities such as “Going to the Countryside” (combined with professional services to society), establishing in-depth teacher-student relationships in real scenarios.
- (3) Development Community: Form “ideological and political-professional” integrated teaching teams with professional course teachers, jointly apply for teaching reform projects, develop teaching resources, and form a growth community with shared interests and responsibilities.

4.2.2. Content reconstruction: From “general textbooks” to “professionalized teaching system”

- (1) In-depth Student Situation Research: Use big data analysis, questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and other methods to continuously track the ideological dynamics, professional puzzles, and value cognition characteristics of students in different majors, and establish a “major-student situation” database.
- (2) Systematic Case Development: Cooperate with professional course teachers to jointly develop a

series of teaching cases with professional “flavor.” For example, for information technology majors, systematically develop case sets focusing on “technological ethics, network security, digital citizenship responsibility, and independent innovation in science and technology”: for intelligent manufacturing majors, systematically develop case sets focusing on “craftsmanship spirit, quality awareness, safe production, and innovative culture.”

- (3) Modular Resource Construction: Build the integrated content into a detachable and reconfigurable modular digital resource library (such as microcourses, case libraries, and question banks), embed it into the school’s online teaching platform for teachers to call on demand, and realize the dynamic update and sharing of resources.

4.2.3. Method reconstruction: From “one-way indoctrination” to “situational interactive inquiry”

- (1) Promote In-depth Case Teaching: Beyond illustrative explanations, adopt complex cases based on real professional dilemmas, guide students to conduct role-playing, debates, and write decision analysis reports, and learn to judge and choose in value conflicts.
- (2) Comprehensively Introduce Project-Based Learning (PBL): Design interdisciplinary comprehensive projects, such as “designing a marketing plan integrating e-commerce live streaming and rural revitalization narratives for local characteristic agricultural products,” allowing students to comprehensively use professional knowledge and ideological and political theories to solve practical problems in the whole process of completing the project.
- (3) Deepen the Integration of Information Technology: Use VR/AR technology to create highly simulated professional practice scenarios (such as virtual construction sites, simulated operating rooms, and simulated business negotiations), allowing students to understand professional ethics norms in an immersive experience. Use intelligent teaching tools to realize real-time classroom feedback and data-driven personalized guidance .

4.2.4. Practice reconstruction: From “extracurricular activities” to “integrated educational field”

- (1) Co-construction of Bases: Clearly include the “ideological and political education function” into the signing clauses of off-campus internship bases, and co-construct “ideological and political-professional” integrated practice bases with excellent cooperative enterprises.
- (2) Project Integration: In the professional on-the-job internship syllabus, clearly set up ideological and political practice links such as “professional ethics practice records” and “industry social observation reports,” which are jointly guided and assessed by enterprise mentors and ideological and political teachers.
- (3) Activity Co-creation: Cooperate with secondary colleges and the Youth League Committee to hold comprehensive competitions of “skill competitions + ideological and political literacy” and thematic educational activities with distinct professional characteristics, so that value guidance can be integrated into the blood of campus culture.

4.2.5. Evaluation reconstruction: From “knowledge assessment” to “value-added-oriented comprehensive evaluation”

- (1) Strengthen Process-Oriented and Performance-Oriented Evaluation: Significantly increase the weight of classroom discussions, project participation, and practical performance in the total evaluation score,

focusing on changes in students' value judgments, thinking qualities, and professional behaviors.

- (2) Establish a Value-Added Evaluation Model: Through the combination of entrance assessment and graduation assessment, track the growth value of students in the dimensions of ideological and political quality, professional spirit, and social responsibility, and scientifically evaluate the actual effect of teaching.
- (3) Implement Multi-Subject Evaluation: Incorporate the evaluations of professional course teachers, enterprise mentors, counselors, and even classmates on their relevant performance in professional learning and internship practice into the final evaluation of Ideological and Political Theory Courses according to a certain weight.
- (4) Reform Teacher Evaluation and Incentives: Take achievements such as participating in interdisciplinary teaching and research, developing integrated resources, and guiding integrated practice as important bases for the performance assessment, professional title evaluation, and selection of excellent Ideological and Political Theory Course teachers, forming a positive incentive loop.

4.3. Support layer (Precision guarantee): “Four-wheel drive” of integrated ecology

The effective operation of the core layer requires a strong support system, namely “four-wheel drive.”

4.3.1. Organizational coordination drive

Establish a leading group for “ideological and political-professional” integration led by the main leaders of the school, with the participation of the Ideological and Political Theory Course department, Academic Affairs Office, Student Affairs Office, secondary colleges, School-Enterprise Cooperation Office, and other departments. Set up a special office responsible for top-level design, overall coordination, resource allocation, and conflict resolution.

4.3.2. Institutional incentive drive

Formulate a series of systems such as the “Implementation Plan for the In-depth Integration of Ideological and Political Theory Courses and Professional Education,” “Measures for the Construction and Management of Interdisciplinary Teaching Teams,” and “Measures for the Recognition and Reward of Integrated Teaching Achievements,” clarify the rights, responsibilities, and interests of all parties, and provide stable institutional expectations for integrated reform.

4.3.3. Digital platform drive

Build an “intelligent ideological and political-professional integration” digital platform, integrate student situation data, integrated teaching resources, support cross-time and space teaching and research activities, realize the management of teaching processes and the monitoring of effects, and provide technical support for precise teaching and management decisions.

4.3.4. Cultural infiltration drive

Create a good campus cultural atmosphere that encourages innovation, tolerates failure, and promotes collaborative education by publicizing excellent integrated cases, selecting and commending advanced teams and individuals, and holding integrated teaching salons, so that integration becomes a value consensus and conscious action of the whole school.

5. Conclusion

Promoting the in-depth integration of Ideological and Political Theory Courses and professional education is a systematic project involving conceptual renewal, system reconstruction, and motivation stimulation, which cannot be achieved overnight^[8]. The “goal - core - support” model proposed in this paper attempts to provide an overall framework from macro to micro and from concept to operation. Its successful implementation lies in the strategic determination and top-level design at the school level, the core is to build a collaborative mechanism for the shared destiny of Ideological and Political Theory Course teachers and professional course teachers, and the difficulty is to break the inherent departmental barriers and evaluation inertia. Looking forward to the future, this reform needs to be continuously deepened in the following aspects: first, strengthen empirical research, test the effectiveness of different paths through rigorous action research and big data tracking, and continuously optimize the model: second, pay attention to the depth of technological empowerment, and explore the application of artificial intelligence in personalized student situation analysis, resource push, and effect evaluation: third, expand the international perspective, conduct comparative research on the value guidance models in vocational education in developed countries, and draw on their essence. Finally, through persistent efforts, make Ideological and Political Theory Courses truly become courses that higher vocational students truly love, benefit from lifelong, and remember for a lifetime, and cultivate more era newcomers with exquisite skills and soul light for the construction of a powerful country.

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