

# Innovative Design of Ideological and Political Education in Art Courses in Higher Education: A Case Study of “Creative Design Thinking and Methods”

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**Abstract:** This study focuses on the innovative design of ideological and political education in art courses in higher education, using the course “Creative Design Thinking and Methods” as a case study. It begins by analyzing the significance and research objectives of integrating ideological and political education into art courses, systematically elaborating on its connotations, objectives, and unique advantages in art education. By showcasing practical examples of curriculum integration, such as “Campus Culture Integration Design,” “Tribute to Red Culture,” and “Course Project Outcome Reports,” the study explores innovative methods for deeply integrating ideological and political education with professional courses. The research summarizes the outcomes of these practices and envisions future directions, including optimizing teaching methods, enhancing faculty capabilities, expanding practical teaching channels, and establishing a scientific evaluation system. This study provides theoretical support and practical insights for the construction of ideological and political education in art courses in higher education.

**Keywords:** Art Courses; Ideological and Political Education in Courses; Creative Design Thinking and Methods; Red Culture.

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## 1. Introduction

Under the impetus of educational reform, ideological and political education in art courses in higher education is playing an increasingly significant role in teaching. Cultivating well-rounded, high-quality talent has become a core objective of higher education in the new era. As a critical component of university education, art courses, while imparting professional knowledge and skills, should also emphasize enhancing students' moral character and shaping their values. The concept of integrating ideological and political education provides a new framework for reforming and innovating art courses in universities. To achieve the organic integration of knowledge transmission and value orientation, various courses have gradually incorporated elements of ideological and political education. Particularly in art courses, embedding these elements helps guide students to establish a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values. This not only enhances the educational function of the courses but also fosters students' aesthetic abilities and creativity, laying a solid foundation for improving the overall quality of education [1]. This study investigates the pathways and value of innovative ideological and political education in the course “Creative Design Thinking and Methods”, aiming to explore innovative teaching approaches in creative design and the integration and practice of ideological and political education within the curriculum.

With the continuous development and progress of society, the requirements for art and design talents have surpassed mere professional skills, emphasizing the comprehensive cultivation of well-rounded competencies and the establishment of correct values. As a critical component of art courses in higher education, “Creative Design Thinking and Methods” is tasked with the significant mission of fostering students' innovative thinking and creative design abilities. The course seeks to guide students in embracing the spirit of

integrity and innovation, grounding their work in the present era, connecting with the people, and drawing inspiration from real life. It aims to enhance students' aesthetic abilities and cultural literacy, while fostering cultural confidence and a sense of responsibility. The integration of ideological and political education into the course design is not about transforming professional courses directly into political theory classes. Instead, it involves seamlessly embedding socialist core values into design case studies, thereby using professional knowledge as a practical vehicle for political ideas. Through this approach, students are subtly educated in socialist core values, which enhances their adaptability to societal needs and promotes the efficient learning of professional knowledge. This process provides critical support for cultivating innovative and versatile art and design talents.

## 2. Integration of Aesthetic Education and Ideological and Political Education

Aesthetic education and ideological and political education in higher education, as essential components of university curricula, serve as vital pathways for cultivating well-rounded talent. Artistic aesthetics, with its unique power to inspire, exerts a profound and positive influence on students' ideologies and values. As the saying goes, art originates from life, and the ability to perceive and experience life lies at the core of aesthetic competence. Against this backdrop, the challenge of organically integrating aesthetic education with ideological and political education, enabling them to complement each other and collectively enhance students' intellectual and comprehensive abilities, has become a critical topic requiring in-depth research and practice. This exploration is not only pivotal for improving the quality of education but also for fostering students' well-rounded

personalities and creativity.

In classroom teaching, the cultural and emotional aspects of artistic aesthetics can enhance students' value recognition in ideological and political education in higher education. For instance, when students appreciate works of art, they engage with the emotions and value judgments embodied within them. This interaction can evoke a profound emotional resonance, helping students refine their inner emotions, develop a clear sense of aesthetic judgment, and distinguish between beauty and ugliness, good and evil in life. Aesthetic education and ideological and political education share a mutually penetrating and interactive relationship. Infusing artistic aesthetic sensibilities into political and ideological education brings vibrancy and depth to campus learning, making it both engaging and meaningful.

In course design, incorporating flexible and engaging classroom interactions along with appropriate and well-guided creative thinking is a priority for integrating ideological and political education with aesthetic education. Given the current student learning context, teachers need to proactively adjust their teaching approaches and adopt the strategy of "listening more, learning more, and guiding more effectively."

"Listening more" involves understanding students' interpretations of topics, their creative ideas during brainstorming, and their visions for creative projects. By comprehending students' thought processes, teachers can provide targeted support for classroom interactions.

"Learning more" requires teachers to continually update their knowledge of new technologies, methods, and concepts. Staying attuned to mainstream societal topics, they can uncover the potential value of these subjects and offer students timely, effective guidance for implementation.

"Guiding more effectively" emphasizes not just frequent guidance but ensuring that the guidance is purposeful and valuable. Effective guidance necessitates that teachers base their suggestions on robust theoretical and practical foundations. By fostering resonance and alignment of ideas with students during interactions, teachers can infuse greater depth and strength into the integration of ideological and political education with aesthetic education.

The integration of aesthetic education with ideological and political education is an essential pathway for enhancing academic quality and an inevitable trend in the development of higher education. In the process of implementing this integration in universities, it remains crucial to fully leverage course resources, strengthen teacher training, and optimize teaching design. By solidifying these foundational elements, institutions can effectively cultivate well-rounded and exceptional talent.

### **3. Ideological and Political Practice Strategies for the Course "Creative Design Thinking and Methods"**

#### **3.1. Problem-driven Design Practice Project - Strengthening Social Responsibility**

The key challenge of the course lies in the application and implementation of creative design thinking methods in design practice projects. In this project, during the thinking and practical stages of the course, a creative thinking session centered around "solving social ecological problems" is set up to guide students in developing design practice thinking and

innovative abilities with a core focus on "solving real-world problems."

During the design thinking phase, students will encounter diverse and complex social issues, such as the pressing topic of "waste sorting" in current society. By independently researching relevant information and combining it with classroom learning, students gain a preliminary understanding of the current state of waste sorting and its design needs, while also analyzing and discussing the difficulties and challenges encountered in the process.

This series of activities encourages students to deeply analyze problems, effectively exercising their critical thinking and innovative abilities. Moreover, it helps students fully appreciate the importance of waste sorting in environmental protection. The project-based internship, driven by problem-solving design practice, not only enhances students' creative thinking skills but also fosters their sense of social responsibility.

By guiding students to participate in such design practices, the course reinforces their sense of social responsibility as designers. It helps them recognize that the purpose of design extends beyond fulfilling personal creative and aesthetic needs. Instead, it is about serving society, solving real-world problems, and promoting sustainable social development.

#### **3.2. Group Collaboration and Co-creation Projects - Strengthening Teamwork**

In this project practice, students will be guided to form groups and engage in multiple rounds of brainstorming around a specified theme. Through the practical teaching process, it has been observed that each student brings unique ideas and perspectives, and different angles of thinking often lead to more inspiration and innovation. As the course instructor, it is important to monitor the dynamics of each collaborative team in real time, identifying issues from a third-party perspective and guiding teams to resolve them through discussion and negotiation.

While achieving the team's collective goals, special attention must be paid to the rationality of task distribution, ensuring that each member can fully leverage their strengths and contribute targeted insights. When disagreements arise during the project co-creation process, the team leader must maintain clear thinking, guide team members in analyzing the root of the problem, and drive consensus. Each member should learn to listen to and respect differing opinions, achieving unity of thought through teamwork, which will result in more refined solutions. Additionally, there should be a dedicated team member responsible for the overall project management, ensuring that the timeline is clear and monitoring progress, providing feedback as necessary to keep the project on track.

Teachers not only need to provide timely guidance to each team but also encourage team members to support one another and face challenges together. In group collaboration, students' language expression and logical thinking abilities are effectively developed, enabling them to communicate more efficiently, express their ideas clearly and accurately, and better understand and incorporate others' suggestions. This practice-based teaching model, which centers on group collaboration, not only significantly enhances students' communication efficiency but also strengthens their awareness of teamwork, laying a solid foundation for their future professional development.

## 4. Innovative Methods for Ideological and Political Practice in the Course “Creative Design Thinking and Methods”

### 4.1. Campus Culture Integration

Campus culture is a unique spiritual wealth of higher education institutions, and this study is based on Chinese universities. Campus culture serves as an important entry point in course design. In both classroom teaching and case practice, we incorporate creative design thinking and methods by leveraging campus culture. Taking the author's institution as an example, campus culture is categorized in classroom teaching:

First category: Teachers lead students in a deep understanding of the school's history, traditions, and cultural heritage. For instance, exploring the school's development history, key historical events, milestones, and notable alumni. By delving into the campus's historical and cultural legacy, such as the school's founding in 1995 and its upgrade to a university in 2014, or the calligraphy of renowned figures like Yuan Longping, teachers can guide students to uncover the stories behind these facts. For example, students may explore the stories behind campus buildings or the architects involved, guiding them to discover more about campus culture.

Second category: The campus life environment serves as a theme, where teachers guide students to collect and create elements of their daily surroundings. Students are encouraged to observe and design from different perspectives, recognizing that design should emerge from life and create value for life. This includes campus architecture, landscaping, and vegetation, among other elements. Through these two directions, students are guided to discover and inherit the campus culture. Based on this, students can integrate their creativity and ideas into design, such as developing campus cultural products or creating campus-specific symbols.

### 4.2. Tribute to Red Culture

Red culture serves as a vivid textbook for ideological and belief education. Through real historical events and touching stories of heroic figures, it provides students with intuitive and profound spiritual nourishment. The integration of red culture into art and design courses can take many forms. In the course design of Creative Design Thinking and Methods, we primarily incorporate red culture through the following two approaches:

The first approach is to leverage the geographical location of the institution to explore local red culture stories. For example, at the author's institution, located in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the course integrates elements of red history, outstanding heroic figures, and the revolutionary spirit of the area into the course design. Through this approach, students are guided to discover and engage with the red cultural elements of the Greater Bay Area.

The second approach is to explore the design expressions of red culture in China through the collection of red cultural materials, such as red murals from the early years of the founding of the country, posters of revolutionary figures, and online propaganda that emerged with the advancement of communication media. While guiding students to pay tribute to red cultural design works from different periods, this approach also helps students discover design transformations in different periods and media contexts. Through these two

aspects, students engage in the collection of red cultural elements and the analysis of red cultural design works, stimulating their creative thinking and practical abilities. At the same time, this deepens students' understanding of red culture and allows them to pay tribute to it through classroom learning.

### 4.3. Course Project Outcome Report

The two innovative perspectives of classroom ideological education proposed in this chapter not only effectively train students' creative design thinking and methods but also stimulate the emergence of outstanding works, much like bamboo shoots after a spring rain. To further inspire students' creativity and enhance the completeness and practical value of their design works, the course introduces a final project presentation stage, focused on showcasing the project-based works. This stage adds a new practical challenge to the creative design works, promoting a full-process closed-loop practice that spans from concept acquisition, creative thinking, and production to organization, summarization, and final delivery.

Through the project presentation, students are required not only to showcase their project works but also to deepen their project review abilities. In this process, students shift from focusing solely on creative thinking in design creation to a more comprehensive thought process. They must integrate the viewpoints of team members and the revision suggestions of the instructor, engaging in multi-threaded logical reasoning and optimization. The presentation can take the form of a flipped classroom, with the creative team jointly explaining and analyzing the project content. This format not only cultivates students' creative thinking but also strengthens their verbal communication skills. More importantly, this process indirectly enhances students' proposal abilities, which are crucial in real-world work situations, laying a solid foundation for their future career development.

## 5. Conclusion

The approaches to implementing ideological and political education in courses are diverse, with a wide range of methods and continuous accumulation of practical experience. The classroom practices and innovative strategies mentioned in this paper are based on actual teaching operations and have been summarized. Through the theoretical knowledge and practical projects in this course, students' various application abilities have been effectively trained. The project practice simulated various scenarios that students may encounter in their future careers, including design requirements analysis, creative brainstorming, information gathering and summarization, team collaboration and conflict resolution, and project proposals. These activities significantly enhanced students' creative thinking abilities. Students were able to accurately analyze the required themes, propose innovative ideas, and integrate creative thinking with design practice, successfully applying it to specific projects.

At the same time, in the design process, students not only considered factors such as social responsibility, teamwork, and environmental protection, but also developed their overall quality from multiple dimensions, with a notable improvement in their mental health levels. From a value perspective, the ideological and political innovation in the "Creative Design Thinking and Methods" course provides valuable reference for the reform and development of university art courses. By organically integrating ideological

and political education with moral education, the course achieved a unified approach to knowledge transfer and value guidance. The course is dedicated to cultivating students' comprehensive qualities, helping them form correct values, and implementing socialist core values into daily teaching. Through this process, students' sense of value identification was enhanced, their social responsibility and national sentiments were cultivated, and their moral qualities were comprehensively improved. This innovation in ideological and political education not only promotes the overall development of students but also provides successful experiences and practical models for the implementation of ideological and political education in higher education courses.

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