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Article

The Internal Logic and Practical Pathways for Integrating the Craftsman Spirit into Ideological and Political Courses in Applied Universities in the New Era

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Abstract: As an important embodiment of socialist core values in the field of professional practice, the craftsman spirit of the new era embodies value connotations such as dedication and commitment, striving for perfection, innovation and creativity, and a profound sense of responsibility. Applied universities bear the important mission of cultivating high-quality applied talents to meet modern industrial demands. Integrating the craftsman spirit into ideological and political course teaching is an important path for fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education and for aligning talent cultivation with the development needs of national industries. At present, the integration of the craftsman spirit into ideological and political course teaching in applied universities still faces practical problems such as insufficient value guidance, shallow curriculum integration, and inadequate transformation into practice, which constrains the effective exercise of the educational function of the craftsman spirit. On this basis, this paper explores practical approaches from the aspects of strengthening value guidance, deepening curriculum integration, and improving the practical system. These strategies aim to promote the transformation of the craftsman spirit from conceptual cognition to value identification and from classroom education to professional practice, thereby providing a solid reference for cultivating applied talents of the new era who possess a strong sense of responsibility, an innovative spirit, and excellent professional competence.

Keywords: applied universities; craftsman spirit; ideological education; teaching methods

1. Introduction

In the context of advancing national development goals and emphasizing educational quality and systemic rigor, contemporary labour education frameworks have been systematically refined to integrate core value orientations. The policy document on comprehensively strengthening labour education across all levels of schooling explicitly positions the model worker spirit, the labour spirit, and the craftsman spirit as foundational components of curricular design and pedagogical practice [1, 2]. This institutional alignment provides a robust foundation for higher education institutions—particularly applied universities—to embed craftsmanship-oriented competencies within their academic missions. Cultivating the craftsman spirit among students supports long-term strategic objectives, including industrial upgrading, technological self-reliance, and the enhancement of skilled human capital. Furthermore, such cultivation reinforces holistic development principles by linking technical proficiency with ethical responsibility, precision, perseverance, and innovation. It also contributes meaningfully to the broader educational mandate of moral formation and character building, aligning academic training with societal expectations for professionalism, diligence, and excellence in practice.

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2. The Internal Logic of Integrating the Craftsman Spirit into Ideological and Political Course Teaching in Applied Universities in the New Era

2.1. Resonance between Fostering Virtue through Education and Cultivating Talent for the Nation

As an important link connecting education and industry, applied universities not only undertake the task of cultivating professional competence but also shoulder the important mission of shaping professional values and fostering a sense of responsibility. In terms of educational objectives, the cultivation of the craftsman spirit and ideological and political course teaching are highly consistent. The craftsman spirit emphasizes dedication and commitment, striving for excellence in practice, continuous improvement through reflection and iteration, innovation grounded in technical mastery, and a deep-seated sense of accountability toward one's work, colleagues, and broader societal needs—qualities that define the professional ethos expected of graduates in the contemporary era. Ideological and political course teaching, through systematic theoretical instruction and deliberate value-oriented pedagogy, supports students in developing coherent frameworks for ethical reasoning, civic awareness, and long-term personal growth. The integration of these two dimensions enables a holistic transformation in talent development: moving beyond narrow skill acquisition toward integrated formation—where technical proficiency, moral discernment, and professional identity co-evolve. In terms of value connotations, the craftsman spirit aligns closely with core societal values promoted in ideological and political education. It embodies perseverance, meticulousness, integrity in practice, and collective orientation—all of which resonate with widely recognized models of exemplary professional conduct. This alignment facilitates meaningful connections between classroom learning and real-world vocational contexts, helping students recognize how disciplined craftsmanship contributes to sustainable industrial advancement and social well-being [3]. Such integration also strengthens students' identification with their chosen fields while reinforcing their understanding of professional roles as socially embedded and ethically consequential.

2.2. Deep Integration of Ideological Guidance and Spiritual Cultivation

Practice constitutes a fundamental mode through which human capabilities are externalized and realized in tangible forms, and the craftsman spirit emerges as a distinctive value orientation cultivated through sustained, purposeful labor. Integrating this spirit into ideological and political education within applied universities entails a deliberate alignment of professional ethos development with broader value-oriented pedagogy, thereby supporting students' holistic spiritual maturation as they engage with evolving societal expectations and occupational responsibilities. This integration operates bidirectionally: first, the craftsman spirit furnishes rich, empirically grounded material for classroom instruction—by incorporating documented experiences of nationally recognized skilled practitioners, sector-leading innovators, and exemplary technical professionals, abstract ethical and civic concepts become contextually anchored, thereby increasing pedagogical resonance and experiential authenticity. Second, ideological and political education contributes conceptual depth and normative framing to the craftsman spirit, reinforcing that technical proficiency is inseparable from ethical grounding and social accountability. Skill acquisition must be guided by principled reflection; only when individual vocational aspirations are consciously aligned with collective progress and public welfare can learners advance beyond technical competence toward meaningful societal contribution. This reciprocal relationship fosters integrated learning across cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains, strengthening coherence among value formation, hands-on application, and career identity development.

2.3. Coordinated Guidance of Professional Beliefs and Goals of Endeavour

Talent cultivation in applied universities must adopt a holistic approach that simultaneously advances professional competence and internalizes enduring ethical and

motivational foundations. Beyond technical proficiency, students require well-developed professional ideals, a robust sense of social responsibility, and sustained motivation for lifelong learning and contribution. The integration of the craftsman spirit—characterized by meticulousness, perseverance, innovation, and integrity—into ideological and political course instruction serves as a vital pedagogical bridge between abstract value education and concrete vocational identity formation. This integration enables learners to situate their personal aspirations within broader societal development frameworks, fostering alignment between individual career trajectories and collective progress. From the standpoint of value orientation, ideological and political courses provide systematic theoretical grounding that helps students critically reflect on moral principles, social ethics, and civic duties; concurrently, the craftsman spirit manifests these values through disciplined practice, iterative improvement, and commitment to excellence in real-world tasks. Regarding goal setting, such courses assist students in interpreting macro-level developmental objectives—such as industrial upgrading, technological self-reliance, and service-sector modernization—as actionable benchmarks for personal growth; the craftsman spirit then translates those benchmarks into daily habits of rigor, problem-solving initiative, and accountability. In domains including engineering technology, intelligent manufacturing, and modern services, attributes such as sustained attention to detail, adaptive innovation, and ethical stewardship constitute indispensable enablers of professional advancement. Moreover, the craftsman spirit offers tangible behavioral models, reflective routines, and evaluative criteria that guide students' continuous self-development [4]. Consequently, embedding this spirit within ideological and political education constitutes a strategic mechanism for transforming students from passive skill acquirers into proactive, values-driven career architects—thereby strengthening the cultivation of new-era applied talents who embody sound ideals, rigorous capability, and conscientious engagement.

3. Practical Problems in Integrating the Craftsman Spirit into Ideological and Political Course Teaching in Applied Universities in the New Era

3.1. Insufficient Value Guidance: Inadequate Exploration of the Educational Connotations of the Craftsman Spirit

Integrating the craftsman spirit of the new era into ideological and political course teaching in applied universities requires achieving a coherent alignment between professional ethos development and value-oriented education. However, current practice reveals notable gaps in conceptual depth and pedagogical implementation. Some institutions have not yet fully internalized the multifaceted educational significance of the craftsman spirit—encompassing rigor, perseverance, precision, innovation, and ethical commitment—and thus underutilize its potential to shape students' long-term character formation and vocational identity. From the perspective of curriculum objectives, talent cultivation frameworks in certain applied universities continue to prioritize the acquisition of technical competencies and hands-on skill proficiency, while comparatively underemphasizing integrative value objectives such as professional accountability, sustained dedication to excellence, and adaptive problem-solving grounded in integrity. Although ideological and political courses include thematic coverage of labor values and occupational ethics, this content often remains abstract and disconnected from students' lived experiences in internships, project-based learning, and career planning. As a result, the craftsman spirit has not been systematically embedded within the formal curriculum architecture—neither in learning outcomes, assessment criteria, nor instructional design—leading students to engage with it primarily as a rhetorical concept rather than as a lived orientation. From the perspective of campus culture development, institutional efforts to convey the deeper meaning of skilled work remain uneven. Many applied universities foreground visible indicators of success—such as competition rankings, award-winning student projects, or industry-recognized certifications—while dedicating insufficient attention to narrating the formative journeys of exemplary practitioners: their

iterative learning processes, responses to setbacks, collaborative decision-making, and evolving conceptions of professional purpose. Consequently, students observe technical accomplishments but struggle to discern the underlying ethical commitments, reflective practices, and growth-oriented mindsets that constitute the enduring substance of the craftsman spirit. This limitation constrains its capacity to function as a stable, generative cultural force within the academic environment.

3.2. Insufficient Teaching Integration: Inadequate Connection between Ideological and Political Education and Professional Training

Integrating the craftsman spirit into ideological and political course teaching in applied universities requires a systematic, multi-dimensional approach that goes beyond superficial inclusion—it demands meaningful alignment with professional characteristics, long-term career development pathways, and the evolving cognitive and affective profiles of contemporary students. In practice, however, this integration often remains fragmented and underdeveloped. A persistent challenge lies in the overreliance on illustrative case narratives—such as biographical accounts of nationally recognized skilled practitioners—without sufficient pedagogical scaffolding to unpack their underlying ethical frameworks, socio-technical relevance, or discipline-specific manifestations [5]. While such stories may temporarily engage learners, they risk reducing complex professional virtues to anecdotal inspiration unless accompanied by guided reflection on responsibility, precision-oriented thinking, iterative problem-solving, and lifelong learning dispositions. Furthermore, curricular design frequently overlooks the heterogeneity across applied disciplines: engineering technology emphasizes rigorous standards compliance and systems-level innovation; modern service sectors prioritize empathetic communication and adaptive responsiveness; intelligent manufacturing integrates human-machine collaboration and data-informed decision-making. Without tailoring conceptual articulation and instructional strategies to these distinct occupational logics, ideological and political education risks becoming abstract and disconnected from students' lived academic and future workplace realities. Pedagogically, many classrooms continue to privilege expository delivery over experiential modalities—limiting opportunities for immersive simulations, industry-integrated projects, peer-led value analysis, or reflective portfolio development—all of which are empirically associated with deeper affective resonance and sustained value internalization. Strengthening integration thus necessitates coordinated curriculum mapping, faculty development focused on transdisciplinary pedagogy, and institutional support for collaborative course design between ideological and political educators and subject-matter specialists.

3.3. Insufficient Transformation into Practice: Inadequate Coordination between Professional Experience and Industrial Resources

The craftsman spirit is fundamentally rooted in sustained, reflective professional practice and must be continually reinforced through authentic, industry-embedded learning environments. Applied universities shoulder a pivotal responsibility in nurturing high-caliber applied talents, and practical teaching constitutes a core pedagogical pathway for internalizing this ethos. Yet, the current practical education framework in certain institutions remains underdeveloped in both design and implementation [6, 7]. While students acquire foundational conceptual understanding of the craftsman spirit through theoretical instruction and structured skill drills, the experiential dimension often prioritizes technical proficiency and task completion over deeper affective and ethical engagement. Specifically, laboratory sessions, integrated curriculum design projects, and field-based internships frequently emphasize procedural accuracy and output delivery, while underemphasizing the cultivation of intrinsic professional dispositions—such as methodical attention to detail, iterative refinement of work processes, unwavering commitment to quality assurance, and proactive problem-solving grounded in domain-specific integrity. This imbalance impedes the critical transition from cognitive recognition to habitual, values-driven professional conduct. Furthermore, university-enterprise collaboration mechanisms for cultivating the

craftsman spirit remain fragmented and inconsistently institutionalized. Authentic exposure to industrial ecosystems—including frontline production contexts, cutting-edge equipment, standardized quality management systems, and mentorship by nationally certified skilled professionals—is essential for contextualizing abstract ideals into lived practice. However, structural barriers—including misaligned academic calendars, insufficient joint curriculum co-development protocols, limited shared infrastructure investment, and underdeveloped faculty-industry mobility pathways—constrain meaningful integration. Consequently, students encounter constrained access to real-world complexity, diminishing opportunities to observe, emulate, and embody the nuanced behaviours and mindsets that define exemplary craftsmanship. Such limitations not only hinder the consolidation of technical competence but also impede the formation of robust professional identity, long-term occupational commitment, and socially grounded vocational purpose.

4. Practical Approaches to Integrating the Craftsman Spirit into Ideological and Political Course Teaching in Applied Universities in the New Era

4.1. Strengthening Value Guidance and Building a Goal System for Integrating the Craftsman Spirit into Ideological and Political Courses

Integrating the craftsman spirit into ideological and political course teaching in applied universities first requires addressing the fundamental educational question of "what kind of people to cultivate." Applied universities bear the important mission of cultivating high-quality applied talents who are not only technically competent but also ethically grounded, socially responsible, and value-oriented. Talent cultivation must therefore transcend narrow skill acquisition and encompass the holistic development of professional ideals, moral integrity, civic consciousness, and long-term vocational commitment. Consequently, the craftsman spirit—understood as a comprehensive ethos encompassing dedication and commitment to one's vocation, relentless pursuit of excellence, capacity for innovation within practical constraints, and deep-seated sense of accountability—must be systematically embedded into the educational objective system of ideological and political courses. This integration ensures that skill development and value formation proceed in tandem, reinforcing each other rather than operating in isolation. Specifically, universities should conduct rigorous curriculum mapping to identify precise points of convergence between core ideological and political concepts—such as socialist core values, professional ethics, and historical materialism—and the enduring principles embodied in the craftsman spirit [8]. In instructional design, the craftsman spirit should not be reduced to instrumental notions like technical dexterity or mechanical precision; instead, it must be presented as a dynamic, reflective, and socially embedded disposition—one that manifests both in meticulous engagement with professional practice and in conscious alignment with broader societal needs and developmental imperatives. Pedagogical strategies should emphasize critical reflection, case-based analysis of real-world professional dilemmas, and experiential learning opportunities that allow students to internalize these values through sustained practice and guided discourse.

At the same time, the value-infusing function of campus culture should be brought into play so as to extend the craftsman spirit from classroom education to environment-based education. Applied universities can, in light of their own professional characteristics, build exhibition spaces for craftsman culture and platforms for skills and culture activities, publicize advanced figures in the industry and the growth stories of outstanding alumni, and enable students to feel the power of the professional spirit in their daily learning environment. For example, some universities have introduced advanced figures from industry into ideological and political classrooms through activities such as "Great National Craftsmen on Campus" and "Face to Face with Model Workers," thereby enhancing students' understanding of professional value through real growth experiences. Beyond symbolic representation, institutions should institutionalize

sustained interaction mechanisms—such as mentorship programs linking students with seasoned practitioners, co-developed project modules integrating industry challenges into course assignments, and longitudinal portfolios tracking students' evolving professional identity formation. Such initiatives foster cognitive, affective, and behavioral alignment with the craftsman ethos. Furthermore, digital infrastructure—including curated online archives of exemplary professional narratives, interactive simulations of ethical decision-making in technical contexts, and multimedia documentation of craftsmanship across regional industries—can significantly broaden access and deepen engagement. Through the synergistic construction of an objective system and the intentional creation of a supportive cultural environment, the craftsman spirit can be transformed from discrete teaching content into a coherent educational philosophy and from an external requirement into an internally motivated pursuit that students actively embrace, thereby providing robust, contextually grounded value support for the holistic cultivation of applied talents in alignment with national development goals and social progress imperatives.

4.2. Deepening Curriculum Integration and Innovating the Teaching Model for Integrating the Craftsman Spirit into Ideological and Political Courses

The key to effectively integrating the craftsman spirit into ideological and political course teaching in applied universities lies in achieving deep, organic integration of ideological and political education and professional education—moving beyond superficial juxtaposition toward systemic synergy. At present, students in applied universities demonstrate a pronounced preference for experiential, context-embedded learning; if craftsman spirit education is abstracted from authentic professional backgrounds, disciplinary frameworks, and real-world occupational scenarios, it risks remaining at the level of passive theoretical cognition without fostering genuine value internalization or behavioral orientation. Therefore, in light of the distinctive characteristics of applied talent cultivation—emphasizing competence-based outcomes, industry alignment, and practice-oriented pedagogy—the craftsman spirit must be systematically embedded across three interdependent dimensions: course content design, instructional delivery, and learning assessment mechanisms [9, 10].

In terms of developing teaching content, the theoretical interpretation of the craftsman spirit should be deepened through conceptual precision and philosophical grounding. Teachers of ideological and political courses should not rely solely on biographical storytelling or anecdotal recounting of exemplary figures; instead, they must engage in rigorous analysis of the underlying ethical, epistemological, and ontological foundations of craftsmanship [5]. For example, through carefully selected cases of nationally recognized skilled professionals, students can be guided to discern how meticulous attention to detail embodies a commitment to social utility and technical integrity; how iterative experimentation and process refinement reflect an adaptive, future-oriented mindset aligned with national strategic development goals; and how sustained dedication over extended periods signifies a mature vocational identity rooted in lifelong learning and self-actualization. Such pedagogical scaffolding enables learners to progress meaningfully from surface-level familiarity—'knowing the story'—to critical reflection and embodied understanding—'internalizing the spirit' as a lived professional ethos.

In terms of teaching design, the connection between the craftsman spirit and professional development must be strengthened through discipline-specific contextualization and curricular coherence. Applied universities can, according to the epistemic structures and practice logics of different majors, identify and mobilize distinctive teaching resources—including industry white papers, enterprise training modules, national occupational standards, and workplace ethnographies—and integrate them meaningfully into ideological and political teaching. For instance, in mechanical manufacturing and engineering technology programs, industrial cases drawn from high-end equipment manufacturing, aerospace component assembly, or intelligent production

line optimization can be used to illuminate how precision engineering reflects collective responsibility for national technological self-reliance; in modern service-oriented majors such as hospitality management or digital marketing, the cultivation of service excellence can be anchored in sector-specific quality benchmarks, customer experience analytics, and ethical data governance frameworks, thereby linking dedication to concrete professional competencies and societal expectations.

In terms of teaching methods, the traditional one-way lecturing model should be decisively moved beyond, with intentional adoption of pedagogically diverse, student-centered approaches—including case-based teaching grounded in real enterprise challenges, immersive situational simulations replicating workplace dilemmas, structured thematic seminars fostering peer-led critical dialogue, and scaffolded practical experiences such as factory visits, mentorship shadowing, or co-developed micro-projects with industry partners. Empirical evidence from classroom-based action research indicates that embedding authentic craftsman narratives, discipline-relevant professional scenarios, and reflective practice opportunities within the broader framework of ideological and political education significantly enhances cognitive engagement, emotional resonance, and long-term value retention. This multimodal strategy transforms the classroom from a site of information transmission into a dynamic space for identity formation, where students actively negotiate the relationship between personal aspiration, professional conduct, and social contribution [11].

In addition, universities should institutionalize cross-disciplinary collaboration by strengthening coordination between ideological and political teachers and professional teachers—not merely as ad hoc consultation but as a formalized, credit-bearing collaborative mechanism. Through structured joint lesson preparation sessions, shared digital resource repositories containing vetted industry materials, and mandatory annual enterprise immersion programs—including participation in technical workshops, quality assurance audits, or vocational qualification assessments—faculty capacity can be systematically enhanced. Such sustained professional development ensures that instructors possess up-to-date understanding of evolving industrial paradigms, emerging occupational competencies, and shifting workforce demands, thereby enabling more precise, credible, and pedagogically effective integration of the craftsman spirit that resonates authentically with students' future career trajectories and societal roles.

4.3. Improving the Practical System and Promoting the Transformation of the Craftsman Spirit from Cognition to Practice

The craftsman spirit is not an abstract concept derived exclusively from theoretical instruction; rather, it is a deeply embodied professional ethos that crystallizes over time through sustained, reflective engagement in authentic practice and accumulated occupational experience. Applied universities possess distinctive institutional strengths in experiential learning, making them uniquely positioned to embed the cultivation of this spirit across the full spectrum of pedagogical activities—including structured laboratory instruction, discipline-specific internships, community-oriented service learning, and sustained university-enterprise collaborative initiatives. Such integration ensures that students progress meaningfully from passive recognition and conceptual comprehension of core values—such as precision, perseverance, integrity, and excellence—to active demonstration and internalization of those values in real-world professional contexts [12, 13]. This transformation requires deliberate curricular scaffolding, intentional faculty facilitation, and consistent alignment between learning objectives, assessment criteria, and workplace expectations.

First, the inherent educational potential embedded within professional practice must be systematically identified, articulated, and leveraged [14, 15]. Laboratories, skill training centers, maker spaces, and applied research platforms serve dual functions: they are indispensable venues for technical competency development and equally vital conduits for shaping professional identity and ethical disposition. During hands-on experimental procedures, iterative product prototyping, and applied project development, instructors

should explicitly foreground procedural discipline, systematic quality assurance protocols, iterative refinement cycles, and evidence-based decision-making. These practices collectively foster metacognitive awareness of craftsmanship—not merely as manual dexterity but as a holistic orientation toward responsibility, continuous improvement, and contextual responsiveness. Students thus acquire not only domain-specific competencies but also the tacit knowledge and affective commitments characteristic of exemplary practitioners.

Second, industry-education integration must be advanced beyond superficial collaboration to achieve structural synergy in value transmission. Enterprises constitute living repositories of occupational culture, tacit norms, and situated wisdom—resources that cannot be fully replicated in academic settings alone. Strategic partnerships—such as co-developed training bases, joint curriculum design, embedded enterprise mentorship programs, and frontline practicum placements—enable students to observe, interrogate, and gradually emulate professional conduct in authentic socio-technical environments [14, 16]. Notably, several applied institutions have pioneered hybrid pedagogical models that bridge ideological education with vocational socialization—for instance, integrating distinguished industry practitioners and nationally recognized skilled workers into interdisciplinary teaching teams. These collaborations facilitate dialogic learning where students engage directly with lived narratives of dedication, problem-solving resilience, and ethical commitment, thereby grounding abstract ideals in concrete, relatable professional trajectories.

Finally, a robust, multi-layered ecosystem for practical education must be cultivated—one that transcends institutional boundaries and leverages both physical and digital infrastructures. Universities can strategically deploy online simulation platforms, curated digital case libraries, virtual enterprise tours, and cloud-based collaborative workspaces alongside traditional enterprise immersion opportunities. This hybrid architecture expands access, enhances scalability, and supports differentiated learning pathways while maintaining fidelity to real-world complexity [2]. Crucially, such an ecosystem depends on coordinated governance among higher education institutions, industry stakeholders, and community partners—ensuring coherence across classroom theory, applied projects, and industrial practice. When these elements operate in concert, the craftsman spirit ceases to be an external ideal and becomes an organic, evolving dimension of students' professional habitus, progressively reinforced through repeated, meaningful engagement across diverse learning contexts.

5. Conclusion

Integrating the craftsman spirit of the new era into ideological and political course teaching in applied universities necessitates a tripartite pedagogical framework: first, grounding instruction in value-oriented guidance to cultivate ethical awareness and professional integrity; second, embedding this ethos organically across disciplinary curricula—not as an add-on but as a unifying thread that connects theoretical knowledge with vocational identity; and third, reinforcing learning through sustained, scaffolded practical experiences such as industry internships, project-based simulations, and reflective portfolio development. This integrated approach fosters holistic student development, enabling learners to evolve beyond technical proficiency toward autonomous, socially responsible career creation grounded in excellence, resilience, and purposeful contribution.

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