

# Research on Curriculum Ideological and Political Education in Architectural Programs under the Background of Urban Micro-renewal: Taking the Principles of Interior Design Course as an Example

Chen Heng<sup>a</sup>, Wu Yuhao<sup>b,\*</sup>, Zheng Zixuan<sup>c</sup>

School of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Wuhan Polytechnic University, Wuhan, China  
<sup>a</sup>m16a324@qq.com, <sup>b</sup>richard.yuhao.wu@gmail.com, <sup>c</sup>2486424062@qq.com

\*Corresponding author

**Abstract:** This study investigates the crucial role of integrating curriculum ideological and political education within architectural education, specifically in the context of China's urban micro-renewal. The necessity of this integration is explored, focusing on its potential to cultivate well-rounded professionals. Using the "Principles of Interior Design" course as a case study, we analyzed existing approaches to curriculum ideological and political integration, identifying both strengths and limitations. The analysis revealed significant challenges, including insufficient content integration between ideological and political elements and professional knowledge, weak evaluation mechanisms, and a lack of diverse teaching approaches. To address these shortcomings, we propose innovative strategies: organically integrating ideological and political elements within the teaching content, project-based learning, and combining design competitions with social service. These strategies aim to not only enhance professional competence but also foster social responsibility and cultural identity, ultimately aligning with the educational goal of "fostering morality and cultivating talents".

**Keywords:** Urban Micro-renewal; Architectural Program; Curriculum Ideological and Political Education; Teaching Research; Principles of Interior Design

## 1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China issued the "Guiding Outline for Ideological and Political Construction in Higher Education Curriculum" in June 2020, which comprehensively deployed the integration of ideological and political education into courses. Subsequently, in July 2022, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China and ten other departments jointly issued the "Working Plan for Comprehensively Promoting the Construction of 'Grand Ideological and Political Class'". These initiatives underscore the importance of ideological and political education in courses. It is regarded as a strategic undertaking to fulfill the fundamental mission of fostering morality and cultivating talents, and is a crucial task for enhancing the overall quality of education. Specialized courses serve as essential vehicles for this integration, with specialized course teachers acting as the "main force," specialized course teaching as the "main battlefield," and specialized course classrooms as the "main channel." The incorporation of ideological and political education in university courses effectively shapes and guides students' worldviews, perspectives on life, and values, with strategic implications for addressing fundamental issues in education.

As China undergoes rapid urbanization, the traditional large-scale development model is gradually giving way to a more nuanced approach to urban micro-renewal. Micro-renewal prioritizes the optimization and revitalization of existing urban spaces, adopting small-scale, incremental modifications to address diverse urban development needs. This paradigm aims to enhance the quality of urban spaces and foster sustainable social, cultural, and environmental development<sup>[1]</sup>. This trend generates new opportunities and challenges for architectural design and urban planning, while simultaneously increasing the professional demands of the architectural discipline. Designers are now required to consider social values and cultural heritage alongside spatial quality. However, the integration of micro-renewal concepts into professional course teaching and the cultivation of micro-renewal talent, particularly in ordinary local universities, has not garnered sufficient attention.

Within architectural disciplines, "Principles of Interior Design" is a core course focusing on spatial layout, functional optimization, material application, and environmental creation. It aims to develop students' spatial design abilities and comprehensive thinking skills. Not only does it involve professional architectural design skills, but it also plays a key role in the quality of living spaces, bridging the gap between a building's exterior and its interior functional needs. In the realm of urban micro-renewal, the "Principles of Interior Design" course shifts its scope beyond spatial and functional enhancements with city development as an agenda, it also requires infusion of ideological and political aspects into professional training. This integration is designed to foster students' social responsibility and cultural awareness, and elevate their ability to lead with values in practical design. This can be achieved by actively innovating pathways in curriculum-based ideological education, expanding the arena of political and ideological education, and achieving the organic integration of professional knowledge and ideological education, thus effectively achieving the educational goal of "fostering virtue through education"<sup>[2]</sup>.

## **2. The Necessity of Integrating Ideological and Political Education into Professional Course**

### ***2.1. It is a Requirement for Cultivating Students' Well-rounded Personalities***

The cultivation of students' well-rounded personalities directly impacts their sense of responsibility and mission in serving national development strategies and practicing core socialist values after they enter society. Education not only shapes and transforms students' worldviews but also directly determines their learning attitudes and methods, thereby exerting a profound direct or indirect influence on their design perspectives. Architecture is a discipline highly interconnected with society, and its ultimate goal is not only to shape physical spaces but also to carry culture, promote social progress, and improve people's well-being. This responsibility requires practitioners to possess core virtues such as cultural confidence, patriotism, and social responsibility, in addition to technical abilities. The integration of ideological and political education provides indispensable value guidance for students to build a sound personality.

From the perspective of personality cultivation, the core of a well-rounded personality lies in shaping students' national sentiments, social responsibility awareness, and national cultural identity. Through guiding students to focus on national needs, such as ecological civilization construction, rural revitalization strategies, and the protection of historical and cultural heritage, ideological and political education promotes their awareness of the close connection between individual design practices and national development goals. Furthermore, the integration of ideological and political education not only shapes students' values but also guides them to proactively take on the responsibility of cultural heritage preservation and innovation in their future architectural practice<sup>[3]</sup>.

### ***2.2. Fostering Students' Characteristics of Social Responsibility***

As a discipline closely related to human life and social development, the core value of architecture lies not only in technological innovation and spatial aesthetics, but also in solving social problems and promoting social progress through design. Cultivating students' social responsibility attributes means transforming them from mere technical executors into social practitioners concerned with public interests, equipping them with a people-centered, society-serving design philosophy. Ideological and political education, through the guidance of values, helps students recognize the close link between their professional skills and social responsibility.

The cultivation of social responsibility attributes also encourages students to pay more attention to social realities and needs, enabling them to actively assume the role of serving public interests in their designs. Through the deep integration of ideological and political education into the curriculum, students can recognize that architecture is not only a technical activity but also a value choice, and that the professional behavior of architects is directly related to social equality and progress. The formation of such social responsibility is not only a core goal of architectural education but also an important way to cultivate new-era architectural talents with patriotic sentiments, social responsibility, and innovative abilities.

### ***2.3. Educational Objectives that Integrate Professional Knowledge with Value Orientation***

Within architectural education, the conveyance of professional knowledge and skill cultivation is

typically straightforward, whereas the development of personal perspectives, moral values, and ideological leadership necessitates the effective infusion of ideological and political components into professional curricula. Architecture functions not just as a technical field for resolving spatial issues but additionally as a societal field that embodies Chinese culture and propagates societal values. This characteristic dictates that educational aims simultaneously encompass both professional learning and societal values.

Therefore, classroom teaching should not only focus on the transmission of professional knowledge and skills but also promote the deep integration of ideological and political education with professional courses, organically embedding ideological and political elements into professional knowledge through optimized curriculum construction. By fully leveraging the leading role of ideological and political education, we can help new-era college students enhance their political identity, establish cultural confidence, define their life plans within the context of national development, strengthen their ideals and political orientation, and contribute to the goal of building a strong socialist modern country.

### **3. Existing Conditions and Issues Regarding Ideological and Political Education in Architectural Studies**

#### ***3.1. Inadequate Combination of Political And Ideological Elements with Specialized Expertise***

In the course on "Principles of Interior Design," the incorporation of ideological and political education often remains on a theoretical plane, lacking a substantive connection with real-world design projects, hence failing to convey the practical applications of ideological and political values through actual design cases. This shortcoming originates from a failure within the curriculum design to organically integrate ideological and political elements, such as cultural confidence, national identification, and social responsibility, into the design assignments. For instance, while numerous design scenarios within the context of urban micro-renewal could have been leveraged to encourage students to contemplate the influence of spatial design on community prosperity and cultural preservation, previous teaching practices predominantly emphasized spatial functionality optimization and technical execution, thereby neglecting the social values underpinning the design process. This resulted in a hurdle for students to cultivate the core idea that "design serves society." Furthermore, previous ideological content was frequently presented in discrete units or theoretical formats. Such a "separation" from the professional content hinders student comprehension of the relationship between ideological education and hands-on design practice and therefore does not profoundly shape students' values and sense of social responsibility<sup>[4]</sup>.

#### ***3.2. The Evaluation Mechanism for The Effectiveness of Ideological And Political Integration is Imperfect***

Currently, the "Principles of Interior Design" course exhibits a noticeable shortfall in evaluating the effectiveness of ideological and political integration, primarily manifested in an evaluation system that is singular and lacks specificity. Prior course evaluations typically focused on the aesthetics, functional implementation, and technical proficiency of design proposals, while the assessment of soft ideological and political indicators, such as cultural awareness and value orientation, was significantly diminished. Moreover, the evaluation methodology largely relies on teacher-centric assessments, lacking robust multi-faceted feedback mechanisms that include self- and peer-evaluations from students or groups, along with input from societal figures or industry professionals. Furthermore, the development of ideological and political education urgently necessitates the implementation of a bidirectional feedback framework; this involves instructors providing feedback on teaching experiences to optimize the educational content, and the refinement of the teaching evaluation framework through both subjective and objective feedback data from students to address issues of ambiguous goals, standardized content, and dated methodologies to enhance teaching effectiveness and student engagement<sup>[5]</sup>.

Evaluation outcomes tend to remain largely qualitative, lacking both data-driven and quantifiable benchmarks for assessing the achievement of ideological and political objectives. Furthermore, professional courses are deficient in a dynamic evaluation mechanism that is woven throughout the entire design process; assessments are mainly conducted at the final project stage and therefore cannot capture a holistic reflection of students' ideological maturation and value formation throughout design undertakings. Specifically, in architecture—a discipline that intersects engineering and technological expertise with the humanities and arts—the achievement of ideological and political goals is often

implicit and intricate; the present evaluation methodologies are inadequate to capture these subtle shifts, resulting in incomplete and inaccurate assessments of pedagogical effectiveness. The limitations inherent in the existing evaluation setup make course integration with ideological and political goals difficult to measure practically, thereby further obstructing its profound assimilation and proliferation in professional education.

### 3.3. The Teaching Forms of Ideological And Political Elements are Monotonous

At present, classrooms still predominantly utilize traditional teacher-centered instruction, with students largely in a passive capacity as recipients of knowledge. Within the pedagogical process, students lack ample opportunities for discourse, questioning, and contemplation, thereby impeding them from deeply engaging with the relationship between design and societal culture. For instance, when the curriculum explores themes such as community development within the context of urban micro-renewal or urban resilience, students are limited to understanding the information solely through direct narration by the instructor, and they cannot develop an emotional connection with social responsibility or cultural heritage through discussion or interaction [6]. Consequently, ideological and political education is confined to a superficial level of dissemination, diminishing students' sense of agency in comprehending such content, and impeding its influence on students' value formation. Fundamentally, the purpose of ideological and political education requires a diverse interactive approach to enhance students' perception and recognition of social responsibility and cultural values. Diverse educational methods such as group discussions, case analyses, and role-playing exercises can effectively promote students' active engagement and strengthen their understanding and resonance with ideological and political elements.

## 4. Exploring Pathways for Integrating Ideological And Political Education into Architectural Professional Teaching

### 4.1. Organic Integration of Teaching Content with Ideological And Political Elements

In the context of architectural education, integrating professional knowledge with ideological and political content goes beyond mere content stacking or superficial labeling. It necessitates a profound exploration of the intrinsic ideological value and social implications embedded within professional knowledge, ultimately aiming to harmonize knowledge dissemination with value orientation. This process underscores the convergence of two key dimensions: first, the integration of epistemic logic with axiological logic. Educational content should be anchored in the discipline's characteristics, fostering both students' professional competencies and their sense of social responsibility and historical duty. Ideological and political elements should thereby serve as an integral part of the teaching methodology, rather than an extraneous component. Second, it promotes the amalgamation of implicit with explicit instruction. By judiciously constructing the curriculum and selecting appropriate pedagogic language, ideological precepts can be subtly embedded in case studies, analyses, and evaluations, thus affording students a tacit ideological education. This implicit approach, together with timely and clear teacher-led guidance, facilitates students' grasp of the intersection between academic pursuit and societal contribution [7].

*Table 1: Specific Implementation Cases of Ideological and Political Education in the "Principles of Interior Design" Course.*

Number	Learning Tasks	Ideological and Political Elements
1	Chapter One: An Overview and Fundamental Perspectives on Interior Design.	To cultivate students' aesthetic awareness and understanding of the significance and value of interior design. Through the explanation of various interior design case studies, students will experience the artistic and practical nature of interior design, guiding them to reflect on how to integrate aesthetics and functionality.
2	Chapter Two: Content, Classification, and Methods of Interior Design.	Through examination of interior design instances in various spatial contexts, students will perceive the multifaceted nature of interior design, encouraging them to investigate novel design approaches.
3	Chapter Three: The Evolution of Interior Design.	By analyzing the styles and schools of interior design in China across different eras, students will be guided to better explore the aesthetic and cultural context of Chinese architectural interiors.
4	Chapter Six: Decorative Design and Drawing Cognition of Interior Surfaces and Components.	Students will conduct case analysis in groups, collaborating to complete design tasks in practical projects, guiding them to focus on cultivating abilities in teamwork and project management.

By integrating learning content and setting specific pedagogical goals for ideological and political elements (concrete examples are delineated in Table 1), a teaching framework can be constructed that

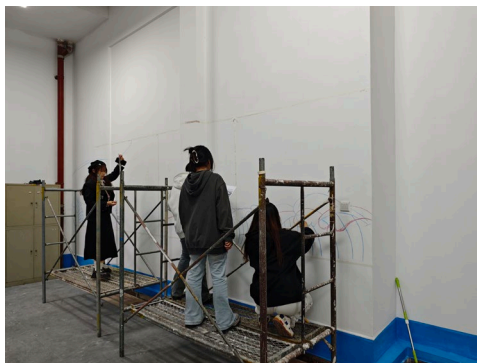
encompasses both disciplinary depth and a high degree of ideological sophistication, thus effectively harmonizing knowledge-based and ideological instruction.

#### ***4.2. Practice Project-driven Ideological And Political Education in The Curriculum***

Practice project-driven ideological and political education in the curriculum is an effective approach that uses practice projects as a vehicle to integrate ideological and political concepts throughout the entire teaching process. Its core lies in combining students' professional learning with social needs and value guidance through real, comprehensive project tasks, prompting students to understand the social significance and ethical value of professional knowledge through practice. This method emphasizes a "learning by doing" approach, placing students in tasks with social contexts, and through self-exploration and teamwork, they internalize ideological and political education content while solving practical problems.

The key to implementing practice project-driven ideological and political education in curriculum lies in the design of project content and the coordination of teaching objectives. It must meet professional teaching requirements while also having clear ideological and political educational values, including emphasizing social responsibility and teamwork awareness. Additionally, the guidance of teachers plays an important role in the teaching process. Teachers need to help students reflect on the impact of their design decisions on society, culture, and the environment during project implementation, and through timely guidance, organically unify the solution of professional problems with the achievement of ideological and political goals. Therefore, project-driven ideological and political education in curriculum enables students to form a deep understanding of professional value and social responsibility through practical activities, realizing the dual goals of "cultivating people" and "cultivating talent."

In the practice project at Wuhan Polytechnic University, architectural students, under the guidance of teachers, drew murals on the stilts of the Jiangnanli community (Figures 1 and 2). The murals, with the theme of legal publicity, deeply integrated interior design with curriculum-based ideological and political education, requiring students to participate in the entire process from design to implementation, while enhancing their professional skills, guiding them to pay attention to social needs and public values. In this process, students enhanced their social responsibility and legal awareness through community research and practical creation. This project demonstrated the integration and practice of ideological and political education in professional teaching with practical actions.



*Figure 1: The wall painting process undertaken by architecture students.*



*Figure 2: Wall painting projects completed by architecture students.*

#### ***4.3. Integration of Design Competitions and Ideological And Political Education in Curriculum***

Through competitions and service activities, students gain a profound understanding of the role of design in advancing social progress. This approach not only tests students' professional skills but also emphasizes their insights into social needs and the guidance of values. In design competitions, students need to find and examine design goals from the perspective of social service, focusing on the contribution of the plan to community well-being and its response to social problems. In this way, design transforms from a purely artistic expression into a socially responsible practice, prompting students to consider the ethics and public value of design in innovation, and further achieving the effective integration of curriculum-based ideological and political education goals.

Furthermore, this integrated approach emphasizes guiding students to confront social issues directly during the competition process, strengthening their sense of mission and social awareness through practical operation. While completing the competition tasks, students gradually realize that design is not only a manifestation of technology and aesthetics but also a commitment to social care [8]. This combination of competition and service enables students to shift from passive learning to active practice, with ideological and political content naturally integrated into the learning process, achieving the unity of knowledge transfer and value shaping.

At Wuhan Polytechnic University, faculty and students within the architecture program utilize group-based design competitions to organically incorporate ideological and political education within practical projects (Figure 3). The group competition format enables students to learn how to achieve consensus among varied opinions through task division and collaboration, fostering an understanding of the responsibilities and consequences associated with collective decision-making. This sort of competition extends beyond merely evaluating technical skill; it underscores the team's social role and integrates numerous ideological elements throughout its execution. In the course of advancing their design assignments, students collectively need to address tangible social needs, harmonizing their individual proficiencies with the team's objectives, thereby gaining a deeper comprehension of design's contributions to social welfare. Group competitions serve as a vehicle to make ideological education more engaging and practical, assisting students to attain value recognition and ideological leadership through active participation.



*Figure 3: Architectural faculty and students collaboratively engaging in a design discussion group.*

#### **5. Conclusions**

In the context of urban micro-renewal, integrating ideological and political education into architectural education is not only an important path for implementing the educational goal of fostering virtue and cultivating people but also an effective means of cultivating students' social responsibility and cultural identity. The study, using the "Principles of Interior Design" course as an example, shows that by organically combining ideological and political elements with professional teaching content, practice-driven teaching projects, and the integration of design competitions and social services, it is possible to effectively overcome the current issues in the integration of ideological and political education, such as fragmented content, imperfect evaluation mechanisms, and monotonous teaching forms, and to promote the transformation of ideological and political education from the theoretical level to the practical depth.

This teaching model not only stimulates students' interest in learning architectural knowledge but also enhances their deep understanding of social responsibility and cultural values, cultivating new-era architectural talents with both technical skills and humanistic care. In the future, with the continuous optimization of the ideological and political education teaching system, universities should further improve the evaluation mechanism, strengthen multi-party feedback, and promote the deep integration of ideological and political education with professional education, providing more support and possibilities for the innovative development of architectural education and social progress.

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