

## *Original Paper*

# The Integration of Ideological and Political Education into College Career Planning and Employment Guidance Courses: Design and Practice—A Case Study of the “Enjoyable Career” to “Professional Ambition”: Career Interests Exploring Course

Chunze Song<sup>1,2</sup>, Xinpeng Xu<sup>3,4</sup>, Jing Wu<sup>1,5</sup>, Wanxiu Yang<sup>1</sup> & Hairong Ling<sup>1,5\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Communication University of China, Nanjing, Nanjing, China

<sup>2</sup> School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pinang, Malaysia

<sup>3</sup> School of Public Health, Nanjing Medical University, Nanjing, China

<sup>4</sup> Institute of Healthy Jiangsu Development, Nanjing Medical University, Nanjing, China

<sup>5</sup> School of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, China

\* Hairong Ling, Communication University of China, Nanjing, Nanjing, China; School of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing, China

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### ***Abstract***

*In the contemporary intricate and dynamic job landscape, college career planning and employment advisory courses encounter novel problems. This study examines the effective integration of ideological and political education into career interest exploration courses to facilitate students' transition from an “enjoyable career” to a “professional ambition”. This research integrates Holland's career interest theory with ideological and political education to provide a multifaceted teaching strategy that highlights the connection between professional interests and social responsibility. The objective is to assist students in elucidating their professional interests while promoting appropriate career ideals and a feeling of social responsibility. Integrating ideological and political education promotes students' career awareness and social responsibility while bolstering their flexibility and aptitude for sustained growth, eventually benefiting both people and society.*

### ***Keywords***

*college career planning and employment guidance, ideological and political education, enjoyable career, professional ambition, career interests exploring course*

## 1. Introduction

### *1.1 Background of Career Planning and Employment Guidance for College Students*

College students face a growing array of complex and varied career settings and opportunities due to the rapid transformation of occupational structures and the rise of new industries in the fast-evolving contemporary landscape (Zhou & He, 2019). Career planning and employment guidance education is a crucial component of the higher education system and acts as a bridge between higher education and work. It improves the job competitiveness and social adaptability of college students by offering systematic theoretical advice and practical experience, aiding them in self-understanding, career exploration, and personal career plan development (ZHANG, 2021). These courses not only focus on short-term job issues, but also focus on students' long-term career development and lifelong learning ability, to promote their comprehensive growth. In this process, the colleges should not only provide specific career knowledge, employment information and skills training, but also strengthen the guidance in students' professional ethics and social responsibility, so that college students can not only successfully find jobs, but also realize the sustainable development of their careers.

### *1.2 Background of Ideological and Political Education*

Ideological and political education is an important part of the higher education system in China, and its core goal is to cultivate socialist builders and successors with correct values, social responsibility and mission (Zhang & Gu, 2023). It has preserved conventional theoretical teaching while adapting to contemporary advancements, and has also paid attention to the incorporation of college students' real-world experiences and perspectives, especially for career development and the enhancement of social adaptation (Zhang & Gu, 2023; Zhou & Ge, 2019). At present, the state's ongoing commitment to the ideological and political work of young students has resulted in ideological and political education that is not limited to the dissemination of political theories. Rather, it emphasizes that education is a means by which students are guided to establish a correct perspective on life, values, and careers, thereby establishing a strong ideological foundation for their overall development.

In this context, the effective integration of ideological and political education into the career planning and employment guidance of college students has emerged as a critical issue in higher education that requires further investigation.

## **2. Integration of Ideological and Political Education into Career Interest Exploration Course Design**

### *2.1 Combination of Career Interest Exploration and Ideological and Political Education*

Career interest, as a key intrinsic driver in personal career choices and development, is a critical factor in career planning and employment guidance for college students. According to Holland's theory (1997) of career interests, an individual's preferences and tendencies towards specific career activities not only influence their career choices but also closely relate to their job satisfaction, work performance, and career stability (Zainudin et al., 2020). For university students, clarifying their career interests helps them more precisely define their career direction and improve the efficiency and quality of career decisions (Adlya & Zola, 2022). Additionally, career interests can stimulate students' motivation and enthusiasm, allowing them to maintain high levels of engagement, enthusiasm, and creativity in their future careers (Savickas, 2005), thereby enhancing both personal value and social contribution. Thus, emphasizing the cultivation of career interests in career planning and employment guidance courses, and using scientific instructional design and practical activities to help students explore and develop their career interests, is not only essential for promoting their career choices and sustainable career development, but also plays an important role in promoting students' participation in national construction.

Furthermore, the concepts of "enjoyable career" and "professional ambition" are complementary in career planning. "Enjoyable career" emphasizes choosing careers based on personal interests and enjoying the pleasure and sense of accomplishment derived from work, viewing interest and enthusiasm as crucial drivers of career success (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Such interest-based career choices help students establish a positive career attitude early on and improve job satisfaction and happiness. However, "enjoyable career" is not the end but rather the starting point towards "professional ambition". "Professional ambition" focuses more on the sense of purpose and social value in a career, emphasizing the integration of career interests with long-term career goals, not only pursuing personal value realization but also considering social contribution and career development sustainability (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). In career planning, "enjoyable career" serves as the starting point, helping students build a career awareness aligned with their interests, while "professional ambition" serves as the goal, guiding students to set clear career visions and develop practical career planning paths (Savickas, 2005). Therefore, facilitating the transition for university students from "enjoyable career" to "professional ambition" not only enhances their career satisfaction and happiness but also cultivates more professionals with a sense of mission and responsibility for sustainable social development, ultimately achieving a win-win situation for individuals and society.

The objective of fostering the comprehensive development of college students is exemplified by the relationship between career interest exploration education and ideological and political education. Ideological and political education is a process that assists students in the development of a positive

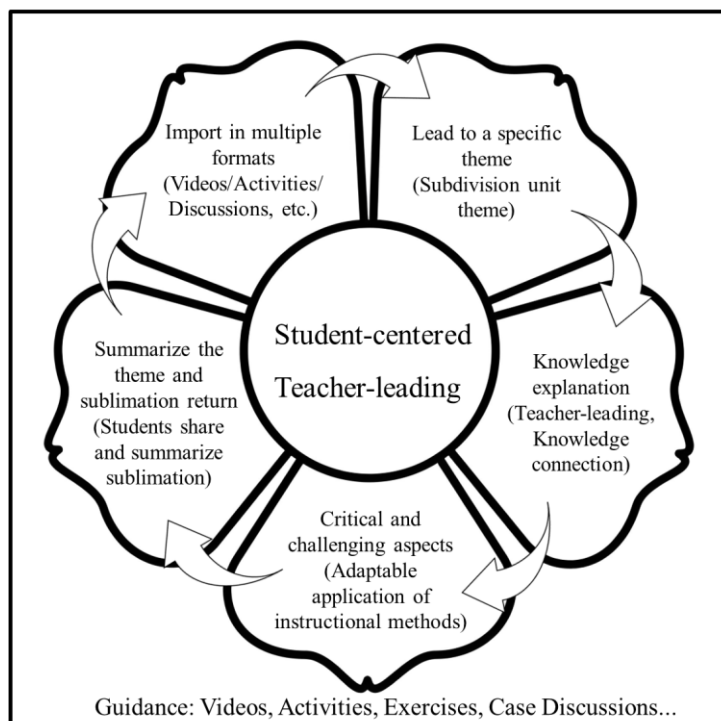
worldview, correct values, and a positive outlook on life (Zhang & Gu, 2023). And then, it cultivates their sense of social duty, collectivism and sense of identity with national and social development. Nevertheless, the career interest exploration education focuses on helping students identify and develop their personal career interests, guiding them to set suitable career goals according to their personal interests and abilities, and exploring appropriate career development paths.

The combination of career interest exploration education and ideological and political education realize the two-way cultivation of knowledge and value. Ideological and political education provides a framework of ideological, political and social responsibility for the career interest exploration course, which enables students to consider not only their personal interests and development, but also social responsibility, public values and national demands in their career choice. It helps students to be more forward-looking and socially responsible in their job choice, while also lays a firm foundation of principles for their future professions, realizing the career development path from “enjoyable career” to “professional ambition”. The career interest exploration education provides a practical platform for ideological and political education, allowing students to perceive the relationship between themselves and society through practical career interest exploration activities, and fully understand the fit between their interests and the national social development goals when making career decisions.

Consequently, a comprehensive examination of the teaching design of career interest chapters, the integration of ideological and political education, the stimulation of students’ intrinsic motivation, the effective promotion of college students to achieve a positive change from “enjoyable career” to “professional ambition” in the process of career planning and employment guidance, the finding of a balance between personal interest and social responsibility, and the realization of the dual improvement of career ideal and life value are necessary. It is of significant theoretical value and practical importance to more effectively address the ideological and political construction requirements of college students’ career planning and employment guidance courses.

## *2.2 Design Ideas for Integrating Ideological and Political Education into Career Interest Exploration Education*

The quality of students’ career choices can be enhanced, and the cultivation of their social responsibility and the establishment of correct career values can be facilitated by incorporating ideological and political education into the process of exploring career interests. The “infusing” teaching method of the past should be replaced with the “student-centered, teacher-leading” guided teaching approach in the course design. This will be achieved by optimizing and integrating the course content and teaching methods. In addition, a closed loop of the course is established to enhance students’ comprehensive grasp of the subject matter. The conceptual framework for this course design is illustrated in the figure, while the detailed material is presented in the table.



**Figure 1. Enjoyable Career and Professional Ambition—Career Interest Teaching Conceptual Framework Design**

**Table 1. Enjoyable Career and Professional Ambition—Career Interest Teaching Design Contents**

Teaching Unit	Unit Theme	Teaching Objective	Teaching Content	Teaching Method
1	Introduction to interest	<p><b>Attitude level:</b> Learn the right way to think about interest by studying interest theory.</p> <p><b>Knowledge level:</b> 1. Understand the concept of interest; 2. Know and understand career interest theory.</p> <p><b>Skill level:</b> Experiential exercises help students comprehend career interest theory.</p>	<p>1. Definition of interest</p> <p>2. Career interest theory</p> <p>3. The relationship of Enjoyable career-Professional ambition</p> <p>4. Course chapter introduction</p>	<p>Expository method</p> <p>Experiential activity</p> <p>Interactive discussion method</p>
2	Type analysis (1): Realistic	<p><b>Attitude level:</b> Students are urged to actively nurture and improve their professional skills according to</p>	<p>1. Realistic and Investigative type analysis</p>	<p>Expository method</p> <p>Exercise method</p>

	type and Investigative type	occupational features, increase professional quality, and adapt to future job-seeking and employment by analyzing Realistic and Investigative type characteristics. <b>Knowledge level:</b> 1. Understand the characteristics of Realistic type and Investigative type; 2. Master the career map corresponding to Realistic and Investigative types. <b>Skill level:</b> Learn to compare and analyze the characteristics of Realistic type and Investigative type, and match people to jobs according to specific career maps. <b>Attitude level:</b> Students are urged to actively nurture and improve their professional skills according to occupational features, increase professional quality, and adapt to future job-seeking and employment by analyzing Social and Enterprising type characteristics. <b>Knowledge level:</b> 1. Understand the characteristics of Social type and Enterprising type; 2. Master the career map corresponding to Social and Enterprising types. <b>Skill level:</b> Learn to compare and analyze the characteristics of Social type and Enterprising type, and match people to jobs according to specific career maps. <b>Attitude level:</b> Students are urged to actively nurture and improve their professional skills according to	2. Realistic and Investigative type career map introduction 3. The enlightening to professional ambition from Realistic and Investigative types	Case teaching method Interactive discussion method
3	Type analysis (2): Social type and Enterprising type		1. Social and Enterprising type analysis 2. Social and Enterprising type career map introduction 3. The enlightening to professional ambition from Social and Enterprising types	Expository method Exercise method Case teaching method Interactive discussion method
4	Type analysis (3): Conventional		1. Conventional and Artistic type analysis 2. Conventional and	Expository method Exercise method

	type and	occupational features, increase	Artistic type career	Case teaching
	Artistic type	professional quality, and adapt to	map introduction	method
		future job-seeking and employment	3. The enlightening	Interactive
		by analyzing Conventional and	to professional	discussion
		Artistic type characteristics.	ambition from	method
		<b>Knowledge level:</b> 1. Understand the	Conventional and	
		characteristics of Conventional type	Artistic types	
		and Artistic type; 2. Master the		
		career map corresponding to		
		Conventional and Artistic types.		
		<b>Skill level:</b> Learn to compare and		
		analyze the characteristics of		
		Conventional type and Artistic type,		
		and match people to jobs according		
		to specific career maps.		
		<b>Attitude level:</b> Help students		
		develop a healthy interest and		
		aspiration via interest		
		comprehension.		
	The	<b>Knowledge level:</b> 1. Understand	1. Understand	Expository
	relationship	interest code and learn how to	interest codes	method
	between	interpret it; 2. Master the adaptive	2. Balance interest	Exercise method
5	Enjoyable	balance among interest, profession,	with profession,	Demonstration
	career and	career and life.	career, and life	method
	Professional	<b>Skill level:</b> Be fluent in interest code	3. Create and	Case teaching
	ambition	interpretation and have mastered the	transform	method
		transform-create approach for		
		reaching one's professional		
		ambition.		
		<b>Attitude level:</b> To help students	1. Understand and be	Expository
	From	develop a healthy perspective on	familiar with the	method
	Enjoyable	interest and to fortify their outward	numerous	Exercise method
6	career to	cultivation from sensory interest to	progressing aspects	Demonstration
	Professional	ambition, through the understanding	from enjoyable	method
	ambition	of interest.	career to professional	Case teaching
		<b>Knowledge level:</b> 1. Make sense of	ambition	method

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the iceberg theory of interest characteristics and the link between interest and ability; 2. Be familiar with resources for discovering and nurturing interests and ambitions.	2. Utilize conversion resources efficiently	Interactive discussion method
<b>Skill level:</b> By examining theoretical knowledge, acquire the ability to adjust to the interplay between interest and balance, and master the techniques of transformation and innovation in an imbalanced condition.		

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First, optimize the design of the course content. Guarantee that career interest exploration and ideological and political education are mutually reinforcing. The course employs a variety of methods, including thematic discussion, situational simulation, and case analysis, to assist students in reconciling their personal career aspirations with The Times' mission, national development strategy, and social responsibility (ZHONG & XIONG, 2021). During the exploration of career interests, emphasize the role of vocations in the advancement of society and the nation, and assist students in determining the social significance of their career choices through self-reflection. Simultaneously, the unique ideological and political education module, informing students of the intersection of national development needs and individual career objectives, will enable students to recognize that career choice is not merely a matter of personal interest and preference, but also a reflection of personal mission and social value.

Subsequently, enhance instructional strategies. Diversify instructional methodologies to cultivate students' engagement and initiative. The classroom teaching approach is student-centered, incorporating both online and offline interaction to enhance the penetration of ideological and political education through project-driven, role-playing, team cooperation, and other activities (YIN & TANG, 2023). These methods enable students to identify the intersection of their personal interests and the process of career selection and development. They can also gain a profound understanding of the responsibility to contribute to society in the context of The Times, thereby facilitating the transition from "enjoyable career" to "professional ambition".

### *2.3 Strategic Suggestions for Integrating Political Education into Career Interest Exploration Courses*

The objective of incorporating ideological and political education into the design of career interest exploration courses is to assist students in the development of appropriate values and social responsibility, as well as to comprehend their personal career interests through multidimensional



interaction during the course teaching process. Consequently, the organization and arrangement of instructional activities serve as indicators of the emphasis. Educators should prioritize the clarification of teaching objectives, the value guidance of teaching content, the innovation of teaching methods, the guiding role of teachers, the enhancement of student participation, and the quality of classroom interaction (YIN & TANG, 2023; ZHANG & LYU, 2023).

#### **Clear teaching objectives, integrate teaching content, strengthen ideological and political education guiding role**

To help students understand that their career choices are not solely a manifestation of their personal preferences, but also a responsibility to serve the country and society, the content design of the career interest exploration course incorporates national development strategy and industry development trends (Du et al., 2021). Through practical examples such as the impact of scientists and entrepreneurs on society and the country, the contribution of medical workers in the fight against COVID-19, and the impact of scientists and entrepreneurs on society, etc. it is demonstrated that a career is not only a support for personal life but also a force for social progress, thereby strengthening students' sense of social responsibility and mission.

#### **Incorporate political and ideological education resources and fortify social practice**

The career interest exploration course will incorporate ideological and political education resources, and students will be facilitated in engaging in social practice activities (ZHONG & XIONG, 2021), such as volunteer service and vocational shadow internships, to gain a personal understanding of the personal mission and social function of the occupation. For instance, students are encouraged to engage in the survey of "Social Responsibility and Career Choice" to gain a personal understanding of the impact of various careers on society and thereby increase their awareness of the importance of combining their career interests with social contributions.

#### **Engage in diverse pedagogical approaches, emphasizing the interactive impact and the infusion of value**

To enhance the integration of ideological and political education, the student-centered pedagogical approaches are employed, including interactive components such as role-playing, group discussions, PBL, and other forms (WU, 2022; YIN & TANG, 2023). Students may simulate their responsibilities across different professional fields and comprehend the personal obligations and societal ideals inherent to each profession by enhancing the interactive way of participation. For example, subsequent following the survey, a collaborative activity centered on the issue of "Social Responsibility and Career Choice" may be devised. So that, the students can have an in-depth conversation about a particular profession, explore the significance of the career to society and the contribution that individuals can make to society, and understand the social significance of career choice from multiple dimensions. In this way, college students can not only understand the diversity and importance of career choices better, but also cultivate their ability to contemplate social responsibility.

**The incorporation of social value into career planning**

In the process of career planning and employment guidance, students should be guided to combine “enjoyable career” with “professional ambition”. This highlights the necessity of evaluating not just interests and abilities in career planning and job hunting, but also social needs and contributions. By guiding students to set clear career goals and combining with the needs of the country’s economic and social development, students can formulate long-term career strategies, so that they can assume social responsibilities and realize the dual values of career and life while realizing their personal career dreams (Liu et al., 2019).

**3. The Educational Influence of Including Ideological and Political Education within the Career Interest Exploration Course**

After the ideological and political education is integrated into the course of career interest exploration, it will not only help students better understand their career interests and development direction, but also enhance their sense of social responsibility and career mission. Thus, it improves the effect of career planning and employment guidance. This integration will profoundly affect students’ career choice, the formation of values, and the overall professional growth.

**Enhance the professional cognition and self-positioning of college students**

By integrating the elements of ideological and political education into the course of career interest exploration, students can clearly understand their own interests and advantages, as well as realize the social significance and responsibility of career choice in the process of exploring career interests. Combined with the national development demand, social development trends and social value of occupation introduced by the course, students are guided to deeply understand the relationship between personal career and social development. This understanding will assist students in better understanding their career direction and life objectives. This cognitive enhancement can effectively encourage students to transition from career choices that are solely motivated by their interests to those that are more rational and socially responsible.

**Foster a sense of social responsibility and mission among students**

By investigating ideological and political education in the classroom, students gain an understanding that a career is not merely a means for individuals to earn a livelihood, but also a significant method of contributing to society and assuming social responsibility. It will demonstrate how various industries contribute to national development and service society in the context of globalization through thematic discussion and case analysis. It will assist students in fostering a sense of responsibility and mission that personal career development is closely linked to social development and national mission by establishing the concept of “professional ambition” and understanding the relationship between “enjoyable career” and “professional ambition”.

### **Foster students' career resilience and sustainable growth**

Ideological and political education enhances students' flexibility and capacity for sustainable development in their careers. In social practice and career cognition exercises, students learn to adapt to workplace changes and comprehend the influence of external factors, such as social duty and national demands, on individual career growth. This comprehensive education enables students to effectively navigate employment obstacles and transitions, enhances their career resilience, and establishes a basis for long-term professional growth.

### **4. Conclusion**

Ideological and political education can be organically integrated into the course of exploring career interests, as well as provide students with diversified educational models and improve their comprehensive ability of career planning, particularly in the cultivation of social responsibility and a sense of mission, through the adoption of diversified teaching design. The effective implementation of ideological and political education in the curriculum and the attainment of satisfactory teaching results can be achieved through the use of explicit teaching objectives, carefully designed curriculum content, innovative teaching methods, and diversified evaluation mechanisms.

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