

Practice and Research Based on Experiential Teaching and Case Teaching in Exhibition Design Courses

Xinshu Ye *

Wenzhou Polytechnic, Wenzhou 325000, Zhejiang, China. E-mail: leaf0611@163.com

Fund project: General Education and Teaching Reform Project of Wenzhou Polytechnic during the 13th Five-Year Plan Period, (Project No. WZYYB202010).

Abstract: The paper conducts a practical research on the teaching reform with combining experiential teaching and case teaching in response to the characteristics of the current exhibition design courses in higher vocational colleges, which is more comprehensive, and the problems of mutual derailment of theory and practice. It specifically analyses the application of experiential teaching and case teaching in exhibition design courses through analysing the current situation and problems of exhibition design courses and the elaboration and understanding of experiential teaching and case teaching methods. The paper expects to improve the theoretical teaching of exhibition design courses at this stage and make a practical and forward-looking exploration.

Keywords: Experiential Teaching; Case Teaching; Exhibition Design; Teaching Reform

1. Current situation and problems of teaching exhibition design courses

Exhibition design is a professional course of comprehensive design. On the one hand, this course needs to guide students to understand the development of exhibition design over time; On the other hand, it explores the relationship between exhibition content and space design. In recent years, the concept of “Internet +” in various fields has been intensifying, and the teaching forms of higher education have been gradually diversified and turned to online development, such as “MOOC”, “the micro course” and “open online courses”. Online education seems to be fast and convenient, but it does not take into account the problems of students’ autonomy, and hardware and software limitations. Therefore, classroom teaching is still the main front of higher education personnel training. Reforming the original class structure and enriching the form of class teaching are important elements of the current class teaching reform.

The domestic exhibition design industry is developing rapidly, while there are some problems in the content and form of exhibition design courses teaching. On the one hand, the teaching content is relatively single. Many of them still follow the traditional way of art education in the teaching process, staying in the established mature cases, simulated design and drawing-based teaching mode. Students learn and train in a step-by-step manner, which not only reduces students’ enthusiasm for learning, but also deviates from the innovative track of ability cultivation. As a result, students cannot really practice independently. On the other hand, there is a tendency of “emphasizing software operation, while de-emphasizing design creativity” in the teaching method. To some extent, the computer operation software is only a tool to replace the brush. It does not mean that proficiency in software can be competent for exhibition design. The lack of systematic training of design

Copyright© 2021 Xinshu Ye

doi: 10.18686/ahe.v5i4.3566

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

thinking in the teaching process leads to relatively low overall design level, the lack of creativity in design works, and the quality of talent training can hardly meet the needs of the booming exhibition design industry.

2. The application of experiential teaching and case teaching in exhibition design courses

This practice is based on the exhibition design course of the product art design major. It mainly takes the experiential teaching method to conduct field research in different types of exhibition halls or art and cultural spaces of Wenzhou city, supplemented by the case teaching method in the classroom. Then the discussion and analysis of some chosen exhibition halls are conducted, and teachers compare each real case with the classic cases of similar types of exhibition halls in China and abroad.

2.1 Phase 1 - project selection and task assignment

Combining the actual situation of various exhibition halls and art and cultural spaces in Wenzhou city, they can be divided into four categories: public museums, private art museums, local thematic museums and university halls. Teachers collect information about each venue and related exhibition activities in advance for students' reference and selection, thus they can easily arrange students to conduct field research and material collection.

At the same time, students can be grouped according to their wills. Each group includes four to six students and they are required to finish field research in groups. After the group discussion, the site of field research is pre-selected and the group presentation is made in the group number order each week. Apart from this, each student will be required to complete an individual exhibition review on their field research by the end of the course. The second field research will be conducted on an individual basis, with the analysis and evaluation of four categories of exhibition halls or one of the current exhibitions they are interested in.

2.2 Phase 2 - field research and task requirements

In the early phase of group field research, students are supposed to search for information about the selected venue from multiple sources, so as to have a macroscopic understanding of the venue's location, surrounding environment and exhibition types. During the field research, it is recommended to observe and record the spatial planning, exhibit display, graphic design, guiding routes and interactive devices of the venue from multiple perspectives. The form of group work helps to strengthen the students' ability to divide and collaborate, and to cultivate teamwork spirit. Ultimately students are required to complete this field research task in the form of group presentation.

Students are required to complete an exhibition review about analysis of one particular exhibition hall or one current exhibition with at least 1,500 words in Chinese after their individual field research. When conducting individual field research, students may attempt to present the chosen topic from the third-party perspective as an art critic. The relevant background information of the topic is needed and students are supposed to describe their observations in as much detail as possible. It is important to use original language to describe and justify their opinions of the exhibition or exhibition halls in the context of their own personal experience and knowledge. Meanwhile, students are advised to make careful observations and take timely notes when conducting field research. However, it needs to be emphasized that art criticism requires a personal perception of art, not just a record of what is presented in the field. Therefore, it is not necessary to borrow materials from relevant art booklets or art press reviews. In addition, during the process of field research, students are asked to trust their own observations and ideas. They can comment on visual effects, technical presentations, and exhibition strategies, or focus on describing selected works and describing their initial impressions of the exhibition as well as their overall experience.

2.3 Phase 3 - interactive learning and case studies

After the experiential field research, students return to the class to enter the phase of case teaching. In the class, students make group presentations and each group gives feedback to each other, while the teacher makes comments and analysis. Each group presents the results of their field research, and other group members comment and give their own suggestions. Students conduct practice and exploration in a hands-on manner through preliminary field research, and finally complete the presentation of research results in a cooperative group. This process provides students with the opportunity to re-experience and re-examine

the actual cases, which helps to deepen their understanding of the actual cases and form the independent cognition, laying the theoretical foundation for future practical designs. In the phase of group presentations and mutual evaluation feedback, students can ask pertinent questions, express their opinions, and learn from each other. This process provides a good platform for them to demonstrate and communicate, thus improving their subjective initiatives, communication and expression skills, and critical thinking skills.

At the same time, teachers conduct the evaluation and analysis based on the students' presentations and discussions. Teachers are supposed to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the private art museums, public museums, and local thematic museums that some students have researched in the field. They choose the corresponding domestic or international classic cases of the same type of venues to analyse how excellent venues meet the needs of visitors from all angles and make it a great experience. It allows students to experience the principles and methods of exhibition design through the analysis of excellent classic cases, and compare them with the actual situation of the field research venues. Teachers and students are likely to have a discussion and analyse the shortcomings of the corresponding venues in Wenzhou and what can be learnt from those great cases, so that students have a chance to reflect on them. Therefore, case teaching of this practice is quite different from traditional case teaching in the class. It combines students' perceptions and experience gained through practice with professional knowledge such as excellent cases and design thinking guided by teachers. So that students can have more subjective and comprehensive thinking and judgment on the understanding of the cases, thus help to cultivate students' independent thinking and innovative and creative abilities.

3. Conclusion

This paper proposes an innovative teaching reform practice that combines experiential teaching and case teaching methods. It focuses on the social practice of field experience and also provides students with opportunities to go out of the classroom and enter various exhibition halls and many other art and cultural spaces. Conducting the field research enables students to broaden knowledge of exhibition design expertise at all levels and cultivate their appreciation of various types of pavilions and exhibitions of exhibition design. In addition, through the presentation of practice results, interactive learning and the comparison and analysis of excellent classic cases, the teaching reform practice is conducive to mobilize students' independent learning initiative, cultivate independent thinking, art appreciation, and the ability to view things dialectically from a macroscopic and comprehensive perspective.

This teaching reform practice and research are likely to provide theoretical support for the reform of exhibition design courses. It contributes to broaden students' cognition of the forms, functions and types of exhibition design, cultivate their appreciation of art and design, and enrich their understanding of different types of art. Thus, it gives support of creative thinking for future independent design, team project cooperation and other exhibition design creations, and explore new space for transforming art and developing themselves on this basis.

References

1. Wang Y. Case and discussion-based classroom teaching reform practices: a case study of "basic principles of display design. *Education Modernization* 2019; 6(34): 45.
2. Yang Y. A Study on the practice of experiential teaching based on "Contextualization" in display design courses. *Art Science and Technology* 2019; 32(4): 88.
3. Xu X. Exploring the teaching reform of display design course in visual communication. *Packaging World* 2015; (2): 42.