

Empirical Research on the Teaching of Art and Design Courses based on the Concept of Cultural Nurturing

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Abstract: In 2020, the Ministry of Education proposed a new liberal arts construction program that emphasizes the formation of national cultural consciousness, which has an important connection with the curriculum cultivation in the national emphasis on “foster virtue through education”. This paper focuses on the teaching characteristics of art and design courses in Chinese universities and conducts an empirical study on how to nurture people in the curriculum construction of art and design majors. This paper explores the teaching methods based on aesthetic education, moral education, labor education, etc. to educate students in a “silent and soft” way and realize the educational goal of “educating people with culture”.

Keywords: Foster virtue through education; Cultural Nurturing; Art and Design; Curriculum Reform

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The Ministry of Education’s Declaration on the Construction of New Liberal Arts^[1] points out that the construction of “new liberal arts” will play an important role in enhancing comprehensive national strength, strengthening cultural confidence, cultivating new generations, building a strong country of higher education, and integrating the development of liberal arts education. The Guidance Outline of Curriculum Development in Higher Education^[2] specifies that the fundamental tasks of establishing moral education are value shaping, knowledge transmission, and ability cultivation. It can be seen that the construction of new liberal arts has an important connection with curriculum cultivation, and it is especially important to explore and construct an autonomous path for the development of Chinese art education, and to insist on doing what we think is right^[3]. The art and design discipline should take up the responsibility of consolidating and correcting the source and keeping the righteousness and innovation in value shaping and beautifying the mind.^[4]

1. The current situation and challenges of the art and design curriculum system

The concept of contemporary design emerged with the first industrial revolution, and England and Germany became the birthplaces of the first industrial designers. After the First World War, two schools, Bauhaus (Germany) and VKHUTEMAS (USSR), laid the foundation for modernist design and its educational system. After World War II, the “Ulm Model” of the Ulm School of Design in Germany and the commercial design in the United States together built the basic framework of design education.^[5]

Because of the late start of design education in China, we have continued the Western design education model until now. However, the world is changing drastically, the global governance system is being adjusted, and the academic system and values are different from China’s development ideas, forming a certain degree of “cultural invasion” and generating a lot of conflicts and contradictions in the ideological field. Teachers of art and design in colleges and universities should carry out in-depth thinking and teaching reform on the fundamental issue of “what to train, how to train and for whom to train”.

2. The empirical study of art and design curriculum education

2.1 Inherit excellent traditional art and educate people about the beauty

China has a long history and an excellent cultural and artistic heritage. Traditional arts and crafts are a combination of aesthetics and life, art and science, and are closely connected to people’s lives. In the art and design course, we organized a visit to the Shanghai Museum for students, from bronze to ceramics, from lacquerware to furniture. During the visit, students not only had to see, but also stand in the designer’s shoes and think about the subtleties of the ancient Chinese traditional thinking of making things from the perspectives of function, shape, material technology, artistic style, and the inheritance and development of Chinese civilization on the spiritual and material levels from an aesthetic perspective. At the same time, students will be able to appreciate the craftsmanship of ancient artisans.

The students have accumulated rich design inspirations. In the design practice of the course, teachers have guided students to experiment with a variety of traditional materials such as ceramics, wood, metal, lacquer, and leather, and to design several cultural and creative products using handicrafts. (Fig.1) The course improves students’ aesthetic and humanistic qualities, educates people about beauty, and cultivates their cultural confidence and patriotism.

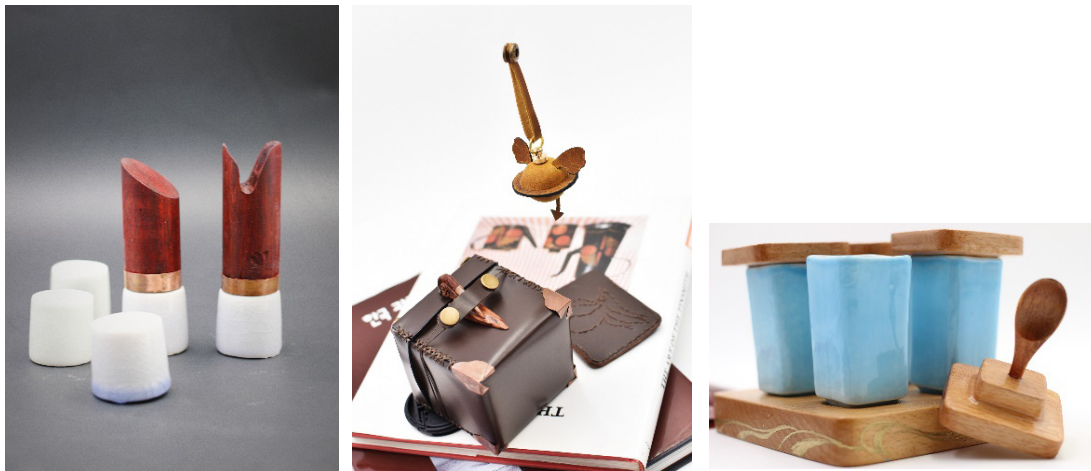


Fig.1 Students' design works in the course

2.2 Excavate the material of education in the new era and educate people with a national spirit

In the course, we tell the heroic story of the Chinese mountaineering team climbing Mount Everest at the beginning of the course, to motivate students to study hard and strive to climb the academic peak, and in this way develop their national and ethnic pride. In the “Product Modeling Design and Production” course, students spend a large part of their time making hands-on work, in which they will use materials such as ceramics, wood, and polyurethane, and we teach them to conserve materials and clean their working environment carefully. These are all concrete expressions of nurturing people in the course.

2.3 Based on excellent traditional culture, educate people with morality

Teachers should think from the students' point of view when designing their teaching, close to their daily lives, and avoid rigid splicing. This requires teachers not only to explore vivid course nurturing materials but also to study the course nurturing elements in-depth, organize them carefully and intersperse them skillfully. Aiming at the characteristics of lower grade students, we guide students to observe design objects in their lives from a perceptual perspective through the topic “Design Stories of My Family” in another course, to experience the cultural life behaviors behind the objects, and to implicitly feel the relationship between people and design. Students tell real and touching stories about design in their homes, and many of them are in tears as they tell them. In this way, we integrate cultural education into classroom teaching, so that students can feel the “truth” and “goodness” of family affection, feel the multiple meanings of art and design on the aesthetic level, a provoke students to think about the purpose and essence of design and pass on the idea of benevolence and love in the excellent Chinese tradition to the students. The students will be inspired to think about the purpose and essence of design and pass on to them the idea of benevolence and love in Chinese traditional culture.

3. Summary

Art and design education in China is greatly influenced by the values and teaching models of western countries, and the construction of curriculum education is particularly important. We have explored the implementation methods of curriculum nurturing from different perspectives such as aesthetic education, moral education, and labor education in art and design courses, and gradually realized in teaching practice that the most important prerequisite for students to master the knowledge and cultivate abilities is to “establish moral education”, and teachers should make nurturing education achieve through reasonable and clever curriculum design. The teachers have to make the education “silent” through reasonable and clever curriculum design. For the teachers themselves, the teaching process can also guide young students to find “role models” and establish the correct outlook on life and values.

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