

Research on the Practice of Empowering Art College Students with Comprehensive Development through Art Education under the Guidance of Student Development

Lei Yang

School of Music and Dance, Tianshui Normal University, Qinzhou District, Tianshui 741000, Gansu, China

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Abstract: Art college students have the characteristics of aesthetic sensitivity, emotional delicacy, and distinct personality, but there is generally an imbalance in the development of professional skills and comprehensive literacy during their growth process. Traditional aesthetic education in universities focuses more on imparting knowledge and skills, and lacks response to students' psychological growth, personality shaping, and personalized development needs. This study is based on the perspective of student development and education disciplines, supported by the theory of holistic development and the theory of subjective development. It analyzes the growth characteristics and development difficulties of art college students, examines the limitations of college aesthetic education in terms of educational concepts, teaching models, and practical carriers, and proposes a practical path for updating concepts, optimizing models, expanding dimensions, and enriching carriers. The aim is to construct an aesthetic education system centered on student development.

Keywords: Student development; College aesthetic education; Art college students; Comprehensive development; Educational path

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1. Origin of the problem

In 2020, the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the *Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving the Art Education Work in Schools in the New Era*, requiring “incorporating art education into the entire process of talent cultivation at all levels and types of schools, and running through all stages of school education.” In 2023, the Ministry of Education issued a notice on the comprehensive implementation of the school aesthetic education infiltration action, proposing to “take infiltration as the goal and path of aesthetic education work,

integrate aesthetic education into all aspects of education and teaching activities, and subtly demonstrate the effectiveness of educating people.” The above policies mark the strategic transformation of college aesthetic education from a subsidiary of professional education to a core element of comprehensive education, providing a clear institutional framework for empowering students’ development with aesthetic education.

Art college students have significant peculiarities in cognitive styles, emotional structures, and behavioral habits ^[1]. Long-term professional training has made them sensitive to aesthetic perception and active in innovative thinking, but they also face structural contradictions: professional skills training takes up a lot of time, and the accumulation of humanistic knowledge and the cultivation of psychological resilience are relatively weak; Emotionally rich and self-aware, with high sensitivity to competitive pressure and employment prospects, and are prone to emotional fluctuations and self-awareness biases. This kind of imbalanced development phenomenon is not an individual occurrence, but a structural problem that has long existed in the training mode of art majors, and it urgently needs to be responded to from the perspective of educational philosophy and institutional design ^[2].

From the perspective of student development, current aesthetic education in universities has been narrowed down to the teaching of artistic skills and the assessment of creative works, and its educational functions of nurturing the soul, improving personality, and enhancing comprehensive qualities have not been fully released ^[3]. The classroom-based and skill-based aesthetic education model neglects the growth needs of students as complete individuals, making it difficult to fully utilize the unique value of aesthetic education in promoting comprehensive development. How to return to the educational essence of aesthetic education and empower the comprehensive growth of art college students through aesthetic infiltration is a pressing issue that urgently needs to be addressed.

2. Core concepts and theoretical foundations

2.1. Definition of core concepts

Student development orientation is the fundamental stance of this study, which differs from traditional knowledge-oriented and management-oriented education models. Its core lies in taking students’ growth patterns, physical and mental characteristics, and development needs as the fundamental starting point of educational work, focusing on personality soundness, literacy improvement, and mental health, respecting individual differences, and emphasizing personalized cultivation. Under the framework of student development and educational disciplines, this orientation emphasizes respect for students’ subjectivity and the activation of their developmental potential in the educational process ^[4].

In this study, college aesthetic education is understood as a comprehensive education project that goes beyond skill-based teaching. The document from the Ministry of Education clearly states that “aesthetic education is an education of aesthetics, sentiment, and spirit, as well as an education that enriches imagination and cultivates innovative consciousness ^[5]. It relies on diverse carriers such as art courses, aesthetic experiences, and cultural immersion, focusing on cultivating students’ aesthetic perception, aesthetic judgment, and aesthetic creation abilities, while achieving the educational goals of cultivating sentiment, shaping character, and nourishing the soul. Compared to the normative orientation of moral education and the knowledge orientation of intellectual education, aesthetic education has an irreplaceable unique advantage in promoting the enrichment and improvement of students’ inner spiritual world through the mediation of sensory experience and the mechanism of emotional arousal ^[6].

The group development characteristics of art college students can be grasped from three dimensions: cognitive level, keen aesthetic perception, active innovative thinking, and outstanding artistic imagination and creative ability; On the psychological level, the emotions are delicate and rich, and the personality is independent and distinct, but the emotional fluctuations are large and the psychological resilience is weak; On the development level, there is a clear advantage in professional skills, but there is a relative lack of humanistic literacy, comprehensive ability, and stress resistance, presenting an imbalanced development trend of “emphasizing skills over literacy”^[7]. The grasp of the above characteristics is the practical starting point of this study, and the design of subsequent educational paths is based on an accurate understanding of these characteristics.

2.2. Theoretical basis

The first theoretical support for the study is the theory of holistic development education. This theory advocates that education should go beyond the one-dimensional goals of knowledge imparting and skill training, focus on the complete growth of the individual body, mind, spirit, and character, emphasize respect for individual differences, pay attention to sound personality, and pursue comprehensive development^[8]. This theory provides a theoretical basis for the transition of aesthetic education from “cultivating skills” to “educating people,” and suggests that aesthetic education in universities should not stop at improving students’ artistic expression level, but should focus on the comprehensive growth of students as complete individuals.

The theory of student subjectivity development emphasizes the subject status of students in the educational process, advocating that the education work should abandon the one-way indoctrination mode, fully respect students’ subjective initiative and personalized needs, and guide students to achieve independent growth through participation^[9]. Art students have distinct personalities and strong autonomy. This theory suggests that aesthetic education reform should shift from “what to teach” to “what students need,” and construct an immersive educational path that adapts to the development of subjectivity, allowing students to transform from passive recipients to active constructors in aesthetic activities.

The theory of aesthetic education infiltration reveals the unique educational mechanism of aesthetic education. The Ministry of Education’s Art Education Infiltration Action clearly proposes to “infiltrate students with art education, comprehensively enhance their core competencies such as cultural understanding, aesthetic perception, artistic expression, and creative practice”^[10]. Different from mandatory disciplinary education, aesthetic education nourishes the soul, shapes aesthetics, and perfects personality through implicit ways of environmental influence, artistic experience, and cultural immersion. Its educational effect often naturally manifests in long-term immersion rather than immediate achievement.

3. Reality review: Development characteristics of art college students and difficulties in aesthetic education and education

3.1. Development characteristics and current situation of art college students

Outstanding advantages and outstanding innovative aesthetic ability. Systematic professional training endows art college students with aesthetic perception, artistic expression, and innovative thinking abilities that surpass their peers. Long-term artistic practice has enabled them to have flexible and open thinking, rich and unique imagination, and possess good artistic literacy and creative potential, making them an important talent reserve for innovative development in the cultural and artistic fields.

The development structure is unbalanced, and there are shortcomings in comprehensive quality. Art students invest far more time and energy in professional skills than in other fields, resulting in a relative compression of humanistic knowledge learning, moral cultivation, and comprehensive ability enhancement. The evaluation mechanism of professional assessment guided by skill achievements further strengthens this tendency, resulting in some students having a weak humanistic background and relatively narrow cognitive perspectives. At the same time, the sustained pressure in high-intensity creative and competitive environments poses significant challenges to students' emotional regulation and stress resistance abilities. Some students lack effective psychological coping resources when facing academic setbacks and employment uncertainties.

Psychological traits are unique, and personality cultivation needs to be strengthened. Art students have rich emotions and keen perception, and have a high awareness of changes in themselves and their environment, but also come with a certain degree of psychological vulnerability. Some students focus too much on individual expression and neglect the cultivation of collective consciousness and empathy. Some students experience anxiety, inferiority, or restlessness under professional competition and employment pressure, and the stability and soundness of their personality still need further cultivation. The above psychological traits not only constitute the individual source of artistic creation, but also become a key aspect that needs to be focused on in development guidance.

3.2. The realistic dilemma and attribution analysis of aesthetic education in universities

There is a deviation in the educational philosophy, and students' development needs are marginalized. Some universities equate art education with the teaching of artistic skills and the output of competition results, with educational goals focused on quantifiable performance indicators. The core development needs of students' psychological growth, personality shaping, and literacy improvement have not received the attention they deserve. As a result, aesthetic education has become an accessory of professional education, and its unique value of nourishing the soul and developing a sound personality has been obscured. The underlying reason for this ideological deviation is that some managers have reversed the "instrumental value" and "ontological value" of aesthetic education, neglecting that aesthetic education is primarily about educating "people."

The teaching mode is relatively rigid and lacks personalized immersion. Most universities' aesthetic education mainly focuses on classroom theoretical lectures and skill demonstrations, with a single teaching form and a lack of immersive, experiential, and interactive aesthetic activities. More importantly, aesthetic education teaching generally adopts unified standards and fails to implement differentiated cultivation for the individual differences, psychological traits, and developmental shortcomings of art students, making it difficult to implement precise education. The emergence of this problem is closely related to structural factors such as insufficient staffing of art education teachers and excessive class size.

The dimension of education is relatively single, and the integration of body and mind development is lacking. The existing art education work mostly focuses on improving aesthetic skills and professional abilities, and fails to organically integrate art education with psychological education, personality education, and values education. Universities generally lack a normalized mechanism that relies on artistic aesthetics to provide psychological counseling, character shaping, and value guidance. The disconnect between aesthetic education and students' physical and mental development is prominent, and the effectiveness of education is limited.

The practical carriers are not rich enough, and a long-term education system has not yet been formed. The immersion effect of aesthetic education depends on sustained practical scenarios and cultural

atmosphere. However, current aesthetic education is mostly limited to classroom teaching, with insufficient supply of extracurricular art practice, aesthetic experience, and cultural influence activities. The construction of campus aesthetic education culture is weak, and aesthetic education presents fragmented and short-term characteristics, making it difficult to form a long-term education mechanism that covers the entire life cycle of students in school.

4. Practical path: Strategies for empowering art education under the guidance of student development

4.1. Conceptual innovation: Anchoring the educational goal of student development

In the new era, aesthetic education in universities must abandon the utilitarian orientation of “emphasizing skills over literacy, emphasizing achievements over growth,” and return to the principle of educating people. Based on the perspective of student development and education, the core goals of aesthetic education should be to establish holistic development, sound personality, mental health, and improvement of literacy, so that aesthetic education can truly serve the complete growth of students. The Ministry of Education’s Art Education Infiltration Action clearly proposes to “infiltrate students with art education, making their physical and mental well-being more enjoyable, vitality more prominent, and personality more sound,” providing clear guidance for the renewal of the concept of art education.

This transformation requires university teachers to break away from pure professional teaching thinking, pay attention to students’ psychological state, personality changes, and literacy growth in daily education, integrate aesthetic education into the entire process of students’ development, and form a joint force of classroom teaching, artistic practice, and daily management to educate students. Assessment and evaluation should also shift from a single skill indicator to a comprehensive consideration of students’ personalized growth and soft literacy, and lead practical transformation through ideological change.

4.2. Model optimization: Building an immersive education mechanism

In response to the prominent sensory thinking and emphasis on experiential perception of art students, aesthetic education teaching should shift from indoctrination to immersion. Classroom teaching should increase interactive activities such as art appreciation, aesthetic reasoning, creative insights, and cultural interpretation, stimulate students’ active participation and deep experience, and make the aesthetic process an opportunity for students to discover and construct themselves.

Differentiated cultivation is equally indispensable. For students with weak aesthetic foundations, emphasis should be placed on establishing basic aesthetic perception and confidence; For emotionally sensitive students, they can rely on classic artworks to carry out spiritual nourishment and emotional counseling; For students with outstanding innovation abilities, it is necessary to build a creative platform and encourage personalized expression. Teaching students according to their aptitude can achieve precise education, enabling every student to receive growth support that suits their own development pace in aesthetic education.

4.3. Dimension expansion: Promoting the integration of physical and mental coordination in aesthetic education

The special value of aesthetic education lies in its bridging role between sensibility and rationality, body and mind, and individual and society. Relying on this advantage, aesthetic education can be deeply integrated

with psychological education, personality education, and literacy education, unleashing multidimensional educational effectiveness.

At the level of mental health, the unique value of art therapy can be utilized to alleviate students' emotional stress through music appreciation, painting creation, dance experience, and other pathways, enhance psychological resilience and emotional regulation ability, and provide students with non-verbal channels for emotional expression and release. At the level of personality shaping, relying on excellent traditional Chinese culture, art, and classic works, it guides students to perceive truth, goodness, and beauty, cultivate calm, inclusive, and resilient character, and correct self-centered and extremist cognition. At the level of comprehensive literacy, integrating humanistic knowledge and moral cognition into the entire process of aesthetic education, broadening students' horizons, and achieving the synergistic improvement of professional skills and humanistic literacy.

4.4. Abundant carriers: Building a stepped aesthetic education practice platform

The immersion effect of aesthetic education depends on sustained practical scenarios and cultural atmosphere. Universities should break down classroom barriers and build multi-level platforms for aesthetic education practice.

At the campus level, relying on activities such as art exhibitions, calligraphy and painting exhibitions, and classic sharing sessions, a normalized aesthetic experience atmosphere is created to enable students to continuously receive the influence of beauty in their daily campus life, extending aesthetics from the classroom to real-life scenarios. At the societal level, students are organized to participate in practical activities such as public welfare art performances, rural art education support, and traditional cultural inheritance. Through these activities, students deepen their understanding of art, enhance their sense of social responsibility, broaden their development horizons, and achieve a two-way promotion of personal growth and social services.

In addition, a tiered aesthetic education system should be established throughout the first to fourth year of college: the lower grades should focus on cultivating aesthetic foundations and guiding psychological adaptation, helping students complete the transition of aesthetic cognition from middle school to university; Senior students focus on improving their literacy, shaping their values, and cultivating their professional aesthetics, in order to fully prepare their aesthetic literacy and personality qualities for entering society. This stepped design aims to achieve a precise match between aesthetic education and students' growth stages, forming a sustained educational pattern.

5. Conclusion

Art education is an important path for universities in the new era to implement moral education and promote the comprehensive development of students. It is particularly significant for art students, a special group that combines professional advantages and development shortcomings. From the perspective of student development and education, the core value of aesthetic education in universities lies not in the improvement of skills, but in the nourishment of students' souls, the shaping of their personalities, and the cultivation of their comprehensive qualities. The essence of aesthetic education empowering students' development is to use aesthetics as a medium to activate their internal growth drive, enabling them to enrich their spiritual world and improve their personality

qualities in the process of perceiving, understanding, and creating beauty.

The current art education work in universities still has shortcomings in terms of concepts, models, dimensions, and carriers, making it difficult to fully adapt to the growth needs of art students. Future reforms should adhere to the development orientation of students, update educational concepts, optimize infiltration modes, expand multidimensional paths, enrich practical carriers, fully tap into the implicit educational value of aesthetic education, help art college students achieve the coordinated development of aesthetic literacy, psychological quality, personality traits, and comprehensive abilities, and provide continuous support for the overall improvement of the quality of art talent cultivation in universities in the new era.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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