

# The Construction of Campus Visual Culture

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**Abstract:** At present, with the development of information technology, visual culture has greatly influenced all aspects of life. Therefore, schools at all levels and types should focus on the construction of campus visual culture, which is a conducive way to actively and effectively carry out moral education, at the same time play its irreplaceable role. Campus visual culture may function as ear fumigating and eye staining. It can not only promote all-round development of students, but also improve their independent personality and ingenuity. This paper is mainly discussing the visual culture, the construction of campus visual culture, the significance of campus visual in art and art education, and the relationship between them.

**Keywords:** Aesthetic education; Visual culture; Art education; Campus culture construction

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## 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of modern society, students' aesthetic education has also become particularly important. Therefore, cultivating students' core literacy has become the core content of current education and curriculum reform. Its purpose is to cultivate comprehensively developed people on the basis of "building morality and cultivating people," and core literacy can improve students' ability to adapt to future social development. Art education is mainly characterized by nurturing emotion, which focuses on five core qualities: (1) image reading; (2) art expression; (3) aesthetic judgment; (4) creative practice; and (5) cultural understanding; especially when conducting educational activities and cultivating students' ability to learn, feel, understand, and create beauty, which is an indispensable part of the development of art education. In the 1990s, western developed countries took "who to cultivate and how to cultivate" as the guiding ideology of education and proposed the related concepts of core literacy. The ultimate purpose of their education is to enable students to gradually adapt to their own development and to nurture the quality and key abilities that are necessary for social development.

There are 5 core qualities of art including, image reading, art expression, creative practice, aesthetic judgment, and cultural understanding, but the core qualities of image reading and art expression are only available in art disciplines. In contrast, the other three core qualities are learned through the fundamental "visual image" of art discipline, indicating that visual image as the top priority in the art discipline. Further, the cultivation of visual culture plays an important role in the art discipline, thereby the teaching can be conducted not only in the art classroom, but also in the construction of campus culture, and only in this way students' art literacy can be increased. Therefore, strengthening art education in campus construction could not only optimize the school's educational environment, allowed the students to learn and understand the cultural atmosphere, but at the same time enhances students' ability to develop and cultivate cultural influence.

## **2. Visual culture**

In Baidu Encyclopedia, visual culture is defined as human culture based on visual media, such as pictures, sculptures, and dances. It is opposed to oral and printing culture based on language and text. In the book of “Art for life,” it is mentioned that “visual culture includes all kinds inside and outside the art museum, visual artifacts, and performances, as well as emerging technologies, as well as the inherent artifacts and the beliefs, values, and attitudes in their manufacturing, presentation, and use <sup>[1]</sup>.”

The term “visual culture” was introduced in China as early as 1981. With the development and changes in time, we have also redefined and thought about the way we observe the world. Therefore, visual culture has become a kind of mass culture, consumer culture, and post-modern culture. The most important thing in visual culture is the purpose of visual exploration, which is a process of social interpretation of visual objects through viewers’ individual characteristics. The book “Introduction of Art” states that “visual image is the basic feature of art. The visual image of art is created by artists according to their unique aesthetic understanding of social life. It has both objective real-life roots, and subjective consciousness, and it is the unity of subjectivity and objectivity <sup>[2]</sup>.” Therefore, visual culture is very important in our daily life.

The most important thing in visual culture is visual art, which has always been the most beautiful thing in human vision. Thereby, the cultivation of visual culture plays an important role in improving students’ aesthetic education. The characteristic of visual art is like feeding the human brain with intuition and visual effects, thereby the people can obtain images, knowledge, and receive the education that they deserve. In addition, the influence of visual art is subtle and can leave a deep impression; therefore, visual art is very important in art education.

## **3. Campus visual culture construction**

### **3.1. Definition of campus visual culture construction**

Professor Yin Shaochun of the Academy of Fine Arts of Capital Normal University once mentioned that, “China’s art education has developed from a single artistic content to extremely rich subject teaching categories represented by visual art <sup>[3]</sup>.” In addition, visual culture has the recognition of people’s lifestyle and values, as well as reflects the characteristics and literacy of a certain group <sup>[3]</sup>. As a type of campus culture construction, campus visual culture construction has the combination of culture and vision. At the same time, it can also be used as the spiritual wealth and cultural atmosphere which is created in the process of educational and teaching activities between school teachers and students, as well as an activity and material which carry these spiritual wealth and cultural atmosphere <sup>[4]</sup>.

In the 1990s, some scholars pointed out that; “The aesthetic education function of campus culture is determined by the content of campus culture, and this aesthetic education function shows the strong hierarchy, potential, and selectivity <sup>[5]</sup>.” In the construction of campus visual culture, the things that are should be built not only restricted to the tangible teaching buildings, roads, public sculptures, and others, but also composed of integration of intangible atmosphere with these tangible things, to achieve “both spirit and form,” which is the daily so-called implicit culture, through which students’ aesthetic education and ability can be improved.

### **3.2. Content of campus visual culture construction**

Firstly, school visual culture can be divided into dominant culture and recessive culture, while dominant culture refers to material culture, which is something tangible. For example, the buildings, indoor, and other environments they could not speak, but they possess a lot of knowledge in the practicality of their functions, the beauty of their shapes, and the appropriateness of education. Meanwhile, recessive culture includes school spirit, class spirit, teachers’ quality, and others. The visual explicit culture is discussed below in more details.

### **3.2.1. Sculpture**

At present, traditional culture or the folk art should be included in the campus visual culture construction, because the traditional excellent folk art is a folk-art type which is formed under the joint action of local and traditional culture, reflecting the life, customs, and aesthetics of the local people.

Therefore, when building campus visual culture, statues of the characters or events in local folk tales can be placed in the campus where the students live. This could not only improve students' visual aesthetics, but also let students know more about local excellent folk culture, to improve their cultural confidence. By using this method to design the sculptures, it can inherit the excellent culture of the region, enhance the local cultural influence, and fully tap the regional traditional folk art, and such sculpture design should be the primary principle in campus visual culture construction.

### **3.2.2. Roads**

The construction of roads is important for the construction of campus visual culture. Students walk down on the school road every day, for example, on the way to the classroom, playground, and to other places; therefore, the construction of road visual culture is also very important. The road construction in the campus can be divided to the road in the campus, and the corridor in the teaching building.

In addition, to the conventional decoration, the corridor in the teaching building should also be decorated with students' art works, which not only to beautify the environment of the corridor, but also to allow students to participate in the construction of campus visual culture, improve students' participation, and improve their aesthetic self-confidence and also their pride. As campus visual media is conducive to the establishment of interaction between students and schools. Importantly, students can equally participate in the process of school decision-making through campus visual media, affect the formulation of school public policies, supervise the implementation of school public policies, and improve the management level, decision-making level, and serviceability of schools <sup>[6]</sup>.

Furthermore, for the design of garbage cans and streetlamps on both sides of the road on the campus, advice from students and teachers on design the visual culture of the campus can be included, which may improve the students' aesthetic education's ability. In addition, the greening construction on both sides of the road in the campus is also very important, where a green environment could not only protect students' eyes, but also makes the campus full of vitality.

### **3.2.3. Symbol**

The symbol of campus is also the main component of campus visual culture construction, such as, a series of logo designs, such as the presentation of creative theme sculptures, the home contact bar of each class, various safety signs, behavior, and habit guidance signs, and others.

The design of these symbols can also realize the unity of educational function and sensory aesthetics and allow every detail of the symbols to represent as the reading book of education, and the concretization of moral education "standards" highlighted by every plant and tree.

### **3.2.4. Well covers and campus walls**

Students can strengthen the construction of campus visual culture by graffiti well covers and drawing on campus walls. These ways can also reflect the learning theme of "art is everywhere," and let students find the beauty in their surroundings. This type of aesthetic education can beautify the campus, and will not destroy the beauty of the campus visual art, at the same time can give students and teachers a relaxed and happy environment for study and work.

### **3.3. The significance of campus visual culture construction**

#### **3.3.1. The construction of campus visual culture can promote the development of the school and guide the values**

Firstly, the campus visual culture can be regarded as the soul of school development, because it can unite the whole school, teachers, and students, which has the role of cohesion, and can well display the school image, subsequently, improve the popularity of the school and the grade of the school. Secondly, the construction of campus visual culture will not only reflect the tradition of the school culture and the learning atmosphere, but also may reflect the development potential of the school. Such construction of campus visual culture can enable students to acquire other knowledge, knowledge outside their textbooks, and simultaneously expand their learning space and aesthetic ability. A good campus visual landscape should guide educational and teaching activities to a higher level, promote the students' intelligent development, stimulate the teachers' and the students' enthusiasm for work and learning, and cultivate students' positive emotions, and compared with a simple and rigid teaching method, this teaching method can achieve twice the result with half the effort <sup>[7]</sup>.

Campus visual culture is one of the important bridges for the harmonious coexistence between the campus environment, teachers, and students. As a visible and explicit form of expression on campus, campus visual culture will also highlight the characteristics of the campus itself and can improve the value orientation and aesthetic taste of teachers and students, which will affect the daily work, study, and life of teachers and students. Through such visual means, we can create more cultural educational environment, and reflecting the connotation and extension of campus culture should be the ultimate goal of campus culture construction.

#### **3.3.2. Campus visual culture can cultivate students' sentiment and improve aesthetic education**

When students are in a good visual environment on campus, they will be invisibly affected, which is what we usually call "sneaking into the night with the wind, moistening things silently." Excellent visual symbols in the campus environment can enable teachers and students to find a sense of belonging and pride of a group. They can also understand the environmental culture on campus in their own way, thereby the campus visual culture can have a silent dialogue and communication with teachers and students.

Such construction of campus visual culture can also allow students and teachers to participate together, and truly feel the charm in the process of construction. As Professor Yin Shaochun mentioned, "through the setting, transformation, and beautification of campus visual culture, we can achieve environmental education." In addition, students' aesthetics will also be greatly improved, indirectly improve students' aesthetic education.

#### **3.3.3. The construction of campus visual culture can promote students to form good habits**

If the campus visual cultural conditions are too simple and lack modern cultural atmosphere and artistic interest, it may lead to students' disillusionment of the school, and they may not even want to go to school, resulting in the development of bad habits among students. However, these issues can be overcome by visual cultural construction of the school. For example, in a quiet library or classroom, students speak and discuss loudly with embarrassment to affect others' study and work, while in a beautiful and clean campus, teachers and students are embarrassed to litter and spit everywhere <sup>[8]</sup>. Therefore, the campus visual environment culture can promote the teachers and students to form good habits unconsciously.

### **3.4. How to carry out the construction of campus visual culture**

When building campus visual culture, in addition to reflecting the function of educating people and beautifying the campus environment, the core quality of art discipline should also be highlighted, so as to

reflect the visual, humanistic, practical, pleasant, and other aspects of art discipline. Only in this way, we can better cultivate students' aesthetic education. Teacher Xiang Li, an art teacher and researcher of Hubei Academy of Educational Sciences, mentioned that "Firstly, we should explore the 'visual and cultural materials' of the campus and make sufficient articles according to the educational objectives of the school. Secondly, we should combine the local excellent cultural resources to build a campus culture with personality, sense of mission, and cultural accumulation. Thirdly, we should make use of the unique natural resources to create a green, ecological, harmonious, and elegant campus."

For the construction of campus visual culture, a reasonable layout should be used, and it can be presented in visual forms such as, images and symbols. In this way, students may not only satisfy visually, but also can have spiritual thinking, and also can help to cultivate students' ability of "image reading." When designing campus visual culture, the changes and states of students in the process of growth should be taken into account as well. Only such visual culture construction can allow the students to gain improvement in visual aesthetics, and also can enhance the ability of image reading; therefore, the construction of campus visual culture is very important.

The construction of campus visual culture should also be promoted with the teaching task. It can be introduced into the teaching of various courses, integrated into the process of educating students to master the knowledge and develop habits, and play a subtle role in static education.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Campus visual culture can convey the educational ideas to be expressed, reflect the educational objectives, guide students to form good values, and healthy aesthetic emotions, in order to improve the quality of art education and teaching. Thus, the construction of campus visual culture is an important part of aesthetic education. Professor Yin Shaochun also mentioned that "Life should live in two spaces, one is natural space, the other is cultural space." From this sentence, we can see that natural space and cultural space should be integrated and unified with each other. In a sense, the construction of campus visual culture is so important that it should be nurtured.

The construction of campus visual culture, as one of the important contents of school culture construction, is an intangible spiritual wealth. Internally, it can lead to teachers and students to change their ideas and standardize their behaviors, stimulate the enthusiasm of all members, and enhance the sense of belonging of teachers and students and the cohesion of the school. Externally, it can enhance the popularity of the school, win the recognition of the public, enhance the competitiveness and influence of the school, and win a broader space for the sustainable development of the school <sup>[9]</sup>.

We should excavate the campus "visual and cultural materials" and prepare sufficient articles according to the goal of school education system. In addition, we should combine the excellent cultural resources of the region to create a campus environment with personality and cultural accumulation. Finally, we should make use of the unique natural resources to create a green, ecological, harmonious, and elegant campus. In the art teaching activities, we should not only create an atmosphere of art class, but also create a good campus visual culture. This is conducive to the all-round development of students, and the construction of campus aesthetic education can also be well developed.

#### **Disclosure statement**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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