

The Problems and Countermeasures in the Teaching of Graphic Design Majors in Universities

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Abstract: As a cradle for cultivating and delivering graphic design professionals, the graphic design major in universities should keep up with the times, guided by the “Opinions on Deepening Undergraduate Education and Teaching Reform, and Comprehensively Improving the Quality of Talent Cultivation,” deepen teaching reform, and enhance the quality of talent cultivation. Based on this, this article analyzes the existing problems in the teaching of graphic design major and actively explores its teaching reform path, in order to promote the in-depth implementation of graphic design major teaching and even the entire graphic design teaching reform, comprehensively improve the quality of graphic design talent cultivation, and promote the great reform and development of higher education.

Keywords: Universities; Graphic design; Problem; Countermeasure

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1. Introduction

In order to deepen the reform of undergraduate education and teaching, and cultivate socialist builders and successors with comprehensive development in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor, the Higher Education Department of the Ministry of Education has formulated the key work points for 2024 as “promoting innovation in the higher education system and mechanism and high-quality development”^[1]. As an important component of the talent cultivation system in universities, the graphic design major has played a significant role in cultivating high-quality graphic design professionals. With the deepening of higher education reform, the teaching of graphic design majors is also facing a transformation from a disciplinary system-oriented approach to a focus on skill cultivation. It requires universities and teachers from various disciplines to timely change their teaching concepts, innovate teaching methods, actively explore talent cultivation models that meet the development needs of the graphic design industry, improve the quality of talent cultivation, and promote the development of graphic design education and teaching to a higher level.

2. Problems in graphic design teaching in universities

2.1. Insufficient cultivation of practical skills

The current teaching mode of graphic design majors in universities is still being influenced by traditional teaching modes, and the teaching philosophy and methods have not yet changed. In addition, due to the characteristics of graphic design majors, teachers tend to focus on teaching theoretical knowledge in the teaching process. In practical teaching, teachers use simulation software for operation training, but students' practical skills are not fully cultivated, and their awareness of the importance of graphic design work and practical exercises is insufficient^[2]. In this type of teaching model that emphasizes theoretical teaching, teachers may adopt an indoctrination teaching approach in the classroom, which may lead to students losing interest in transferring professional knowledge of graphic design and hinder their development. At the same time, in this type of teaching mode, graduates have weaker practical skills and cannot meet the actual employment needs of enterprises, which may lead to a decline in their professional competitiveness and employment difficulties.

2.2. Outdated teaching content

With the continuous progress and development of the economy and society, the standards, regulations, policies, and other aspects of the graphic design industry are constantly adjusted and changed, and the updating speed is rapid. The teaching reform, teaching resources, and textbooks of some universities may not keep up with the development of the times, and there is a certain lag, resulting in the teaching content of the graphic design major falling behind the development of the industry. There is a significant gap between the actual level of students and the talent demand of the relevant industry^[3]. The demand for high-quality and high-tech talent in society and the industry under the new situation cannot be met, causing a shortage of high-quality talent, which in turn leads to difficulties in student employment and enterprise recruitment.

2.3. Lack of innovation in course arrangement

The rationality of the course arrangement in the field of graphic design directly affects students' learning effectiveness and interest. However, some universities still show conservatism and lack innovation in the curriculum arrangement of graphic design majors. The traditional curriculum overly emphasizes theoretical knowledge and neglects the cultivation of students' innovative thinking and practical skills, resulting in a disconnect between their practical skills and market demand^[4]. In addition, the connection between courses is not close enough, and there is a lack of interdisciplinary integration, which makes it difficult for students to have a complete knowledge system and adapt to the diversified development trend of the graphic design industry.

3. Strategies for improving graphic design teaching in universities

3.1. Improving the quality of teachers and building a “dual-teacher” teaching team

The “Opinion on Deepening the Reform of Undergraduate Education and Teaching, and Comprehensively Improving the Quality of Talent Training” clearly proposes to “guide teachers to devote themselves to educating students”^[5]. In this context, universities should take measures such as improving the teacher evaluation and appointment system, strengthening the construction of grassroots teaching organizations, and forming structured innovation teams to create a structurally optimized and specialized “dual-teacher” team^[6]. On the one hand, building a structured innovation team is crucial. According to the reform needs of the graphic design profession, following the principles of dynamic combination, complementary abilities, and division of labor and cooperation, we will build a structured and high-level teaching team. At the same time, it is necessary to improve the operation mechanism of the structured teaching team. The leaders of the graphic design discipline should form a research-

oriented team comprising teachers with rich graphic design theory, enterprise masters with outstanding practical skills, and teaching and research-oriented educators with extensive professional teaching experience. This should be based on the strengths and research directions of teachers in each discipline. The teaching team should be well-developed and reasonably structured. Each member of the team plays different roles in the cultivation of graphic design professionals so that the entire team always maintains a high professional level in theory, technology, and services. On the other hand, building a high-level “dual-teacher” team is imperative. Building a “dual-teacher” teaching team is a key issue related to the quality of teaching reform in the field of graphic design in universities. In this regard, universities should continuously increase their emphasis on teacher training, cultivate young teachers through “mentoring” and “mentorship,” and promote the professional development of young teachers. Based on the principle of practicality and efficiency, we introduce advanced design talents from enterprises to provide scientific guidance for the practical training and teaching of graphic design majors and promote the cultivation of “craftsman-type” graphic design talents through apprenticeship ^[7]. Through this dual approach and dual measures of building a “dual-teacher” teaching team, we continuously improve the quality of teaching in the field of graphic design and promote the in-depth implementation of teaching reform in the field.

3.2. Building a teaching platform and innovating teaching methods

In the context of the new era, the innovation and reform of teaching models for graphic design majors in universities can be achieved through the construction of online teaching platforms. Online teaching platforms can leverage their dissemination advantages and real-time capabilities to promote the evolution and modernization of teaching models for graphic design majors in universities, meet the requirements of educational modernization, and meet the development needs of enterprises, industries, and various employers in the new era. In the process of teaching mode reform and innovation, teachers should introduce networked and information-based teaching modes in professional practical teaching, update teaching methods, and enable students to quickly adapt to the development speed of the graphic design industry in the new era and improve their skills during the learning process ^[8]. To this end, the construction of an Internet-based teaching platform can improve the efficiency of talent training for graphic design majors in colleges and universities, thus realizing the development of students’ comprehensive quality. Firstly, building a teaching platform requires investment and support from the university. Universities should actively invest funds and resources to build an integrated teaching platform, in line with the needs of educational modernization and the development of the times, so that graphic design students can gain more experience in the learning process using the teaching platform and efficiently improve their practical skills. Secondly, the teaching platform needs to integrate a large amount of resources, simulation technology, etc. In the process of building an integrated online teaching platform, teachers and schools need to build a teaching resource database that is convenient for students to download and apply. Combining excellent technology and the convenience of the network, by collecting, organizing, and classifying teaching resources, a more practical teaching resource database can be integrated. Teachers and students can log in to the teaching platform at any time during class, download resources for learning, and improve their skills ^[9]. Moreover, the online teaching platform should meet the learning needs of different students. In the practical teaching of graphic design students, they will use a variety of teaching simulation software for practice. The teaching platform can integrate these resources and classify them for students’ application. At the same time, the investment and use of teaching platforms can enrich students’ learning content and timely push industry information to relevant professional students. Teachers can also use teaching platforms to share more vivid teaching materials such as pictures and videos with students, enhance their learning enthusiasm, stimulate their learning interest, and enable students to gain more learning results on the teaching platform, thus improving the effectiveness of teaching.

3.3. Introducing the “1+X” mode to reconstruct course content

In the new era, standards and policies in the graphic design industry are constantly being introduced, updated, and adjusted according to economic and political policies. This has also led to the need to adjust the content of teaching in universities according to the development of the industry. To achieve this, professional teachers are required to introduce new teaching modes, rearrange teaching methods, and optimize and adjust teaching content. Therefore, the introduction of the “1+X” certificate system in the teaching of graphic design majors in universities is conducive to the innovation and transformation of teaching modes and promotes the comprehensive development of students. Firstly, teachers should clarify the connotation and role of the “1+X” certificate system, develop teaching models and curriculum content that are suitable for teaching in the new era, ensure that teaching content keeps up with the development of the times and does not fall behind current policies and the employment needs of enterprises. Teachers should combine the changes of teaching content under the “1+X” certificate system, improve students’ skills and professional quality while cultivating their professional knowledge; add new technologies, new regulations, and other knowledge in the teaching process; expand students’ skills, remove outdated teaching content, improve the progressiveness of teaching, ensure students’ knowledge level is kept up with the development of the times, help students improve their professional competitiveness, and master advanced professional skills^[10]. Secondly, the current graphic design profession needs to keep up with the development of the times and align with the actual work situations of enterprises. It should develop new courses such as 3D Max and SketchUp (SU), incorporate new industry developments and technologies, establish new course standards, and develop updated teaching content. For example, the school invites professionals, experts, scholars, and key teachers in the industry to hold teaching seminars, establish new teaching standards for the graphic design industry in the new era, adjust the content of existing textbooks, develop new teaching materials, remove knowledge points that do not conform to the development of the times, and ensure the progressiveness of students’ learning^[11]. Furthermore, under the “1+X” certificate system, “X” represents a professional skills certificate, and the assessment content of the skills certificate will include the latest teaching content, which can help teachers update their teaching content in real-time and keep up with the development of the times. To this end, professional teachers should introduce the assessment content of vocational skills certificates represented by “X” into their teaching. Combining the assessment content of skill certificates, the professional qualities, core skills, professional standards, and new regulations of graphic design talents should be integrated into the teaching content. This should be introduced into the vocational talent training system, and multi-module teaching content should be developed to meet the requirements of vocational certificate assessment while promoting the reform of the teaching mode of the graphic design profession^[12].

3.4. Promoting practical teaching and enhancing skills

In the new era, in order to improve the quality and efficiency of the teaching mode of graphic design majors in universities, more attention needs to be paid to practical teaching, reform the traditional practical teaching mode, focus on improving students’ graphic design skills, promote the improvement of their comprehensive abilities in all aspects, and enable students to actively improve their level of graphic design work. Firstly, teachers need to reform the traditional teaching mode, using information technology teaching methods to consolidate students’ theoretical knowledge and flexibly use information technology to help them master basic graphic design knowledge, laying a solid foundation for their basic knowledge and facilitating efficient practical teaching in the future^[13]. For example, teachers should use multimedia and digital means to flexibly apply online teaching resources, carry out teaching activities such as scenario creation and group cooperation exploration, use media resources to simulate real scenes, create real problems encountered in the graphic design industry, and encourage students to think

independently and solve problems. Secondly, teachers should guide students to engage in self-directed application, exercise their self-learning ability, and engage in practice and exploration of graphic design skills, so that students can develop their innovative awareness and knowledge transfer ability, thereby enhancing their professional competitiveness^[14]. Furthermore, universities should strengthen cooperation between schools and enterprises, engaging in deep cooperation with enterprises to send students to enterprises for practical training and teaching during internships. Teachers should also conduct research in graphic design industry enterprises, investigate the technical and ability requirements of practitioners in practical work, summarize suitable teaching plans, apply them to teaching, enhance students' graphic design practical skills, and thus enable them to achieve comprehensive ability improvement, which is conducive to the cultivation of comprehensive and composite graphic design talents^[15].

4. Conclusion

In summary, in the context of the new era, the graphic design major in universities should also keep up with the times. According to the relevant requirements of the National Vocational Education Reform Implementation Plan, we should create a “dual-teacher” teaching team, innovate teaching methods, introduce the “1+X” teaching mode, promote practical teaching, and continuously seek new reform directions and strategies to enhance students' comprehensive abilities and professional competitiveness, thereby improving the quality of professional teaching and cultivating excellent high-quality, composite graphic design technical and skilled talents.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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