

Research on the Integrated Development of Aesthetic Education Courses and Art Design Major Courses — Boosting Rural Revitalization

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Abstract: Against the background of building a strong educational nation and advancing the rural revitalization strategy, the integration of aesthetic education courses and art design major courses can not only enrich the training content of professional talents and improve students' aesthetic and professional competence, but also help address the practical dilemmas of marginalized aesthetic education and homogenized professional courses. Based on this background, this paper briefly analyzes the epochal value of the integrated development of aesthetic education and art design courses, and explores the education mechanism and implementation paths for such integration to boost rural revitalization. It aims to provide theoretical references for universities to promote deep integration, improve talent training systems, and serve national strategies.

Keywords: Aesthetic education courses; Art design major courses; Integrated development; Rural revitalization

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1. Introduction

China's higher education is shifting from scale expansion to quality improvement. For a long time, most universities have faced a disconnection between aesthetic education and professional courses: aesthetic education is mostly offered as general electives with generalized and theoretical content detached from professional training goals; professional courses overemphasize knowledge and skills while neglecting aesthetic and humanistic cultivation, leading students to prioritize techniques over literacy and professionalism over humanity. Therefore, studying the integrated development of aesthetic education and art design courses not only solves integration problems but also fulfills universities' mission to serve rural revitalization.

2. Epochal value of integrating aesthetic education and art design courses

2.1. Cultivating interdisciplinary art and design talents

In the new era, art and design professionals are required to have **comprehensive quality** rather than merely

technical proficiency. Students need solid design ability, aesthetic literacy, humanistic feelings, and an innovative spirit. Integrating aesthetic education into professional courses makes up for the deficiencies of traditional education, achieves coordinated improvement of professional ability and aesthetic literacy, and cultivates more interdisciplinary talents^[1]. Aesthetic education enriches students' spiritual world, enhances aesthetic perception and creativity, stimulates imagination in design learning, and improves innovative thinking.

2.2. Upgrading the art and design curriculum system

At present, aesthetic education remains marginalized in some universities, offered as general electives with generalized content irrelevant to professional goals. Professional courses lack humanistic and aesthetic elements and fail to motivate students. On the one hand, integrating aesthetic education into art design professional courses can enrich the teaching content and form of art design professional courses, and enhance the interest and innovation of the courses. On the other hand, integrating the professional elements of art and design courses into aesthetic education courses can make these courses more targeted and practical^[2]. For example, the introduction of cutting-edge models such as “Art + Technology AIGC” has greatly updated aesthetic education content, innovated teaching strategies, optimized course structure, and improved teaching quality through diverse professional practices.

2.3. Promoting the intensive development of higher education

The “Outline for the Construction of a Strong Educational Nation (2024–2035)” emphasizes advancing the Aesthetic Education Infiltration Action in schools. The integration of aesthetic education and art design courses is a key approach to implementing this policy^[3]. As a core force in educational development, higher education can break disciplinary barriers, encourage interdisciplinary integration, shift teaching from cramming to heuristic and inquiry-based learning, and guide students to discover beauty in design and deepen professional understanding through aesthetic experience. This improves overall education quality, stimulates innovation, and lays a solid foundation for a strong educational nation.

3. Education mechanism for integrated courses to boost rural revitalization

3.1. Anchoring rural revitalization and unifying educational orientation

The core of integration is to cultivate interdisciplinary talents with professional skills, aesthetic literacy, and rural sentiment. Talent revitalization is the core of rural revitalization. When setting integrated teaching objectives, teachers focus on “nurturing hearts through beauty and educating people through culture” and emphasize “practical innovation and serving rural areas”. Rural design, cultural inheritance, and industrial empowerment are embedded into teaching objectives, helping students grasp professional knowledge while recognizing rural natural, cultural, and living beauty.

For example, in visual communication courses, students are required to extract rural cultural symbols such as traditional patterns and folk stories and transform them into modern visual elements^[4]. This improves students' cultural connotation and aesthetic taste through aesthetic education and deeply integrates rural revitalization into professional education.

3.2. Embedding rural elements for two-way integration

Art design is closely related to rural planning, environmental beautification, and product design. When aesthetic education is integrated into professional teaching, students experience humanistic warmth and aesthetic implication in professional practice^[5]. Teachers can add a rural aesthetic education module, collect folk crafts and landscapes as teaching materials, and guide students to appreciate rural aesthetics through aesthetic appreciation, linking teaching content with rural culture.

In addition, teachers can introduce “rural living environment improvement” projects. Students apply professional knowledge and aesthetic principles of color, form, and artistic conception to renovate rural homestays. While meeting functional needs, they integrate rural cultural elements and spatial aesthetics, enhancing the cultural and aesthetic value of rural development through design.

3.3. Building university-local platforms for localized education

The integration forms a virtuous cycle: university talent training → serving rural revitalization → feeding back educational improvement, achieving mutual benefit. By combining local characteristics and positioning university aesthetic education, students are encouraged to go to rural areas and translate professional knowledge and aesthetic ideas into practical services^[6].

In teaching, universities can cooperate with intangible cultural heritage (ICH) workshops and launch projects such as “Inheriting Rural ICH in the New Era”. Students learn ICH skills from masters, use visual communication design to innovate ICH cultural and creative products, and recommend outstanding works to enterprises for market-oriented development. This industry-education integration deepens students’ application of professional skills and understanding of aesthetic education.

4. Implementation paths for integrated courses to boost rural revitalization

4.1. Guided by integrated education, strengthening top-level design

University administrators and teachers should update educational concepts, establish a collaborative education philosophy of aesthetic education and art design, understand the significance of integration, and formulate feasible plans. A special integrated teaching management group should be established to coordinate work, issue implementation rules, clarify responsibilities, and form synergy^[7].

Universities should give full play to faculty strengths and build an interdisciplinary team composed of aesthetic education teachers, art design teachers, ICH inheritors, and agriculture-related enterprise experts. University teachers provide theoretical and skill guidance; ICH inheritors impart traditional skills and rural cultural materials; enterprises connect market demand and promote achievement transformation. This diversified model improves the ability of integrated education to serve rural revitalization^[8].

In addition, awareness of integrated teaching and rural revitalization should be strengthened to create an atmosphere of “educating people with beauty and culture”. For example, diversified aesthetic education clubs can be founded, including art workshops, chorus, dance, and calligraphy, for teachers and students to create art themed on rural revitalization. Environmental design can be upgraded with bulletin boards, cultural corridors, and graffiti walls full of rural elements, forming an all-round aesthetic education environment^[9].

4.2. Optimizing curriculum based on rural features for deep integration

First, teachers should create rural-themed teaching modules for integrated courses, integrating rural culture,

design demands, and practical cases to avoid formalism. For example, in graphic design courses, content such as “application of rural traditional aesthetics” can be added with cases of rural architecture, folk art, and local culture, guiding students to understand rural aesthetics and convert them into design materials. Meanwhile, content should be updated according to the latest rural revitalization policies to match reality^[10].

Second, teachers should break course barriers, integrate the content of aesthetic education and art design, explore aesthetic elements in professional courses, and naturally embed aesthetic education into professional teaching^[11].

Finally, universities can innovate interdisciplinary course modules to combine professional and aesthetic knowledge in practice. For example, in design majors, “Design +” rural aesthetic education and cultural inheritance activities can be carried out. Through “Trips to the Countryside” and other grassroots activities, the idea of beauty and design wisdom are spread to rural areas, promoting environmental beautification, creative renewal of old buildings, and integration of natural scenery and cultural art. This supports the development of rural tourism and stimulates the rural economy^[12].

4.3. Rooting integrated practice in rural areas for practical education

Traditional practical teaching for both art design and aesthetic education relies on short-term activities. From the perspective of integration, teachers should innovate a long-term assistance practice mode. Taking a semester or academic year as a cycle, students are organized to conduct rural surveys, design, and on-site implementation to support rural construction.

For example, during holidays, students go to nearby villages to investigate local culture and economic conditions, identify rural revitalization needs, and carry out integrated practical projects. In product design courses, teachers can assign “packaging design for agricultural products”. Students apply layout and color matching knowledge to create packaging schemes with visual appeal and cultural connotation, experiencing and creating beauty in practice, enhancing teaching effects, and contributing to rural development^[13].

In addition, multimedia tools such as VR and AR can improve the fun and attraction of integrated teaching. AR technology can display different packaging designs in real scenarios, helping students intuitively understand the impact of color and shape on product attractiveness. This stimulates interest and synchronizes professional learning and aesthetic experience^[14].

4.4. Strengthening teacher training to ensure integration effect

Firstly, reform the training model for teachers. When training teachers for art education courses, enrich the teaching content with professional knowledge in art design, so that art education teachers can better understand the characteristics of the courses and the educational needs; when training teachers for art design courses, add a section on cultivating aesthetic education literacy, and include the teaching ability of aesthetic education in the training goals for art design teachers, to deepen their mastery of aesthetic education teaching methods and techniques. Secondly, strengthen communication and cooperation between art education course teachers and art design subject teachers^[15]. Specifically, one is to establish a teacher exchange mechanism, arrange for art education course teachers and art design subject teachers to conduct regular exchanges and discussion activities, exchange teaching experiences and methods, and explore the difficulties and solutions in integrated teaching. The other is to form interdisciplinary teaching teams, with art education teachers and art design subject teachers as the main body to establish teaching teams, jointly promote the creation, teaching and research of integrated courses, to achieve the goal of complementary advantages. Encourage teachers

to conduct interdisciplinary research, using the research method of combining art education and art design subject courses to improve teachers' integrated research ability and teaching ability.

Furthermore, universities should improve performance appraisal and incentive systems to mobilize teachers' enthusiasm. Integrate teaching effects into assessment with indicators including course development, teaching implementation, and improvement of students' aesthetic literacy, comprehensively evaluating teachers' performance in integrated education.

5. Conclusion

In summary, to meet the new requirements of aesthetic education, universities should organically integrate aesthetic education into art design teaching, enrich the content and form of higher education, and enhance the effectiveness of education. Through the paths of upholding integrated education, optimizing rural-based curriculum systems, rooting practice in rural areas, and strengthening teacher training, the quality of integrated teaching will be continuously improved. The goal is to cultivate more art and design professionals with sound aesthetic literacy and commitment to rural revitalization.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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