

Research on the Development Model of University Aesthetic Education Practice Bases with Public Art Courses as the Core

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ABSTRACT

Aesthetic education is an important way to enhance the aesthetic literacy of college students, cultivate their sentiments, warm their hearts, and stimulate their innovative and creative vitality. Currently, although significant progress has been made in the field of aesthetic education in Chinese colleges and universities, there are still widespread problems such as a focus on skills over literacy, a focus on theory over practice, and insufficient coordination of resources, which hinder the full play of aesthetic education functions. This article aims to explore an innovative model of constructing a comprehensive university aesthetic education practice bases with public art courses as the core. This article first elaborates on the core values and mission of university aesthetic education, and analyzes the current practical difficulties faced by university aesthetic education practices. On this basis, this article proposes a trinity development model of "curriculum - platform - mechanism" for aesthetic education practice bases: its core is to construct a multi-level, modular public art curriculum system of "compulsory courses + elective courses + workshop", achieving a deep integration of knowledge imparting and aesthetic experience; Its carrier is to build a practical platform that combines physical and virtual teaching, creation, performance, and communication, breaking the boundaries of traditional classrooms; Its guarantee is to establish long-term operational mechanisms such as cross departmental collaborative management, integration of internal and external resources, and equal emphasis on evaluation and incentives for both processes and outcomes. This model emphasizes student-centered approach, elevating aesthetic education from scattered extracurricular activities to a systematic education project through the core guiding role of the curriculum and the platform support function of the practice base. This achieves the coordinated development of knowledge, abilities, and literacy, and cultivates a new generation of people with noble aesthetic pursuits, noble personality cultivation, and strong innovation abilities.

Keywords: Public art courses, Aesthetic education practice bases, Development model, Collaborative education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Moral education is the fundamental task of higher education, and aesthetic education, as an important part of the "all-round education" education system, plays an irreplaceable role in shaping a sound personality, cultivating innovative thinking, and inheriting excellent culture. In 2015, the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving School Aesthetic Education Work", elevating the importance of art education to the

national strategic level. 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 Aesthetic Education Work in Schools in the New Era", which further emphasized the need to "aim to improve students' aesthetic and humanistic literacy, promote the spirit of Chinese art education, and use art education to educate, beautify, and cultivate students. In this context, as a highland for talent cultivation, how to effectively implement aesthetic

education work and explore effective development paths in universities has become an important issue that urgently needs to be studied and solved.

Traditional university aesthetic education mainly focuses on offering a few limited art elective courses or organizing scattered literary and artistic activities. This model often lacks systematicity, depth, and sustainability, making it difficult to truly touch students' hearts and internalize them as literacy. The core position of public art courses as the main channel for popularizing art knowledge and enhancing aesthetic abilities to all non art major students is beyond doubt. However, relying solely on limited theoretical lectures in the classroom is far from enough, and it is necessary to closely integrate course learning with rich artistic practice. Therefore, building an aesthetic education practice base that can integrate resources, provide practical fields, and support course teaching, and exploring a scientific development model centered on public art courses, has significant theoretical value and practical significance for breaking through the current bottleneck of university aesthetic education and achieving its fundamental goal of "educating people with aesthetic education".

2. THE CORE VALUES OF UNIVERSITY AESTHETIC EDUCATION AND CURRENT PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES

2.1 The Core Value and Era Mission of University Aesthetic Education

The value of university aesthetic education goes far beyond teaching students single skills such as singing and drawing. Its deeper value lies in the comprehensive spiritual shaping of students through aesthetic activities.

Firstly, aesthetic education is the key to personality development and emotional education. Excellent works of art embody the values of truth, goodness, and beauty, which can guide students to cultivate their sentiments, distinguish right from wrong, and warm their hearts through aesthetic experiences, thus building a positive attitude towards life and noble moral character. When facing practical challenges such as academic pressure and interpersonal confusion, art can become an outlet for students' emotions and a source of spiritual comfort.

Secondly, aesthetic education is a catalyst for cultivating innovative thinking. Art activities emphasize intuition, imagination, inspiration, and individual expression, which complement the logical thinking and empirical analysis of scientific research. Through aesthetic education, students' thinking patterns can be broken, their right brain potential can be stimulated, divergent thinking and cross-border integration abilities can be cultivated, which is the urgent requirement for innovative talents in the new era.

Finally, aesthetic education is the bridge between cultural confidence and inheritance. Through exposure, understanding, and creation of artistic works that embody excellent traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture, students can deeply feel the charm of national culture, enhance cultural identity and pride, and consciously become inheritors and innovators of culture.

2.2 The Main Dilemma of Current University Aesthetic Education Practice

Despite its increasing importance, aesthetic education in Chinese universities still faces many challenges in practice:

- Conceptual cognitive bias: The phenomenon of "emphasizing skills over education" is widespread. Many colleges and universities equate aesthetic education with art skills training, and the content of public art courses tends to focus on imparting knowledge of art history or single techniques, neglecting the cultivation of aesthetic perception, appreciation, and critical thinking, deviating from the educational essence of aesthetic education, which is to nourish things silently.
- Weak practical link: The problem of "separation of knowledge and action" is prominent. Theoretical teaching is seriously disconnected from practical experience. Due to limitations such as venue, equipment, and faculty, students lack opportunities to put what they have learned in the classroom into practice. The situation of "listening to music appreciation for a semester, but never touching a musical instrument; learning painting theory for a semester, but never drawing a painting" is not uncommon, which leads to the superficial effect of aesthetic education.

- Insufficient resource integration: "Fragmentation" and "islanding" coexist. Aesthetic education resources are usually scattered across multiple departments such as art colleges, youth league committees, student affairs offices, and propaganda departments, lacking unified planning and coordination. The utilization rate of art venues and facilities on campus is not high, and there is insufficient introduction of high-quality social art resources outside the campus, which has failed to form a joint force for education.
- Lack of evaluation system: Incentive and feedback mechanisms are inadequate. The evaluation of the effectiveness of aesthetic education teaching and students' learning outcomes mostly still relies on traditional paper-based assessments or simple attendance methods, which cannot scientifically measure the improvement of students' aesthetic literacy and humanistic spirit. The lack of effective evaluation and incentive mechanisms has led to a setback in the enthusiasm of teachers and students to invest in aesthetic education.

These difficulties indicate that it is imperative to construct a new aesthetic education practice model that can systematically solve the above problems.

3. CONSTRUCTION OF A TRINITY DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR AESTHETIC EDUCATION PRACTICE BASES: CURRICULUM - PLATFORM - MECHANISM

To solve the above difficulties, this article proposes to construct a "trinity" development model with public art courses as the core, aesthetic education practice bases as the platform, and collaborative operation mechanisms as the guarantee. This model aims to achieve a fundamental transformation from "knowledge imparting" to "literacy cultivation", and from "classroom teaching" to "comprehensive immersion".

3.1 Core Layer: Building a Multi-level and Modular New System of Public Art Courses

Public art courses are the "brain" and "soul" of aesthetic education practice bases, which determine the direction and connotation of aesthetic education practice. A systematic restructuring of the existing curriculum system is necessary.

- Strengthening the "Aesthetic Literacy" Module: For all freshmen, comprehensive courses such as "Introduction to College Art Education" and "Introduction to Art" are offered, aiming to popularize the basic principles of aesthetics, establish correct aesthetic views, introduce classic art categories from China and foreign countries, and lay a theoretical foundation for students' subsequent art learning and practice.
- Expanding the "Appreciation and Experience of Art Categories" Module: The schools should establish a "course supermarket" including rich and diverse elective courses, covering major categories such as music, art, dance, drama, opera, film and television, calligraphy, design, digital media art, etc. The course design should adhere to the principle of "appreciation leading, experience following". For example, the course "Appreciation of Chinese Classical Music" should be accompanied by basic performance experience of guqin or xiao flute; The course "Appreciation of Western Modern Painting" should be accompanied by workshops on acrylic or watercolor creation.
- Innovating the "Interdisciplinary Integration and Practical Creation" Workshop Module: This is the sublimation part of the curriculum system, aimed at breaking down disciplinary barriers and stimulating students' creativity. The schools can organize themed and project-based workshops such as "Science and Art", "Programming and Interactive Art", "Literature and Drama Creation", "Traditional Culture and Contemporary Design", etc. Students complete a comprehensive art project (such as a microfilm, an art installation, an experimental drama, etc.) in small groups under the guidance of a mentor, integrating aesthetic education with professional education and innovation and entrepreneurship education.

Through these three levels of curriculum design, a progressive and three-dimensional curriculum system is formed, from popularization to improvement, from theory to practice, and from reception to creation, ensuring that every student can find a suitable learning path within it.

3.2 Carrier Layer: Building a Practical Platform for Aesthetic Education That Integrates Virtual and Real Elements and Functions

The aesthetic education practice base is the physical carrier and functional extension of the curriculum system, and is the spatial guarantee for the realization of the concept of "integration of knowledge and action". It should be an open, shared, and intelligent "aesthetic education complex".

3.2.1 Partition of Physical Space Functions

It is necessary to integrate existing resources on campus, plan and construct:

- Teaching area: Multimedia appreciation classroom and smart classroom equipped with advanced audio-visual equipment.
- Practical creation area: Art studio, music rehearsal hall, drama black box, dance practice room, traditional craft workshop (such as pottery and seal carving), digital art laboratory (such as VR/AR creation, audio and video editing).
- Exhibition and exchange area: Small art museums, music halls, lecture halls, used for regularly hosting student exhibitions, concerts, drama performances, academic salons, etc.
- Resource service area: Open art book information corner, art collection and display space.

3.2.2 Intelligent Construction of Virtual Platforms

There is a must to establish an online art education practice base as an effective supplement and expansion to the physical space.

- Online courses and resource library: providing a massive amount of resources such as high-quality art MOOCs, digital art museums, virtual music halls, and artist lecture videos from both domestic and international sources.
- Practice community and exhibition platform: establishing online communities for student art clubs and workshops to facilitate communication and collaboration; opening a "cloud exhibition hall" to showcase students' digital art works,

performance videos, etc., and expanding their influence.

- Management and reservation system: Implementing online reservation, borrowing, and management of practice venues and equipment, and improving resource utilization efficiency.

The deep integration of physical and virtual platforms can break through the limitations of time and space, and maximize the satisfaction of students' diverse and personalized aesthetic education practice needs.

3.3 Guarantee Layer: Establishing a Long-term Operational Mechanism for Collaborative Linkage and Sustainable Development

To ensure the healthy operation of the aesthetic education practice base, it is necessary to establish a scientific and efficient management and guarantee mechanism.

3.3.1 Cross-departmental Collaborative Management Mechanism

The schools can establish an "Art Education Work Committee" led by school level leaders, with the participation of the Academic Affairs Office, Student Affairs Office, Youth League Committee, Finance Office, Logistics Office, and relevant departments, responsible for the top-level design, resource allocation, and major decisions of the base. They can also establish an "Art Education Center" as a daily executive agency to coordinate specific tasks such as curriculum development, platform management, and activity organization, breaking down departmental barriers.

3.3.2 Mechanism for Integrating Internal and External Resources

From the perspective of internal integration, it is necessary to establish an "Art Teacher Resource Library" to encourage art education teachers to undertake public art course teaching and workshop guidance; At the same time, schools will explore teachers and management personnel with artistic talents in non-art majors on campus, and form a diversified teaching staff.

From the perspective of external introduction, there is also a must to actively establish strategic cooperation with local art museums, museums, concert halls, theaters, artist studios, etc., and

introduce high-level exhibitions, performances, and master workshops; schools can hire renowned artists and inheritors of intangible cultural heritage as guest professors or resident artists to bring cutting-edge artistic concepts and practical experience.

3.3.3 *Evaluation and Incentive Mechanisms That Emphasize Both Process and Outcome*

For students, schools should reform the assessment method and adopt a combination of "process evaluation (practical participation, daily assignments) + summative evaluation (final works/performances)". Schools can promote the "aesthetic education practice credit system", which converts students' participation in workshops, artistic creation, volunteer services, and other activities at the base into credits and includes them in the comprehensive quality evaluation system.

For teachers, the workload of undertaking public art teaching and guiding aesthetic education practice will be included in the teacher performance evaluation and professional title evaluation system, and their labor value will be recognized. Schools should provide training and academic exchange opportunities to support the professional development of art education teachers.

4. THE EXPECTED EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPLEMENTATION PATH OF THE MODEL

4.1 *Expected Results*

The implementation of the "curriculum - platform - mechanism" trinity model is expected to bring about positive changes in the following aspects:

- Students benefit: achieving comprehensive improvement in literacy. Students will transform from passive knowledge receivers to active aesthetic experiencers and art creators, and their aesthetic perception ability, artistic expression ability, and innovative practice ability will be systematically exercised, ultimately achieving the perfection of personality and spiritual enrichment.
- School development: Form distinctive aesthetic education characteristics and cultural brands. This model will effectively integrate campus aesthetic education

resources, form a strong educational force, and create a unique campus aesthetic education culture. High quality student art clubs and works will become a beautiful "cultural card" for the school, enhancing its social reputation and cultural influence.

- Social services: enhancing the radiation and leadership ability of culture. The aesthetic education practice base can be open to communities and primary and secondary schools, holding public welfare art popularization activities and experiential courses, making universities a radiation source and leader of regional culture and art, fulfilling their functions of serving society and spreading civilization.

4.2 *Implementation Path Suggestions*

The implementation of this model should adopt a strategy of "overall planning, step-by-step implementation, pilot first, and continuous improvement".

- Phase One: Top-level Design and Resource Activation. The schools should establish a school-level leadership structure and complete the overall planning of the model, conduct a comprehensive inventory of the existing venues, facilities, faculty, and curriculum resources on campus, and carry out preliminary integration. Schools can select 1-2 art categories with good foundations as pilot projects, initiate core curriculum reform and the construction of the first batch of workshops.
- Phase Two: Platform Construction and Mechanism Improvement. According to the plan, the schools should upgrade and transform the physical space, and simultaneously build an online virtual platform. The schools can preliminarily establish core mechanisms such as cross-departmental collaboration, resource integration, and evaluation incentives, and then expand the pilot scope and form a batch of branded courses and activities.
- Phase Three: Comprehensive Promotion and Brand Building. The schools should promote mature models and experiences throughout the campus to achieve full coverage of public art courses for all students, continuously optimize the operating mechanism and deepen cooperation with social resources, and summarize the achievements of the system, form a replicable and promotable "model"

for university aesthetic education, and strengthen publicity to shape the brand.

5. CONCLUSION

At present, it is a key link in implementing the "all-round education" and cultivating new talents of the times. Its core value lies in shaping a sound personality, stimulating innovative thinking, and inheriting national culture. Faced with the current difficulties in concepts, practices, resources, and mechanisms, there is an urgent need for systematic reform and innovation. The development model of the "curriculum - platform - mechanism" integrated aesthetic education practice base constructed in this article is led by multi-level modular public art courses, supported by a practical platform that integrates reality and virtuality, and guaranteed by a long-term mechanism of collaborative linkage, achieving the transformation of aesthetic education from scattered to systematic, and from theoretical to practical. This model, through curriculum foundation building, platform empowerment, and mechanism protection, not only effectively solves the core problems of current aesthetic education practice, but also promotes the collaborative improvement of students' aesthetic literacy, innovation ability, and humanistic spirit, helping schools form characteristic aesthetic education brands and expand social and cultural service functions. In the future, it is necessary to promote the continuous improvement of this model through step-by-step implementation and continuous optimization, providing a replicable and promotable practical path for the high-quality development of aesthetic education in universities, and highlighting the unique value of aesthetic education in cultivating morality and talents.

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