

Cultivation of Students' Ability of Creative Thinking in Basic Course Teaching of Art and Design

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Abstract—To achieve the objective of making students have systematic, flexible and active artistic thought and technical system, we must change the educational concept of basic course teaching of art and design, improve teaching methods and reform basic courses, carry out the training of imagination and creativity to cultivate students' creative ability and professional quality, so that we achieve the cultivation of high-quality talents of art and design.

Keywords—art and design; basic course; creative thinking; ability

I. INTRODUCTION

Institutions of art and design should cultivate talents with the ability of creative thinking. Mattias, the famous educator of design in Germany, says, "We must believe creativity, because creativity is the only unrestricted power." The objective of basic course in art and design major is to cultivate students' creative ability and professional quality. It is not only to train students' professional skills of the subject that students' learn, but also basically cultivate students' pioneering and creative spirit and let them form systematic, flexible and active artistic thought and technical system.

II. MISUNDERSTANDING OF TRADITIONAL BASIC COURSES EDUCATION OF ART AND DESIGN IN OUR COUNTRY

A. *Misunderstanding of Curriculum Provision*

The three components in basic design courses once brought vitality to the Chinese educational world of design. The design basic course is once regarded as indispensable important basic course in design education. So far, it has been listed as important course in the majority of specialized institutions of design. But the traditional three components are too dogmatic. Although there are many rules and principles of formal beauty, some teachers teach through specific compositions and wrongly equate design and formal beauty in some aspects. The core of going against design is the original intention of creation. If it is dogmatic and the teacher cannot teach creatively, it can not cultivate students' creative ability, but develop students' habits of seeking quick success and instant benefits. Then the assignments done by them are sameness without any originality. No matter on depth or breadth, it is in the preliminary elementary stage of modeling and has little relationship with design and cannot reach the level required by

designers. The contents of teaching materials are also backward without clear teaching level.

B. *Misunderstanding of Teaching Idea and Teaching Method*

The traditional basic course education of art and design in our country almost completely follows the methods of foreigners. People follow the same kind of teaching method and idea all over the country. It not only blots out students' individuality, excellent quality and creative ability, but also denies teachers' teaching characteristics. On students' drawing boards, there is only pencil sketch. They completely give up the free, self-conscious, active, expressive way of creation of Chinese traditional painting and calligraphy, sculpture and folk art.

C. *The Concrete Expression of Weakness of Traditional Basic Design Courses Teaching in Learning of Students in Design Major*

Most of the conceptions in people's mind for the basic teaching in art and design major are basic trainings, and the main lines throughout it include form training, color matching training and training of expression methods. It doesn't open the distance of basic courses between art and design major and the major of drawing, and disconnects with the teaching system of professional learning in the later two years. Students generally reflect that the professional basic course has little function, so the basic teaching is also ignored and the class hours are reduced. In many schools, they only provide one month for the learning of basic course. Students have weak foundation of painting and poor modeling ability. Before entering colleges, some students only receive several months of training. In this short period of time, it is a little difficult to train their modeling abilities, stimulate their creative thinking to lay solid foundations for the artistic designing in the future. Besides, at present, we face the problems that most of the specialized basic course teaching in the department of art belongs to traditional model from the form to the content with out clear teaching objectives; and the researches on basic design courses are not systematic enough.

III. REFORM THE BASIC COURSE EDUCATION OF ART AND DESIGN, CULTIVATE STUDENTS' ABILITY OF CREATIVE THINKING

A. *Change Educational Concept*

The open society and active academic thoughts take us in the great atmosphere of renewal, collision and thinking of ideas. Different from other fields, the art and art design are decided by characteristics of their own and the development history. It seems that they have the nature of renewal of ideas. In art design, the cultivation of imagination and creativity is of vital importance. If designers want to design a product, first of all, they must have creative imagination. After the original impulsion in imagination puts forward problems, it accompanies the idea about how to solve problems. "Innovation of imagination is the motive force of sustainable development of human society." As students of design major, they should continuous train their creative thinking when they begin to learn this major.

B. *Improve Teaching Methods*

From the perspective of innovation, students often create works that go against conventional views. It needs us to analyze and pay close attention from objective factor and subjective factor. American psychologist Rogers thinks that the psychological safety and freedom are general conditions that help to exert the creativity. It is one of the most important factors to promote psychological safety by praising individuals. In teaching, teachers should create relaxed environment, encourage and strengthen students' originality without blaming and ridiculing students. External reward and encouragement can strengthen the consciousness of innovation. For most students, in the process of creation and appreciation, after making achievements in creating or understanding works, they will have a sense of joy or feeling of success of self-actualization. Therefore, for the basic course education of art and design, on one hand, teachers should see students' special talent and let them have the space of representation and get due encouragement and evaluation; on the other hand, teachers should focus on the overall situation, and give proper task difficulty, predict the success rate, aesthetic and practical values of tasks, let students fully experience the feeling of success and the joy brought by the form and utility of tasks, stimulate their desires for creation and develop the habit of innovation. In the early 20th century, Gropius, the creator of Bauhaus teaching system in Germany, was the pioneer of creative education. So far, the teaching methods still have reference significance for us. In basic training course, his teaching thoughts that he only gives students materials without any tool, explanation and method, prompts them to think independently, guides them to explore new channels and exert imagination power, trains students' abilities in independently analyzing and solving problems deserve deep introspection of conservative educators who get used to the teacher-centered imitative teaching that follows others blindly.

C. *Reform Basic Courses of Modeling*

In terms of the present professional basic courses opened in art and design discipline, most of them pay attention to the

cultivation of basic skills, such as three components, pattern, decorative painting, and photography, super realistic writing, spray painting techniques and the training of other skills. These courses obviously can broaden the scope of the major, but are less useful for the cultivation of students' creative thinking. They must be reformed.

First of all, we should break the limitation of sketch and anew recognize the objectives and significance of teaching of design sketch, aim at training basic skills required by excellent designers and advocate and exert students' initiative and creativity. The teaching objective of design sketch is to train students' cognition for formal beauty and their abilities in expressing imaginary forms, instead of focusing on the question about how to truly express visual forms emphasized in traditional fine arts teaching. In terms of the objects expressed by it, on one hand, it relates to relevant design forms for the convenience of learning the design idea and innovative connotation; on the other hand, it relates to virtual forms and imaginary forms for the convenience of improving the ability of thinking and exploring the design sketch in real sense. In the sketch training, they should break all rules and restrictions of tool, posture and manifestation mode and integrate basic training and the cultivation of creativity. The specific training includes the following aspects:

1) *Combination training*: Firstly, we use simple objects with linear features such as matchsticks as the elements and form them into small composition or art form after arrangement and assembly to train students' cognition for formal beauty; secondly, we use cuboid and cube as basic elements and create new art form after arrangement and assembly to adjust according to different professional direction. For example, when students of environmental art design major create art forms, they can focus on the modeling of forms such as furniture, sculpture and building; students of advertisement design and visual artistic conveyance major can place emphasis on the modeling rule of graphic design and grasp the characteristics of the rule of formal beauty; thirdly, we deconstruct the chair and anew assemble it. All elements are from the chair and in this way, it has certain limiting condition. It also conforms to the characteristics of design with certain restricted conditions.

2) *Special topic training*: According to the arrangement of teaching hours, choose corresponding special topic training. Here, I introduce the special topics of nail and apple. The combination of these two special topics and graphic creativity is to train students' ability in analyzing things, expressing the characteristics of objects, divergent thinking ability and imagination power.

The special topic of nail can be divided into three parts. The first part is the object with characteristics of the nail. Analyze the structure and kind of nail to summarize the psychological feelings brought by nail: pointed, prickly and hard; associate and imagine based on the three words, freehand sketch objects with the three characteristics; this part must have the limitation of quantity to train students' divergent thinking and cultivate their imagination. The second part is the distortion and damage of the nail. Under the premise of keeping characteristics of the nail, through imitating the

property and way of changing of other materials, change the essential attributes of objects and create new forms with great visual sensory impact to train students' ability in expressing characteristics of things. The third part is the creative design of the nail. According to the previous training, through replacement and combination, use elements of the nail to make creative modeling to cultivate students' creative ability.

The training of special topic of apple can be divided into four parts. The first part is the replacement of materials on the surface of the apple. Keep the shape of the apple remaining unchanged, replace the materials on the surface of the apple with other materials, and pay attention to characteristics of each material and the texture. The second part is the isomorphic apple with different shadows. This part is the originality of the shadow of apple. Through association and imagination of the apple, extend the implied meaning of apple to produce corresponding originality. The third part is the deconstruction and reconstruction of the apple. Analyze the structure of the apple, draw the outer contour line, and replace with other objects that have linear features to achieve visual impact. The fourth part is the cutting and restructuring of the apple. This part pays attention to inspecting students' imagination power and expressive ability of three-dimensional space. It goes especially well with students of environmental art design major. Through imaging the shape of apple after cutting, use the way of freehand sketching to manifest. It can not only cultivate students' spatial imagination ability but also improve their modeling ability.

D. Reform the Course of Components

Although the three components in basic courses of design have many rules and principles of formal beauty, in practical teaching, they are excessively dogmatic and wrongly equate design and formal beauty in some aspects. The core of going against design is the original intention of creation. If it is dogmatic and the teacher cannot teach creatively, it can not cultivate students' creative ability, but develop students' habits of seeking quick success and instant benefits. Then the assignments done by them are sameness without any originality. So what should we do?

1) The practice of association in imitating the nature: There are ever-changing forms in the nature. Everyone has different understanding for the change. The associations produced by this are also different. It needs the ability to catch these changes and the accumulation of knowledge and experience, which can be improved through continuous training. In specific implementation process, first of all, it is necessary to guide students to find their characteristics, including the difference and general character between them and other objects, and the conditions similar to the characteristics of objects that emerge in our mind. When we find it conforms to some memories in our mind, the inspiration of creation will be activated and new objects will be created in our imagination. These objects brought by elicitation method must be accompanied with certain properties of the original objects. In reality, many products in our life are produced in this way, such as the snakelike walk stick, the kettle in the form of cat and cars in the form of beetle, etc. Secondary, it is necessary to let students inspect and learn from the computer

animation made by high-tech means to expand students' imaginary space, increase their knowledge reserves and mental culture and lay necessary ideological foundation for the improvement of students' imagination and creativity.

2) Form transformation practice: Form transformation practice bases on drawing from natural forms. Firstly, absorbedly perceive the image with aesthetics in the nature from many perspectives and excavate the form and characteristics of beauty from the presentation of the object; secondly, through drawing from nature, understand and grasp appearance, texture, structure and internal characteristics of objects from different viewpoints; finally on the basis of drawing, simplify and summarize to highlight and strengthen the parts in major expression, boldly delete and abandon the secondary parts; after the summary, extend it into a pattern of manifestation of a symbol. For example, we can get marking figure through adding text and forms that serve as the foil; we can also get marking figure through grouping treatment for abstract forms. This practice can increase people's feeling and imagination of the form and structure through observing and drawing natural forms, and make them experience the processes from representational modeling to abstract modeling, from drawing to design, improve students' ability to summarize, conclude and abstract the modeling. One of the objectives of this practice is to excavate students' creative quality, which is the natural quality of everyone without the need of learning or training and has no relationship with the knowledge of people. Another objective is to train external imagination and creativity, which are formed in the process of people's growth. The development of these abilities must experience active learning, training and exploitation. In this training, students have different works and ideas and their imaginary space gets developed.

The traditional teaching of color is to use color to achieve the shape of forms on drawing boards and mainly solve problems such as its texture, feeling of quantity, and sense of space, while the color basis required by designers is to understand how to use color to create effect and atmosphere instead of shaping forms. Therefore, our color basis course should focus on cultivating students' cognition for aesthetic perception of color and the expression of the atmosphere of color. In teaching, the teacher should start from understanding and getting familiar with the color, at the same time, base on scientific principle of color to assist and improve people's ability to perceive color, expand the vision of expressing various properties, characteristics and matching of color, comprehensively analyze visual effect, psychological feelings and mental and emotional responses brought by color for people in multiple aspects and perspectives. Meanwhile, the teacher inspects the function of color from the viewpoint of aesthetics and comprehensively improves students' all-around understanding and expressive ability of color and finally lets them become master-hands to freely control colors.

Meanwhile, they establish teaching system of discipline from the shadow to the deep, from the low to the high and from technology to the feeling, break the previous conventional teaching methods, combine plane composition, color composition and three-dimensional composition with relevant space composition, texture composition and the

composition of light to realize open and free teaching. The teacher lets students find from the wide range of natural forms and artificial forms, understand their secrets and rules, look for original form language and means of modeling, make efforts to avoid familiar forms and manifestation mode and gradually understand the nature of design. In consideration of the insufficient class hour and overmuch contents in specific process of teaching, the teacher use the teaching tools of computer aided design to complete a lot of practices in a relatively short period of time to the objectives of exploiting the conception and enriching the feeling of modeling.

IV. CONCLUSION

To sum up, modern society needs creative talents. We should make our teaching obey this general principle to energetically develop students' ability of creative thinking and cultivate high-quality talents of art and design. In basic course teaching, the teacher should help students to carry out the transformation from exam-oriented education to professional learning in colleges to lay solid foundation for the learning of professional courses in the future, pay attention to the cultivation of students' aesthetic judgment and ability of creative thinking, make breakthrough and creation on teaching methods and teaching contents and walk in the forefront of the times.

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