

# RESEARCH ON NEW HORIZONS OF ART HISTORY TEACHING UNDER THE BACKGROUND OF EPIDEMIC PREVENTION AND CONTROL

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In the context of the normalization of epidemic prevention and control, this paper studies the exploration of new horizons in the overall education model of China's higher education based on the basic theory of art history. Based on the analysis of the teaching situation of art history in colleges and universities at home and abroad under the background of the epidemic, based on the advantages, necessity and existing problems of the current teaching of art history, the reform and construction of the teaching mode of art history are carried out with the four parts of «goal – content – scheme – evaluation» as the starting point, and the advantages and opportunities of the internationalization of higher education are analyzed based on art history theory. Through the joint cooperation of «teachers, students and school authorities», a new education system should be developed, the assessment method should be improved, the key position of art history theory in theoretical courses should be strengthened, the teaching method should be gradually optimized, and the training of high-quality innovative talents should be promoted with the goal of national policies.

*Keywords:* normalizing epidemic prevention and control, art history theory, teaching horizon, new development, teaching research.

## 1. Relevant concepts and theoretical explanations

### 1.1. What is art history theory

As a major that can be studied in China's higher education, art history mainly includes basic theoretical courses such as «Art history», «Introduction to Design», «History of design», «History of Arts and Crafts» and «History of Aesthetics», which is a basic course of design majors in art colleges [1]. The teaching of art history theory imparts theoretical knowledge to students through systematic and scientific logical series and vein combing, so as to achieve the purpose of improving students' overall design and aesthetic ability on the basis of theory, and using theory as a wall to consolidate professional level. At present, many colleges and universities have taken art history theory as a compulsory subject for undergraduates and master students of design major, and have added art history theory to the examination subjects of high-quality talents enrollment, so the importance of art history theory in design education is self-evident. For students who graduate from the major of art history theory, the range of employment is also open with the importance of national education to this subject: from art appreciation and art criticism to magazine editing and art history theory specialized education, the range is extremely wide.

With the advocacy and support of national education, the connotation of art history course has been continuously enriched, gradually developing from a single rigid theoretical exposition and explanation to a vivid and flexible knowledge expansion. For example, the content of art history is no longer only related to «art history», «design history» and other historical courses. Related disciplines such as sociology, semiotics, ethics and other contents are supplemented; The

theoretical content of different parts can also be interspersed: During the same period, the design movements carried out by different countries were very different, and the design styles displayed by different countries in the same design movement also had their own characteristics. The juxtapose-comparison of these contents can not only help students better understand the course of history, but also enrich the meaning and expand the breadth of the course of Art history. Better realization and improvement of students' design practice ability from multiple perspectives will be implemented.

### *1.2. Overview of art history teaching in universities at home and abroad under the background of epidemic*

In early 2020, the outbreak of the novel coronavirus put countries on alert. Restaurants, shopping malls, companies, schools and other crowded public places adopt closed management methods such as work stoppage, school suspension and business suspension to reduce the negative impact of the rapid spread of the epidemic as much as possible, but all these have undoubtedly had a huge impact on the development of various fields, and one of the most representative is the field of education. The introduction of the suspension policy means that offline teaching will be temporarily replaced by online teaching. However, the function of online teaching is not perfect, the mechanism is not mature, and the problem of online students' self-discipline is an arduous challenge for education and teaching in the world. In the face of the epidemic, after the Ministry of Education issued the Notice on the postponement of the opening of the 2020 Spring Semester, it also proposed to make full use of the network platform to carry out the requirement of «suspending classes without suspending schools» to ensure that teaching work can still be carried out normally [2]; The situation abroad is no better, with most countries around the world suspending and closing educational facilities within their own countries in response to the spread of the virus. According to the statistics of UNESCO, the epidemic has affected the teaching and life of at least 63 million primary and secondary school teachers [3], which has not only greatly reduced the quality of education for students, but also greatly hindered the training of excellent teachers to some extent.

Under this severe background, the transformation of offline teaching to online teaching has promoted the course of art history from book to digital. Online education platforms such as «Learning», «Super Star Erya», «China University MOOC» have opened courses, providing students with compulsory courses in their daily studies at the same time, but also adding many extra-curricular courses, so that students can still read knowledge although closed at home, so that learning time can be maximized. Driven by the digitization of various courses, the digitalization of art history teaching has increased many advantages that offline teaching does not have, such as: Online tour of VR museum allows students to stay at home but can feel the influence of cultural relics at close range, a large number of pictures and videos in the Internet knowledge base can promote students to better understand the theoretical courses, the classroom set up live

playback, for students to review the course content repeatedly.

### *1.3. Problems existing in the teaching of art history theory in colleges and universities at home and abroad*

As an important theoretical course in art colleges and universities, the teaching of art history theory plays an important role in students' education. However, because the teaching methods and models of history theory in colleges and universities at home and abroad are too traditional and rigid, they can not meet the rapid development of education, so a series of problems need to be solved. It can be summarized from three aspects: the teaching process is less interactive, the content definition is too rigid, and the evaluation method is not flexible enough.

First, in the teaching process of art history theory, teachers focus on explaining the theoretical content and neglect the positive interaction with students. In daily offline classes, most teachers use textbooks and ppt-slides to explain the content of books, but ignore the real-time learning feedback of students. Too boring traditional way of telling weakens students' enthusiasm for learning and reduces the effective interaction between teachers and students. The teacher has not received the feedback and questions from the students, and can not continue to carry out the course teaching method suitable for the students; The lack of communication between students and teachers will lead to a lack of understanding of the curriculum, and can not form a virtuous learning cycle. Second, the definition of a certain chapter in the course is too dependent on the content of the book, and the lack of vivid content expansion to facilitate students to better understand. Some teachers put too much emphasis on the theoretical content in the book when teaching the history theory course, in order to fully make the students learn the content in the textbook. However, some difficult and difficult fragments need to be optimized and expanded with relevant content outside the book, without proper interaction and practice, but simply intended to teach the content of the book, otherwise, students will not know what the general content of the chapter in the book is explained, and what the key parts need to be understood. Thirdly, the assessment and evaluation methods after the conclusion of art history courses fail to comprehensively examine students' understanding of theoretical courses from multiple angles, which leads to the assessment results can not fully reflect students' learning situation. In some colleges and universities, the evaluation method of art history course is limited to answering the test paper, but it does not really check whether the students have fully mastered the important knowledge points of history theory. Too arbitrary, not comprehensive assessment method will make students have a perfunctory psychology, «score» as the first, but can not fully understand the connotation of art history; A single evaluation system will easily make students lose their interest and enthusiasm in the subject, and students with real ability will get bad evaluation results in the assessment because their scores are not high enough.

The negative influence caused by the existing problems in the teaching of art history has hindered the development of the overall education quality of art

history. The only way to accelerate the construction of a new education model of art history is to make students and teachers understand what they are learning

Only by teaching the necessity and importance of art history can we effectively solve the problem and consolidate the key position of art history theory in art design curriculum in the world.

#### *1.4. An analysis of the advantages and necessity of art history education*

As the basic theory course of design course, art history course plays an important role in building the basic professional knowledge foundation of students and helping students understand the overall style of art history. Learning art history theory is not only a good foundation for art ability, but also an excellent way to improve their own quality and design level, to help students establish a correct knowledge framework, and then better enhance practical ability.

Most of the students in the art school have the advantages of strong professional ability and high practical ability, but their theoretical knowledge is very weak. They do not have a thorough understanding of basic theoretical knowledge or even do not understand it. However, professional ability without the support of theoretical structure is unstable. Art history theory is a summary and collection of the style characteristics of different art majors in different periods, the social events that caused major changes in their style characteristics and the root causes of different styles, covering a large amount of knowledge and academic theories related to the major. Understanding different styles from ancient times to the present will enhance students' knowledge and enhance their aesthetic and design abilities. Taking time as context is convenient for students to organize their memory better; Lively and interesting social and historical events are interspersed in it to make the learning process not boring and strengthen the memory point. On this basis, students will continue to learn the theoretical knowledge and practice integration, with theory to assist practice, with practice to verify the theory, complement each other, complement each other.

Art history theory not only has the advantage of cooperating with students to strengthen their design ability, but also can help students establish correct values and personal aesthetics as a theoretical course. In different historical chapters, students are conceptually shaped by different social and historical events, which have warning significance or educational color. In addition, a correct understanding of different styles and their formation reasons at different time points in history courses can also help students find their own aesthetic style and design direction more quickly, and thus accelerate the formation of design ideas with their own characteristics.

#### *2. Construction of teaching reform mode of art history under the background of epidemic*

##### *2.1. Objective: To strengthen the international perspective of student education*

The Outline of the National Medium – and Long-term Education Reform and Development Plan (2010–2020) clearly proposes to carry out multi-level and

wide-ranging educational exchanges and cooperation, and improve the internationalization level of China's graduate education [4]. Internationalization education is one of the core topics of higher education research and practice in the world, and internationalization has become an important basis and driving force for deepening the reform of higher education in various countries [5]. Promoting China's education internationalization and globalization has become an important direction to enhance the overall ability of higher education students and promote the development of high-quality talents in all aspects.

First of all, with the rapid development of the world economy, the field of globalization continues to expand, and the education of various countries is also tending to internationalization. Students may be exposed to knowledge and interaction from all over the world, and educational resources are constantly in line with international standards. In this context, to strengthen the international perspective of students' education, with the goal of cultivating students' international awareness and practical ability that can be developed internationally and improved through interaction and competition with students from other countries, and strengthen theoretical teaching, especially basic courses such as art history, as the carrier. Accelerate the development of talents with more ability and level through the trend of globalization of higher education. Secondly, in the context of the epidemic, educational resources are gradually integrated with digitalization and networking, and it will become easier to break the barriers of space, international and cultural communication and interaction between education. For Chinese students, in the course of theoretical study, they can learn more knowledge beyond books through the Internet, and even watch online exhibitions and listen to online lectures in real time through digital media or VR virtual reality and other advanced scientific and technological media, so as to gain more access to rich international educational resources, expand their horizons and improve their professional quality. In the general trend, accelerating the cultivation of students' international thinking and broadening students' international vision is not only necessary for the situation, but also inevitable for The Times. Finally, art history theory, as a collection of theories covering the development process of different art categories in the world, is rich in content and is not limited to one country. Strengthening the study and understanding of art history theory is one of the ways to train talents in higher education in China to internationalization and strengthen the deep understanding of culture in other countries. In other words, in the current tide of globalization of higher education, the establishment of the goal of strengthening international vision also promotes students' understanding of basic theoretical courses such as art history theory and their enthusiasm for learning, which makes theoretical teaching easier and lays a solid foundation for the improvement and leap of practical ability.

## *2.2. Content: Expand international online resources based on art history theory*

In the trend of internationalization and globalization of higher education,

the teaching quality of art history will be improved in all aspects in this process. These improvements not only include the enhancement of the faculty, the expansion of the scope of practical interaction, but also the breadth of the content. On the basis of art history theory, expanding the breadth of international online resources, opening more international online education platforms, and forming a systematic and mature international art history education system will further promote the development of cooperative higher education, contribute to the cultivation of fully developed high-ability teachers and student reserves, and accelerate the implementation of the «education power» policy.

For art colleges and universities, international online education is an opportunity to improve students' practical ability and overall quality. Take the basic course of Art History as an example: the content of art history covers a wide range of topics, from prehistoric art to industrial revolution, from classical art to modern design style, from elegant and practical English and French to form-based fast food marketing in the United States, from ancient Chinese design to luxury and luxury foreign design... In the traditional education model, the part of art history about foreign countries only stays in the text in the book and the pictures and videos in the .ppt, and students cannot personally feel and fully understand this part of content. With the gradual opening of the international online education platform, students from different countries can break the space barrier, carry out cultural communication and knowledge interaction, share and explain the history of their own countries, and help each other better understand the history courses of different countries. Teachers can also communicate with each other online, share educational methods, and learn advanced models. On the basis of interaction, students will get away from the boring books and words, and the teacher will understand the theoretical courses in a more vivid and flexible way. The communication and sharing between students and teachers, on the other hand, also adds more content to online education resources, so that the breadth and innovation of online education have been greatly developed.

### *2.3. Scheme: Build a comprehensive art history teaching scheme online and offline*

On March 29, at the press conference of the Ministry of Education, Wu Yan, Director of the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education, introduced that the national intelligent education platform for higher education was launched on March 28, after the large-scale online teaching in the national colleges and universities through the epidemic stage, and now all have realized the one-click switch of online and offline teaching [6]. Two years have passed since the Ministry of Education issued the Notice on the postponement of the opening of the Spring Semester of 2020 and the policy of «no suspension of classes» [7]. In the past two years, with the continuous efforts and stability of the country, the education of colleges and universities has gradually adapted to the free switching between online and offline, and the learning mode of students and the education mode of teachers have also been developed and changed. Under the

current background, the teaching scheme of art history course should also be comprehensively optimized and systematically constructed to adapt to the ease of switching between online and offline platforms. The construction of a comprehensive and mature art history teaching program online and offline should be based on three steps: the combination of theory and practice in explanation, the combination of text and interaction in research, and the combination of process and result in assessment.

First, explain the combination of theory and practice. When teachers teach art history theory, they should pay attention

To develop students' practical ability, in different chapter modules, some activities related to the chapter can be organized to call on students to participate. Activities available for participation such as: a debate meeting on a historical event; Launch a work collection contest with a certain historical style as the theme. The works that can be collected can be design products, posters, micro films, photography, songs, dance performances, etc. The excellent works created by students according to the development style of the art in a certain period in the theory of art history will be collected and held for exhibition. Secondly, study the combination of Chinese characters and interaction. In the middle of the art history course, teachers usually assign research and research assignments for students to complete. However, due to the lack of interaction between students and between teachers and students, some assignments are only submitted by research reports or ppt reports, which results in students' learning needs not being met and their learning enthusiasm greatly decreased. In course research, students should be arranged to interact effectively with team members or teachers, such as visiting museums together, completing a work together and attaching research reports and design ideas, etc., so as to strengthen communication and sharing in the course and open up innovative inspiration in students' thinking. Finally, the process and results are combined in the assessment. Grades will no longer be the sole criterion for assessment, and the degree of understanding of art history will be assessed from multiple perspectives. Schools should develop different assessment methods according to the teaching methods and curriculum characteristics of art history. In addition to paper answers, the creation of works in the course and the excellence of group cooperation theme research will be included in the assessment. This method replaces the overly arbitrary judgment of students' understanding of the curriculum in the traditional assessment and provides teachers with a more comprehensive and clear perspective of students' learning.

*2.4. Evaluation: Establish a mature international evaluation guarantee system platform*

Against the background of the epidemic, the teaching of art history is constantly developing into the digital field. The history course with the help of digital media expands the content of the course and becomes easier to understand, so as to achieve the goal of improving students' overall design ability in a more flexible and rich form. The digital process of art history theory is also promoted

by the internationalization and globalization of higher education, and will also be understood and learned by more users. The 48th Statistical Report on the Development of the Internet in China released by the China Internet Network Information Center pointed out that as of June 2021, the number of online education users in China reached 3.25 million [8]. Online education has ushered in an unprecedented development opportunity in the era of the epidemic, but at the same time, the drawbacks have also emerged one by one. For example, the Internet has very low restrictions on self-discipline, the lack of offline education that can be developed by direct contact with students, and the high tolerance and convenience of the Internet have also led to problems such as plagiarism, plagiarism and other academic misconduct becoming easier to some extent. In order to solve the above disadvantages, countries are constantly opening more online education resources with more rigorous management, richer content and more vivid interaction, and gradually creating a mature and stable security system to promote the further optimization of online education and protect the basic rights and interests of users [9].

International evaluation is an important part of the internationalization of higher education. International evaluation not only provides goal orientation for high-quality talents to go international, but also promotes the common progress of global education cooperation in the world. Adding an international evaluation guarantee system platform can effectively solve problems such as low restrictions on students' self-discipline and frequent academic misconduct such as plagiarism in online education. Through the implementation of the establishment of different degree evaluation mechanisms, the establishment of international evaluation authorities, spot checks and blind reviews, and other measures, to maximize the protection of students' learning ability to meet the qualification standards, to ensure that the improvement of students' quality can be effectively carried out as well as management online.

### *3. Practice path of teaching reform of art history under the background of epidemic*

#### *3.1. Teachers develop teaching strategies*

The new model of art history teaching system under the epidemic situation should not only adapt to the offline environment, but also be compatible with the online platform.

As the instructor and guide of students' learning, teachers occupy the main position in teaching. Teachers should formulate appropriate teaching strategies for students themselves to promote their understanding of the course work.

First, students should be guided to interact and improve their enthusiasm while teaching the theory. In class, some entertainment activities related to art history can be held timely: for example, offline interpretation of sketches, vivid restoration of historical scenes, online debate contests, calling on students to discuss controversial social and historical events, such as: After explaining the artistic styles of a certain historical period, students can also be assigned



improvisation assignments, such as drawing paintings or products of Baroque style with simple lines and colors in class. In this way, students can deepen their understanding of the theory. Form vivid memory features in the student's mind. The second is to strengthen communication with students, timely understand and record students' doubts in class, solve students' contradictions in their studies, and promote interaction and sharing among students. In the traditional education mode, students mainly listen to the teacher's teaching, and the sense of participation is low, which easily leads to the low enthusiasm of students. In the new education model, teachers should give students some time to ask questions, and set more assignments or tasks that require group cooperation and student communication to complete, so as to improve students' sense of participation, on the one hand, strengthen students' teamwork ability, on the other hand, improve students' learning enthusiasm and understanding ability. Thirdly, teachers should formulate flexible assessment methods according to the characteristics and teaching methods of art history theory in the assessment of the final course. Art history theory as a theoretical course, simply from the book knowledge to examine students' understanding, it is easy for students to form formalistic bad habits, only for the sake of high grades and mechanical memorization of knowledge points, and do not really understand the content of the book. Only by comprehensively evaluating students' ability from multiple angles and formulating different assessment methods, can the assessment results be just and accurate.

### *3.2. Student evaluation of learning methods*

In the new education model of art history, students can also participate in the reform of learning methods and learning models as makers. Students can put forward their own opinions and ideas according to the new teaching strategy introduced by the teacher. After the teacher adopts and modifies it, they can enter the «trial period» and have a one-week experience of the teaching method developed by the teacher. After the experience, the teacher will hold a small assessment to check the students' understanding of art history theory in the new educational method. The students can also enter the evaluation system to evaluate the teaching method and put forward a new round of suggestions, which will be revised by the teacher. According to students' assessment results and suggestions, teaching methods that are not suitable for students will no longer be used, while teaching methods with good feedback from students will be put into teaching, and the best will be selected from the best. Different types of students show different states in learning, and the same educational method is not suitable for all students, which will easily lead to the fault between the assessment results of students, and even capable students cannot understand the learning content because of the old-fashioned and improper educational method. However, in the reformed teaching mode of art history theory, students will no longer passively accept the knowledge taught by teachers, but will change from passive to active, and can freely choose more suitable educational methods for themselves, so as to guide students to have a clearer understanding of their own learning situation, and thus continuously

strengthen their learning ability and promote the communication and interaction between teachers and students.

### *3.3. The school promotes communication between teachers and students*

As a link between teachers and students, colleges and universities not only provide places and resources for students to learn, but also undertake the important task of promoting effective communication and long-term development between teachers and students, and protecting the basic legitimate rights and interests of teachers and students. Colleges and universities should be the participants and supervisors of students' learning throughout the whole learning process. In each period when students finish the art history course homework, the school should urge students to fill in the homework schedule in time and submit it to the teacher at different periods such as the early stage, the middle stage and the late stage, and the teacher should make suggestions to the students according to the progress and guide the students to continue to complete the homework. In the learning process of students, schools are also obliged to help teachers track the learning situation of different students, sort out the theoretical outline, understand the feedback of students on theoretical knowledge, and remind teachers to change teaching methods according to the learning progress of students at any time, so as to guide students to lay a solid theoretical foundation and improve practical ability. The school can also organize regular teacher-student interaction activities, such as: teachers regularly hold lectures to answer questions for students; Carry out ice-breaking activities for teachers and students to narrow the distance between teachers and students; The teacher will lead the students to create the extension works related to the art history course to promote the benign and effective communication between teachers and students. Teachers will not only have a better understanding of students' own situation and learning situation through interaction, but also close the relationship between students and teachers, so that teachers can more easily grasp students' problems, deviations, mistakes in learning and solve them.

### *3.4. Implement the assessment and evaluation system*

The main purpose of curriculum evaluation is to understand students' mastery of the curriculum and provide basis for the continuous optimization of curriculum teaching [10]. However, the assessment system of art history theory in Chinese colleges and universities is not scientific and fair enough, and the assessment of the assessment results is too mechanical, and it is impossible to grasp the depth of students' understanding of the course. Strict and systematic evaluation system should be composed of flexible evaluation system and multi-directional evaluation results.

First of all, the investigation of art history theory should not be limited to the final course scores, but should be matched with the performance of work creation in the course and the theme research of group cooperation according to the score ratio. Excellent attitude is included in the assessment criteria. Vivid and flexible assessment of art history from multiple angles effectively cures the

perfunctory attitude of «formalism» among students to a certain extent, and focuses on cultivating high-level students' overall quality ability. Finally, the assessment results should be evaluated from various aspects, too mechanical and rigid, «one-size-fits-all» evaluation method can not reflect students' learning situation of art history thoroughly. From classroom performance, project cooperation, homework submission, final scores and other stages should be set up a complete evaluation criteria, from a multi-dimensional understanding of students' degree of history and the learning of the whole course should be systematically tracked and grasped. A fair assessment system is combined with a complete assessment system to integrate the learning process with the final result, and the intuitive and perfect learning results obtained will promote students to further optimize their own development.

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