Research on the Construction of a Course-based System for College Student Art Troupes: A Case Study of Shanxi Technology and Business College

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Abstract: This paper employs a case study approach, drawing from the experiences and achievements in curriculum development within the Shanxi Technology and Business College art troupe, to explore methods and strategies for the establishment of a curriculum-based system within college student art troupes. The development of a curriculum-based system for college student art troupes represents a significant initiative for universities to strengthen and enhance aesthetic education. It contributes to the improvement of students' aesthetic awareness and humanistic qualities while fostering well-rounded, highly qualified individuals. As one of the pioneering institutions in implementing curriculum-based art troupe development, the university plays a pivotal role in guiding and exemplifying the construction of curriculum systems within college student art troupes.

Keywords: Art troupe, Curriculum, Aesthetic education

1. Introduction

Currently, major universities have established college student art troupes open to all students, which are comprised of students currently enrolled in the university and operate at the university level. These existing art troupes encompass a diverse range of artistic disciplines, providing daily training and stage performances for students with various interests and talents. For instance, Tsinghua University's Student Art Troupe consists of twelve teams, including brass bands, symphony orchestras, ethnic orchestras, keyboard ensembles, choirs, dance teams, drama teams, Peking Opera teams, folk art teams, international standard dance teams, art societies, and photography teams, with over 1,200 members. [1]Tsinghua University's Art Troupe has been invited multiple times to represent the university in cultural exchanges with countries such as Greece, the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and others. This demonstrates that college student art troupes represent the highest level of artistic troupes within their respective universities.

In 2015, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Comprehensive Strengthening and Improvement of School Aesthetic Education Work," proposing the curriculum-based management of aesthetic education practice activities. It emphasized that "aesthetic education practice activities are an important part of school aesthetic education curriculum and should be included in the teaching plan, implementing curriculum-based management." In 2020, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Comprehensive Strengthening and Improvement of Aesthetic Education Work in Schools in the New Era," which clearly stated that "in higher education, public art courses and artistic practices should be incorporated into the school's talent cultivation program, implemented under a credit system, and students must complete two credits of public art courses to graduate."[2]

The urgency of constructing a curriculum system for university student art troupes is evident, as many universities have integrated university student art troupes into their talent cultivation systems as art practice courses, subject to credit-based management. However, during the construction of the curriculum system for art troupes, issues such as a lack of understanding of macro policies, unclear construction strategies, and ineffective specific measures have arisen. This paper takes Shanxi Technology and Business College Art Troupe as an example to conduct an in-depth study of the construction of a curriculum-based system for university student art troupes.

2. Literature Review

As art education gradually gains prominence in various major universities, college student art troupes, as an effective avenue for artistic practice, have begun to emerge in these institutions. Scholars have highlighted a series of issues currently facing college student art troupes and have proposed solutions to further their development.

In his 2014 work, "Operational Models for the Sustainable Development of Non-Art Major College Student Art Troupes," Xiaoyou Xing pointed out multiple issues within the art troupe at Dali University, including guiding principles, management systems, artistic faculty, and student qualities. Guibin, in his 2017 publication "Exploration of the Establishment of College Student Art Troupes," argued that there is insufficient implementation in core content,

institutional construction, and foundational support within contemporary art troupes. Weiqidan, in 2018, in "Ideas for the Construction and Management of College Art Troupes – A Perspective from Non-Art Major Universities," identified issues in art troupes in non-art major universities related to leadership attention, management mechanisms, student qualities, resource integration, and faculty deployment. Liang Qingdong, in his 2016 work "A Brief Discussion on the Construction and Management of College Student Art Troupes in Regular Higher Education Institutions," focused on proposing solutions. He addressed urgent issues in the construction and management of college student art troupes by exploring aspects such as the innovation of artistic works, innovation in practice platforms, faculty team configuration, student enthusiasm, and hardware facilities, presenting effective measures and viewpoints.

Furthermore, some literature has discussed the impact of college student art troupes on students' aesthetic literacy. Xing Yuning, in her 2016 work "An Overview of the Current Situation of College Student Art Troupes in Ordinary Chinese Universities," emphasized the significant role of art troupes as an integral component of aesthetic education in the implementation of quality education and campus cultural development in universities. Wang Rui, in 2018, in "An Initial Exploration of Basic Assurance Issues in College Art Troupe Construction – Unleashing the Blossom of Art in a New Era," argued that art troupes can effectively promote students' comprehensive development and enhance their aesthetics, emotions, interests, temperament, and horizons. Zhu Yan, in her 2018 publication "College Art Troupe Aesthetic Education in the Perspective of General Education," discussed how art troupes, through the refinement of artistic beauty, contribute to nurturing students' comprehensive qualities, appreciation abilities, and creative capacities.

Regarding research methodologies, some scholars have employed case studies. For instance, Wu Yibo, in "Transformation and Development of University Student Art Societies in the Perspective of New Era Aesthetic Education," used Shanghai Jiao Tong University's art troupe as a case study to analyze a series of innovative mechanisms in aesthetic education implemented by the troupe. Zhang Xiaodong, in "Analysis of the Current Development and Management Innovation of University Student Art Troupes," took East China University of Science and Technology's art troupe as a case study and conducted an in-depth exploration of the troupe's future development direction.

In conclusion, this paper focuses on Shanxi Technology and Business College as the research subject. Building upon the research of the aforementioned scholars, it aims to fill gaps in the study of strategies for curriculum development within university art troupes. The objective is to provide valuable insights for the curriculum development of college student art troupes and pave the way for their future development.

3. Significance of the Curriculum-based System Construction for Art Troupes

(1) Implementation of University Aesthetic Education Policy Requirements

Aesthetic education aims to enable learners to accumulate aesthetic experiences, cultivate a sense of beauty, and develop the ability to appreciate beauty through educational means. There are various approaches to conducting aesthetic education in universities, including classroom-based aesthetic education, campus cultural aesthetic education, and lifestyle aesthetic education, all of which contribute to the cultivation of aesthetic sensibilities, refinement, and the fostering of an appreciation for beauty. Among these approaches, the curriculum serves as the primary channel for implementing aesthetic education within educational institutions. Higher education received by university students is predominantly delivered through classroom teaching. Incorporating the training and practice of university student art troupes into art practice courses, integrating them into the talent cultivation system, and managing them under a credit-based system can further enhance classroom-based aesthetic education, thereby advancing the development of aesthetic education in universities.

Aesthetic education encompasses not only artistic beauty but also natural beauty, scientific beauty, social beauty, and more. However, art, as a concentrated manifestation of beauty, is the most effective avenue for aesthetic education. As mentioned by Zhang Lixin in "The Inherent Relationship between Art Education and Comprehensive Human Development," [3]art education, serving as the primary channel for aesthetic education, is an indispensable nourishment in higher education and plays a significant role in the comprehensive development of individuals.In response to the requirements outlined in the 2015 State Council General Office document titled "Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Comprehensive Aesthetic Education in Schools," by 2018, major universities had already introduced a comprehensive set of eight elective courses primarily focused on art appreciation. However, the full implementation of elective courses in various categories such as art practice, art history and theory, art criticism, and others as stipulated in the document had not been realized. This resulted in appreciation-based courses becoming the primary mode of curriculum-based aesthetic education in universities.

The curriculum-based construction of university student art troupes is a necessary supplement to aesthetic education courses. Tsinghua University, following the principles of aesthetic education, has designed four types of art courses: cognitive courses, art appreciation courses, art practice courses, and research-oriented courses. While art appreciation courses can enhance students' aesthetic cognitive abilities, they are confronted with a significant deficiency in terms of aesthetic practice. Therefore, the curriculum-based construction of art troupes serves as a necessary complement to art practice courses.

Aesthetic education in higher education has become a crucial indicator for assessing the quality of university education and is included in the assessment criteria for undergraduate teaching and the effectiveness evaluation of the "Double First-Class" initiative. Offering a comprehensive and diverse range of high-quality aesthetic education courses is of paramount

importance to the impact of university aesthetic education. The importance of curriculum-based construction for art troupes is increasingly evident in this context.

(2) Achieving the Standardized Long-Term Development of Art Troupes

The implementation of curriculum-based management for art troupes necessitates the appointment of professional guiding instructors, thus imposing stricter requirements on their qualifications and titles. The selection of guiding instructors for art troupes should make full use of both internal and external academic resources to assemble a professional teaching team. Instructors are expected to possess systematic learning experiences in a specific artistic discipline, along with rich teaching and practical experiences. They should provide more assistance and guidance to students in imparting foundational artistic knowledge and training artistic skills, leading to a significant improvement in training outcomes.

Curriculum-based management of art troupes demands adequate material support. The practical nature of art troupe courses implies the need for equipment and facilities suitable for daily teaching. For instance, calligraphy troupes require brushes, rice paper, ink, felt, and mounting materials for their routine activities and exhibitions. Dance troupes have specific venue requirements, including smooth wooden floors for fundamental movements and mirrors for dance practice. Hence, standard classrooms are inadequate to meet the requirements of art troupe courses. To effectively conduct art troupe practice courses, it is essential to ensure comprehensive material support.

Curriculum-based management of art troupes increases the attention of both teachers and students. Despite having specific management regulations, art troupes often face challenges associated with loose management. Conflicts in scheduling between art troupe activities and student union events, club activities, or even mandatory courses can lead students to abandon art troupe training and performances, posing significant management difficulties for art troupes. With the implementation of curriculum-based management for art troupes, student attendance is subject to specified assessments, and it has a certain impact on their overall performance and academic performance. This heightened awareness among teachers and students enhances their commitment to art troupe activities and compliance with art troupe regulations.

Professional guiding instructors, sufficient material support, and the heightened attention of teachers and students can positively influence the standardized long-term development of art troupes.

(3) Cultivating Well-Rounded Modern Talents

Cai Yuanpei believed that "education ultimately aims to cultivate individuals with sound character and comprehensive qualities. The educational policy advocates simultaneous development in morality, intelligence, physique, aesthetics, and labor." [4]This approach breaks away from the long-standing emphasis on intellectual education and the use of a single exam score as the sole measure of student performance. The curriculum-based construction of university student art troupes is an essential avenue for achieving aesthetic education. Simultaneously, it promotes the all-round development of intelligence, morality, and more, thereby cultivating well-rounded modern talents.

Art troupe courses contribute to students' intellectual development, as participation in these courses effectively improves academic performance. The human brain is divided into two hemispheres with distinct functions. The left hemisphere primarily handles mathematics, language, logic, and similar functions, while the right hemisphere is responsible for activities such as drawing, music, and imagination. After prolonged engagement in specialized knowledge learning, it is advisable to engage in activities like singing, drawing, and recitation, which facilitate coordinated activities of both hemispheres. This approach prevents one hemisphere from remaining in a prolonged state of excitation, leading to protective inhibition. Experiments conducted as early as the beginning of the 21st century have demonstrated that the coordinated development of both hemispheres of the brain contributes to improved academic performance. The United States initiated the "Arts Integration" program, and research results revealed that students in schools offering arts courses performed significantly better in subjects such as reading, mathematics, and writing compared to students in schools without arts courses. [5]In the process of implementing curriculum-based management for art troupes, students of Shanxi Technology and Business College art troupe, despite their active involvement in artistic practice activities, consistently maintained superior academic performance and overall qualities.

Art troupe courses also facilitate students' moral development. Wang Guowei once stated, "The ultimate goal of aesthetics aligns with the ultimate goal of ethics." [6]Aesthetic education encompasses ethical education, as participating in art troupe courses not only leads students to establish correct aesthetic concepts but also cultivates noble moral sentiments and nurtures beautiful souls. Art troupes' approach to moral education differs from traditional moral and ethical education. Traditional moral education primarily focuses on cognitive aspects and seeks to improve moral levels through rational understanding, adherence to moral constraints, and compliance with social order. Art troupes, on the other hand, emphasize emotional cognition, exerting a subtle influence on individuals' moral and ethical qualities through inspiration and influence, thus fostering noble moral sentiments.

Higher education institutions adhere to the fundamental principle of nurturing both character and talents. Through the curriculum-based construction of art troupes, the aim is to cultivate modern talents who possess comprehensive development in morality, intelligence, physique, aesthetics, and labor, serving as builders and successors in the socialist construction.

4.Curriculum-Based System Construction Strategy for Shanxi Technology and Business College Art Troupes

(1) Basic Overview of Shanxi Technology and Business College Art Troupe's Curriculum-Based Construction

Shanxi Technology and Business College has formed eight art troupes for non-art major students. These troupes include a choir, a dance troupe, a recitation team, a drama troupe, a folk music ensemble, a traditional opera troupe, a calligraphy team, and a painting team. The art troupes have implemented curriculum-based management and are integrated into the university's talent cultivation program.

The Department of Aesthetic Education is responsible for curriculum teaching and provides each art troupe with two professional instructors. These instructors guide the art troupes in professional skill training and assist with student management and auxiliary teaching, such as piano accompaniment. The teaching team adopts a combination of full-time and part-time instructors, primarily consisting of full-time university instructors. Simultaneously, renowned artists or expert scholars from outside the university are also hired to leverage high-quality academic resources both on and off-campus.

(2) Characteristics of Art Troupe Courses

Art troupe courses belong to the category of practical art courses, distinguishing themselves from cognitive courses, art appreciation courses, and research-oriented courses. They exhibit characteristics such as collectivity, inclusivity, progressiveness, and practicality.

Art troupe courses emphasize collectivity. The primary focus of these courses is on collective artistic activities such as choir singing, recitations, group dances, and ensemble performances. Consequently, the aim of art troupe courses is not solely to enhance students' artistic skills and proficiency but also to cultivate their aesthetic abilities and sensibilities through the medium of art. Simultaneously, within the context of teamwork, these courses foster collaborative skills, steering students away from self-centered thinking and teaching them to take responsibility for others. This collectivity aligns with the notion that art education is not solely about nurturing artists but about fostering aesthetic individuals—ordinary people who possess an appreciation for and a demand for beauty.

Art troupe courses demonstrate inclusivity. They are open to all students within the university without imposing any specific prerequisites related to their majors. Students can choose to participate in different art troupe courses based on their interests and passions. Shanxi Technology and Business College offers art troupe courses simultaneously on both the Longcheng and Beige campuses, ensuring equal opportunities for all non-art major students to partake in artistic education.

Art troupe courses exhibit progressiveness. Although students participating in art troupes pursue non-art majors, they do not come with zero knowledge or skills in the arts. Campus-based aesthetic education has already permeated through students of various age groups, and higher education-level art courses should build upon the foundation laid during middle and high school art courses. Therefore, teachers must thoroughly understand and assess the students' prior knowledge and skill levels and implement a progressive teaching approach accordingly.

Art troupe courses possess a practical nature. The primary distinction between art troupe courses and art appreciation courses lies in their practical nature. Art appreciation involves analyzing the themes and meanings behind art through its form and language. In contrast, art practice is about expression—from the inside out. It involves artists with emotions or ideas searching for suitable language and forms to convey them. During the process of practice, different forms of artistic expression are employed to understand, experience, appreciate, and create beauty. This, in turn, nurtures ideals of beauty, artistic sentiments, moral character, and artistic refinement.

Lastly, art troupes utilize mixed-class teaching, bringing together students from various majors and different academic years. Senior students often possess extensive learning experience and can serve as role models. New members entering the troupe are typically more proactive in their studies, bringing energy and enthusiasm that can motivate active participation in art troupe courses. The mixed-class nature of art troupe courses promotes interaction among members, broadens their social circles, and ignites artistic sparks through encounters with students from different majors and academic years.

The teaching quality of the art troupes is supervised and managed by the Academic Affairs Office. Art troupe courses are elective in nature, and each course requires the development of a syllabus and the formulation of a teaching plan. These documents are updated and iterated as needed. The Academic Affairs Office conducts irregular classroom observations and teacher presentations to ensure the quality and content of teaching.

Art troupe teaching practices emphasize the immersion in the learning process and prioritize stage experiences. Formative assessment methods are used, combining regular basic training, subgroup rehearsals, ensemble rehearsals, full dress rehearsals, and public performances to evaluate students comprehensively. Art troupe courses are conducted twice a week, with each session lasting two hours. This scheduling ensures that art troupes have ample training time while avoiding conflicts with other academic courses, allowing students to participate in art troupe activities without compromising their academic studies.

Shanxi Technology and Business College has allocated dedicated training venues for art troupe courses. Taking into account the specific needs of each art troupe, the university has procured various equipment and facilities. For instance, the folk music ensemble has a dedicated training space equipped with various traditional musical instruments such as the guzheng, erhu, and flute to meet their training requirements. The choir has a specialized training room with equipment including pianos, conductor's podiums, and audio systems, providing solid material support for choir courses.

(3) Following the Rules of Aesthetic Education to Achieve Curriculum Innovation

The "Opinions on Strengthening and Improving School Aesthetic Education in the New Era," issued in 2020, explicitly call for the implementation of a teaching model that combines "basic knowledge and skills of art, artistic aesthetic experiences, and specialized artistic talents." Shanxi Technology and Business College' curriculum system construction for its art troupes begins with the principles of aesthetic education. Through art troupe courses, students build upon their essential knowledge and basic skills, with a focus on enhancing core competencies such as cultural understanding, aesthetic perception, artistic expression, and creative practice, thus helping students develop specialized artistic talents.

Creating course handouts aids students in comprehending beauty. Public art courses do not have uniform textbook requirements, but textbooks and handouts are indispensable learning materials that help students establish a comprehensive knowledge base. The Department of Arts and Education at Shanxi Technology and Business College has specially compiled electronic versions of course handouts for use in art troupe course learning, both in online and offline settings. Prior to class, students acquaint themselves with foundational knowledge, entering art troupe courses with questions and thoughts that form a solid theoretical foundation, thus better guiding their artistic practice. In the process of preparing course handouts, emphasis is placed on exploring local non-material culture and artistic resources, playing a vital role in preserving and promoting regional culture, enhancing students' cultural confidence. For example, the course handout for the Folk Music Troupe focuses on introducing Shanxi folk music, enriching students' understanding of Shanxi's folk music, contributing to the dissemination of Shanxi's folk music culture, and enhancing their affection for their hometown.

Utilizing scenario-based teaching helps students experience beauty. Art troupe courses are not confined to the classroom; they select museums, art galleries, and music halls as venues for teaching. Aesthetic education emphasizes setting the scene, allowing the perceiver to return to the place of the "original scene" or the "original object." This creates a conducive atmosphere for aesthetic perception. Learners are influenced by the surroundings and naturally adjust their mindset, maintaining an aesthetic expectation and approaching objects of beauty with a calm state of mind. This minimizes interference from non-aesthetic factors and leads to a more complete immersion of body and mind, resulting in an idealized aesthetic perception. Under the guidance of teachers, Shanxi Technology and Business College' Painting Art Troupe has conducted course learning and practical activities, such as reproducing murals from the Lou Rui Tomb, at the Shanxi Provincial Museum. Scenario-based teaching not only provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the history and culture of Lou Rui Tomb murals but also immerses them entirely in an artistic atmosphere, an experience that cannot be fully achieved within the confines of a classroom.

Harnessing emotional power encourages students to feel beauty. Ultimately, aesthetic education is sensory education, necessitating the full activation of sensory organs to enable students to feel beauty. Painting is a visual art, primarily appealing to the eyes; music is an auditory art, primarily appealing to the ears; drama is a composite art that requires the full engagement of various sensory organs. Discipline-based education emphasizes rationality, enlightening wisdom through logic, concepts, and formulas. General education, on the other hand, emphasizes sensibility, expressing emotions through color, lines, melody, and other means. Currently, there is much more emphasis on discipline-based education than on general education, leading to a widespread issue of students lacking the ability to express their feelings sensually. Often, human emotions, moods, and other psychological states cannot be fully expressed through language, text, concepts, or logic. It is precisely at these times that art comes into play. As the "Da Xu" section of "The Great Preface" states, "Poetry is the expression of one's innermost feelings. Thoughts are born in the heart and expressed in words. When emotions stir within, they are formed into words; when words fall short, we sigh; when sighs are insufficient, we sing; and when singing is inadequate, we dance."[7] Art, as an external form of the inner world of the mind, is not only vivid, intuitive, and sensory but also profound and rich.

Utilizing unconventional methods guides students in appreciating beauty. Art appreciation exhibits the characteristic of non-standardization, as there is no standard answer in the perception of beauty—it is often said that there are a thousand Hamlets in the eyes of a thousand readers. Art troupe courses prioritize student interaction, reflecting a modern teaching philosophy that places students at the center and breaks away from the teacher-centered lecturing approach. Teachers become guides, posing questions at appropriate times to stimulate student discussions. When it comes to discussions about works of art, there are no correct or standard answers, which differs from discipline-based education. Therefore, teachers should encourage open-minded thinking, fostering multifaceted and multilevel appreciation of beauty among students.

Through practical teaching, students' creativity is unleashed. Art troupe courses do not excessively emphasize the mastery of artistic skills. Many students, in pursuit of proficiency tests for artistic talents, engage in tedious skill training for extended periods, ultimately losing interest in art. Art troupes start with students' interests as a point of departure, focusing on stimulating students' artistic creativity. They view artistic creation as a channel for conveying different perspectives and expressing personal opinions. Students not only participate in campus life but also pay attention to social phenomena and hot topics. Through the rehearsal of artistic works, students engage in independent thinking and ultimately form their own value judgments.

5.Conclusion

During the process of constructing a curriculum system, Shanxi Technology and Business College has taken a series of measures, including developing course outlines, implementing scenario-based teaching, harnessing emotional engagement,

and utilizing non-standard assessment strategies. These initiatives have enhanced students' aesthetic and humanities qualities, fully harnessing the significant role of university art groups in higher education aesthetic education.

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