Exploration of Strategies for Cultivating Practical Skills of Intermediate Art under the Perspective of "Core Literacy"

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Abstract: Within the domains of education and practice, the concept of "core literacy" has increasingly established its indispensable position. To delve deeply into the practical application and impact of this concept within the vocational art education realm, this paper revisits the definition of "core literacy" and its historical evolution in the educational sector. By analyzing the categorization of skills and the mutual interaction between "core literacy" and skills, this study draws upon genuine teaching cases to illustrate their inherent connections. Concerning the cultivation of practical operation skills, this paper systematically explores both theoretical construction and practical application strategies, highlighting their pivotal role in innovating vocational art instruction. By integrating literature review and case study methodologies, it is revealed that skill cultivation strategies guided by core literacy can notably enhance the proficiency and innovation capabilities of vocational art students. This provides a fresh and cutting-edge theoretical perspective and practical methodology for vocational art education.

Keywords: Core Literacy; Vocational Art Education; Practical Skills

1. Introduction

With the continuous shifts in global educational trends, the skills that 21st-century students are expected to master differ from those of the past. Traditional teaching methods and evaluation systems are increasingly unable to meet the present teaching demands, especially within the field of vocational education. Consequently, the cultivation of practical operation skills and innovative thinking in vocational art instruction has become a focal point of interest for both educators and researchers.

2. Concept and Research Progress of Core Literacy

2.1 Definition of Core Literacy

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) first introduced the term "core literacy," also known as "21st-century literacy." From a value orientation perspective, "core literacy" should reflect the qualities students need for lifelong learning and align with the core values recognized by the state and society. In terms of criteria selection, it pays attention not only to the cultivation of disciplinary foundations and other comprehensive literacies but also to the qualities essential for individuals to adapt to future societal life and personal lifelong development. It can reflect the latest dynamics of societal development and embody the historical and cultural characteristics and current educational status of a country[1].

2.2 Development of Core Literacy in the Education

Field With the ongoing changes in 21st-century education, core literacy has evolved from an academic concept to the core philosophy of educational practice. Many educational researchers believe that core literacy involves more than just basic knowledge and skills. It is more about students' ability to apply these skills and knowledge to address the complex and ever-changing real world[2].

3. The Importance of "Core Literacy" in the Teaching of Secondary Art

Art, as a form of visual art, is distinguished from other arts by the static, visible, and unified characteristics of its physical and spiritual aspects. In January 2020, the Ministry of Education issued the "Vocational School Art Subject Curriculum Standards," which explicitly identified art perception, aesthetic judgment, creative expression, and cultural

understanding as the core literacies for vocational art subjects. The crux lies in "cultivating a well-rounded individual." This concept is based on the unique characteristics and tasks of the art discipline, reflecting the key literacies of humanistic heritage, healthy living, and practical innovation in the core literacy framework for Chinese students[3] . Vocational art education not only focuses on the teaching of traditional painting, crafts, and design skills but also emphasizes nurturing students' innovative spirit and hands-on operational capabilities. The goal of vocational art teaching is to cultivate talents with artistic literacy and practical operational capabilities for society. Thus, core literacy holds paramount importance in vocational art education.

Core literacy in art education includes comprehensive ability, autonomous learning, teamwork capability, critical thinking, and innovation awareness. These skills help students cope with a changing world, foster interdisciplinary collaboration and communication skills, and gain a deep understanding of the culture and values behind art, leading to more profound creation. At the same time, core literacy offers a comprehensive teaching philosophy for vocational art education, laying a solid foundation for cultivating artists with comprehensive qualities. In vocational art education, the cultivation strategies for "core literacy" emphasize the deep integration of personal development with future career trajectories, focusing on students' comprehensive development in knowledge, skills, personal growth, career planning, and emotional and social aspects. It ensures that students achieve balanced development in areas such as critical thinking, teamwork, and project management. Moreover, it stresses self-motivation and active exploration, nurturing students' lifelong learning capabilities and laying a solid foundation for their future careers and academic pursuits. Furthermore, "core literacy" provides students with a broader range of industry choices, such as advertising, marketing, and product management, rather than just roles like artists or designers. In terms of emotional and social abilities, "core literacy" emphasizes self-awareness and emotional management, helping students enhance their self-esteem and confidence, fostering a strong sense of empathy and communication skills.

4. The Role of Core Competencies in Secondary Vocational Art Education

4.1 The Impact of Core Competencies on Skills

Basic Skills: Every student in secondary vocational art education must master fundamental abilities, which include essential skills such as painting, sculpting, and designing. These skills form the foundation for vocational students to evolve into excellent art professionals. A certain level of creative thinking and aesthetic awareness is necessary for students. In secondary vocational art instruction, by nurturing students' basic skills based on core competencies and through prolonged practice and accumulation, students can not only firmly grasp these foundational techniques but can also express their individual thoughts through the demonstration of skills or artworks[4]. This kind of cultivation goes beyond merely honing skills, integrating them with real-life and work experiences to achieve a harmonious blend of application and innovation.

Advanced Skills: Skills like digital art, 3D modeling, and animation design are critical for secondary vocational art students. Attaining these skills requires students to have a certain professional background and engage in in-depth studies. Within secondary vocational art instruction, through the fostering of these advanced skills, students can better adapt to societal demands and growth, emerging as competitive art talents. With the training rooted in core competencies, while teaching advanced skills, educators focus on cultivating students' critical thinking. They not only delve deep into theory but can also integrate this knowledge with other relevant disciplines in practice, realizing interdisciplinary innovation.

Interdisciplinary Skills under Core Competencies: Secondary vocational art instruction emphasizes interdisciplinary skills, such as project management, market analysis, and team collaboration, accentuating students' application capabilities in actual work scenarios and their ability for interdisciplinary cooperation. This equips students to apply what they've learned to address challenges in the workplace. These skills, pivotal for secondary vocational art students, when put into practice, can also be amalgamated with knowledge from other disciplines. This results in

interdisciplinary application, enhancing their agility in addressing real-world challenges[5].

4.2 Skill Application Case Analysis in Actual Teaching

(1) Practical Case of Core Competency and Skill Cultivation - Taking the Creative Painting Project as an Example

In a certain secondary vocational art course, the teacher, integrating core competencies, designed a painting project titled "Turning Scissors into Butterflies". Students, grounded on mastering basic painting techniques and aligning with their life experiences and observations of current social phenomena, were required to engage in original painting creations. Through this project, students not only honed their painting skills but also enhanced their critical thinking and innovative abilities, manifesting the role of core competencies in skill cultivation.

(2) Application Case of Interdisciplinary Skills - Combining Art with Marketing as an Example

Amid increasingly fierce market competition, a startup sought the help of a secondary vocational art student to design its company LOGO. Based on market research, the student thoroughly considered the preferences and values of the target consumer group and trends related to the company's products or services. The student cleverly integrated the consumers' expectations with the company's brand philosophy into a single design. After several rounds of feedback and iterations, the final design was accomplished. This LOGO not only effectively conveyed the company's brand ethos but also garnered widespread praise from consumers in the market. This case underscores the immense practical value of merging art skills with interdisciplinary skills like marketing. Future art education should focus on nurturing students' interdisciplinary capabilities to cater to the increasingly complex and changing market demands.

(3) Workshop Teaching Application Case - Art Workshop Practical Ability as an Example

During a week-long workshop, students collaborated with peers from other majors to complete an interdisciplinary art project, underscoring the significance of interdisciplinary skills. A workshop teaching model was employed for puppet art instructional discussions, offering students a hands-on learning environment. Initially,

teachers provided some foundational knowledge about puppetry. Students then delved into the puppetry workshop, gaining an in-depth understanding and mastery of puppet creation and performance techniques through hands-on activities. Within the workshop, they could craft puppets, learn puppet manipulation for performances, and team up with fellow students to choreograph and showcase puppet plays.

The crux of secondary vocational art teaching practice skills lies in fostering students' core competencies and skills. For instance, the "Turning Scissors into Butterflies" project sharpened students' foundational painting skills while challenging their critical and innovative thinking, enabling them to grasp artistic expression, observation, reflection, and innovation. The case combining art with marketing illuminates the pivotal value of interdisciplinary skills in modern society. The workshop teaching example underscores the importance of practical abilities; through real-world environments and hands-on tasks, students can deepen their grasp on knowledge and skills while honing collaboration and communication capabilities.

5. Analysis of the Effects of Practical Operation Skill Training Methods

5.1 Practical Application Strategy in the Theoretical Construction of Training Methods

(1) Project-Based Learning Strategy By setting actual art project tasks, students are given the opportunity to practice and refine their skills within the project framework. In the previously mentioned "Turning Scissors into Butterflies" project, before the teaching begins, the teacher should make students clear about the project goal, which is to use paper-cutting techniques to create a decoration. Students, by researching and conducting market analysis, determine the product's style. During the teaching process, the teacher needs to guide students in effective project planning, which encompasses project progression, positioning, expected outcomes, etc., rather than merely focusing on guiding basic student skills. Upon project completion, students are encouraged to showcase their works, share experiences from the project, and then receive feedback from various perspectives to enhance their learning

outcomes.

(2) Situational Teaching Strategy

Constructivist learning theory posits that students should play a central role in learning activities and should acquire knowledge through the creation of specific situations. Secondary vocational students have strong hands-on capabilities, active thinking, and a heightened sense of curiosity. They actively engage in activities they find interesting, making situational teaching paramount for boosting student enthusiasm. For instance, in the puppetry art activity case, the teacher established an art workshop exuding an artistic ambiance. Through various puppet art decorations and showcasing exquisite puppets, a mood-rich art scenario is created, sparking students' curiosity. Throughout the crafting process, teachers can guide students to explore the history and cultural background of puppets, broadening their horizons. This situational teaching approach, while stimulating students' interest and motivation, and fostering their practical skills and independent exploration spirit, can also elevate their artistic and cultural appreciation [6] .

(3) Student-Centered Autonomous Exploration Strategy

The application of autonomous exploration under core competencies not only promotes hands-on practical abilities but also encourages student-led innovation. For instance, in implementing a student-centered autonomous exploration strategy, educators should be mindful of the following points: Firstly, respecting individual student differences. Teachers should value the unique characteristics of each student, allowing them to learn at their pace and in their style. Secondly, guiding active student participation. Autonomous exploration demands a full display of initiative. Hence, educators should design engaging and interactive learning activities, prompting students to actively participate, reflect, and delve deeper. Simultaneously, a democratic, relaxed learning environment should be nurtured, where students feel encouraged to express opinions, fostering critical thinking and innovative capabilities. Lastly, it's essential for educators to provide effective learning guidance to assist students in addressing challenges they encounter.

5.2 Innovative Contributions of Training Methods to Art Education

(1) Diverse Teaching Methods

Traditional art education often places too much emphasis on techniques and theoretical knowledge, neglecting the cultivation of practical operational skills. In contrast, new training methods break this traditional mold by seamlessly integrating theory and practice, focusing more on students' practical capabilities. Art education in vocational schools should not only transmit knowledge and train skills but also develop capabilities and imbue ideological education. Modern practical operation skill training methods introduce various teaching methods, like project-based learning and computer-assisted teaching, making the teaching process more dynamic and applicable. Given the realities of teaching, diversifying teaching methods is indispensable [7] .

Project-Based Learning Project-based learning, founded on group cooperative inquiry, relies on project task practices. It mainly emphasizes process-driven and autonomous learning classroom teaching models, grounded in real-life situational problems and specific project tasks, embodying collaborative learning and self-construction [8] . The implementation of project-based learning disrupts the traditional "lecture-centric" teaching model, highlighting students' autonomy, collaborative exploration, and breaking down learning tasks. It embodies the cultivation requirements of core competencies, promoting the enhancement of students' innovation abilities. Project-based learning is especially suitable for vocational school students. An education philosophy that places students at the core can fully engage students and spark their enthusiasm in project practices, enhancing their practical operation skills. Therefore, educators should adopt a student-centric pedagogy and design and execute project activities based on students' zones of proximal development to continuously enhance their operational capabilities.

Computer-Assisted Teaching Modern educational technology, especially information technology represented by computer-assisted teaching, has revolutionized traditional teaching models, arousing students' learning interest. This method places emphasis on nurturing students' innovative thinking and manifests their independent thought process. In

vocational schools' art curricula, teachers employ computer-assisted teaching to instruct students on the basic operations and practical techniques of software like Photoshop, Ai, and 3DMAX. This allows students to more intuitively understand these tools' applications and helps them effectively complete artworks. Furthermore, computer-assisted teaching can utilize simulation technology, enabling students to experience various practical processes firsthand, thus better mastering skills [9] . This teaching method not only enables students to grasp knowledge more effectively but also strengthens their operational capabilities, fostering innovation and creativity.

(2) Strengthening Practice and Application

The aim of vocational art education is to cultivate technical art talents geared towards frontline social production and services. Graduates from vocational institutions should not only understand the basic theories and knowledge of their majors but, more importantly, possess the production operations and organizational capabilities required for specific job clusters. They should excel at translating technical intentions or engineering drawings into tangible entities and address practical issues in production. Such individuals exhibit sufficient professional theory knowledge, proficiency in production techniques, and robust organizational skills, essentially making them composite talents[10]. Vocational educators, through various practical skill training methods, emphasize practice and application, providing students with more opportunities to engage in real-world settings. This strengthens their operational skills, preparing them effectively for their future careers.

(3) promoting holistic student development

Skill training based on core competencies isn't just confined to technical training. It also stresses cultivating students' innovative abilities, critical thinking, and team collaboration capabilities, enabling students to grow in a more comprehensive and balanced manner. In vocational art education, while teachers pay attention to students mastering foundational skills like painting, sculpture, and design, they also prioritize enhancing advanced skills such as digital art, 3D modeling, and animation design. Concurrently, fostering interdisciplinary skills ensures that students not only grasp artistic knowledge and skills but also synergize them with knowledge from other disciplines, thus enhancing their innovative and application abilities. These skills, while constituting the core capabilities for vocational art students, are also indispensable in their professional careers, preparing them to tackle a variety of complex issues and challenges in their practical work.

6. Conclusion

Vocational art education emphasizes the cultivation of core competencies, integrating both traditional and modern teaching strategies. This approach assists students in experiencing the creation of knowledge through hands-on practices, laying a solid foundation for their future careers. The philosophy of core competencies advocates a holistic training approach, enhancing practical skills and innovative thinking capabilities. The application of hands-on skill training methods based on core competencies has achieved outstanding results in vocational art education. Continuous research and expansion of the content and application of core competencies are essential.

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