



Integration of Social Practice and Digital Media Teaching in the Context of Rural Revitalization: An Empirical Study Based on the 'Third Classroom'

Lan Mo^{1,3}, Yuxue Zou², Asliza Aris³ and Xiaopu Zhang^{1,*}

¹College of Arts and Media, Guangzhou Vocational and Technical University of Science and Technology, Guangcong 9th Road, Guangzhou, 510550, Guangdong, China

²Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang, 43400, Selangor, Malaysia

³College of Creative Arts, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, 40450, Selangor, Malaysia

molan@gkd.edu.cn (Lan Mo)

gs68128@student.upm.edu.my (Yuxue Zou)

arisasliza@uitm.edu.my (Asliza Aris)

*zhangxiaopu@gkd.edu.cn (Xiaopu Zhang)

Abstract. With the in-depth implementation of the rural revitalization strategy, the demand for digital media professionals is increasing. This study explores practical ways to integrate social practice with digital media teaching in this context, focusing on the application and effects of the 'Third Classroom' teaching model. Through an empirical research method, this study conducted pre- and post-intervention surveys among digital media students at Guangzhou University of Science and Technology to evaluate the impact of the 'Third Classroom' on students' professional skills, teamwork abilities, and innovation capabilities. The results indicate significant improvements in these areas post-intervention, particularly in students' understanding of rural revitalization and the role of digital media in this process. The study concludes that incorporating social practice into digital media education can enhance students' comprehensive skills and foster professional talents with practical and innovative abilities, contributing to the rural revitalization strategy. These findings provide theoretical and practical guidance for curriculum reform in vocational colleges' digital media programs and hold significant implications for promoting rural revitalization.

Keywords: Rural Revitalization; Digital Media Teaching; Social Practice; 'Third Classroom'; Empirical Study.

1 Introduction

China's uneven development between urban and rural areas has become increasingly pronounced in modern society (Gallagher, 2020). To address this challenge, the Chinese Government has launched the Rural Revitalisation Strategy, which aims to promote overall progress in the countryside by improving rural conditions, enhancing the

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Y. Li et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2024 3rd International Conference on Science Education and Art Appreciation (SEAA 2024)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 866,

https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-291-0_39

soft power of rural culture and promoting agricultural modernization (Liu, 2020). In this strategy, digital media plays a crucial role, as it plays a central role in propaganda, cultural dissemination and information services. Digital media professionals, with their professional skills, have become a key force in promoting rural revitalization (Shen & Chou, 2022).

However, digital media majors' current social practice activities in China's higher vocational education still need to meet rural revitalisation needs fully (Liu, 2023). To bridge this gap, this study explores the impact of the 'third classroom' model, which combines social practice and teaching methods, on students' professional skills, teamwork, and creativity, using the example of digital media majors at Guangzhou University of Science and Technology.

The 'third classroom' model goes beyond traditional classroom lectures (first classroom) and independent learning (second classroom), aiming to enhance students' professional skills and practical abilities through activities such as social practice, volunteer services, project research and technical competitions (Lee & Dickson, 2010). In digital media majors, this model is often combined with rural revitalisation projects, allowing students to participate in rural cultural dissemination, information technology support and brand building, thus deepening their understanding of the importance of rural revitalisation. By participating in projects such as rural live-action filming, online media publicity design and agricultural brand packaging, students can master multimedia production techniques and online marketing skills while developing teamwork and problem-solving skills.

This study focuses on students' awareness of rural revitalisation and the application of digital media skills in rural revitalisation under the "third classroom" model. Implementing the curriculum intervention experiment not only helps students to give full play to their professional strengths in real work but also provides data support and improvement direction for professional curriculum reform. This teaching mode reform is closely integrated with the national strategy. It aims to cultivate highly skilled professionals who can meet the future needs of rural economic and social development, which is of guiding significance and application value to vocational and technical education and rural revitalisation.

In rural revitalisation, digital media professional education is especially crucial for cultivating students' professional skills. By integrating digital media resources and innovating teaching methods, the quality of teaching can be improved, and professionals adapted to the needs of rural revitalisation in the new era can be cultivated. This study will provide practical cases and a theoretical basis for the curriculum reform of digital media majors in private vocational colleges and universities, which will have a practical and long-term impact on implementing the rural revitalisation strategy. Through the 'third classroom' mode, students' sense of social responsibility and mission is enhanced, which will help to improve their competitiveness in the future job market.

2 Literature Review

In education research, the combination of social practice experiences and digital media teaching is becoming a focus, especially in the context of the rural revitalisation strategy promoted by the Chinese government. This review aims to synthesise and analyse current research on rural revitalisation, digital media education, the 'third classroom' teaching model, and the impact of social practice experiences on student development.

Rural revitalisation: The Chinese government emphasises the rural revitalisation strategy in Central Document No. 1, which aims to achieve comprehensive rural development through five dimensions: industry, ecology, culture, governance and life[1]. Research has pointed out that rural revitalisation requires a multi-dimensional approach in which digital technology plays a key role[2][3].

Digital media education: Technological advances are driving a shift in digital media education from technology transfer to an emphasis on practical skills and interdisciplinary learning[4]. In vocational education, the combination of digital media and practical experience is critical to students' preparation for the world of work[5], and innovative pedagogical models such as project-based learning enhance students' practical skills[6][7].

The 'third classroom' model: the 'third classroom' goes beyond traditional teaching to provide students with real-world experiences through social practice, project-based learning, and community engagement[8]. In digital media education, the 'third classroom' model can help to bridge the gap between theory and practice and enhance students' professional competence and adaptability (Hills & Thomas, 2020).

Impact of social practice on students: Social practice is essential to the holistic development of students, and experiential learning plays an important role in intellectual and moral development[10][11]. Empirical studies have shown that social practice significantly enhances students' professional skills, teamwork and creativity[12][13].

Integration of digital media teaching and social practice: In the context of rural revitalisation, the integration of digital media teaching and social practice shows excellent potential. Digital media play a role in documenting rural transformation, promoting culture and supporting branding[14]. Students contribute to rural development by engaging in rural practices and applying digital media skills to solve real-world problems (Rijswijk et al., 2021; Mosse, 2020).

Combining social practice experience with digital media teaching is essential for rural revitalisation. The 'third classroom' model serves as an educational framework. It provides practical experience and enhances professional skills. This study will further explore the impact of the 'third classroom' model on digital media students at Guangzhou University of Science and Technology to provide new perspectives on digital media education and contribute to implementing the rural revitalisation strategy.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research method to investigate the application and effect of the 'third classroom' teaching mode in digital media teaching. The specific research design is mainly reflected in the curriculum reform of 'Cultural Creativity and Communication', which has 64 class hours and includes three main parts: basic theory, social practice, and comprehensive assessment after the course intervention. Firstly, course contents covering dimensions such as basic theory, practical techniques, and creative thinking are arranged for students in the pre-course, and a solid foundation for subsequent social practice is laid out through a combination of centralised lectures and online self-study. In addition, the professional tutors also guide students in conducting in-depth analyses of the background knowledge of rural revitalisation by conducting course discussions.

In the social practice section, the course has carefully designed a practical project focusing on digital media creation. Students are divided into groups and dispatched to different rural communities to complete customised digital media product design and production tasks. The practical projects allow students to choose their project themes under the tutor's guidance, such as rural cultural communication, packaging and marketing of agricultural products, etc., to apply their knowledge and skills in a real-world context.

3.2 Sample Composition and Data Collection

In this study, sophomore students (85 in total) taking the course of Cultural Creative Design in the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year in the digital media arts major of Guangzhou University of Science and Technology were selected for the empirical data collection of the questionnaire survey. Specifically, the questionnaire design focuses on assessing the improvement of students' professional skills, teamwork, and creativity in various aspects, as well as the degree of students' knowledge of rural revitalisation strategies and their understanding of the application of digital media in the process. The questionnaire design is hierarchical, including an essential information section, a knowledge and skills assessment section, and a personal experience and reflections section, containing 15 question items, using a combination of closed-ended and open-ended question design. Numerical data were scored using a 5-point Likert scale to facilitate quantitative analysis, while open-ended questions were designed to collect students' feelings and suggestions for qualitative analysis.

Once the questionnaires were completed and developed, the tutor distributed them to the participating students so they could complete the pre-course assessment on the first day of the course. Participating students were invited to participate in this study voluntarily, and informed consent was obtained. They were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to the classroom site immediately. In order to match the pre-test data with the post-test data, the students interviewed were asked to write down their

class and student numbers. At the end of the class, the tutor distributed the same questionnaires to the students who had completed the questionnaires in the pre-test and collected them on-site. The recovered questionnaire data were managed electronically, entered into professional statistical software, and subjected to a rigorous data cleaning and verification process to eliminate invalid and duplicate questionnaires, resulting in 84 valid questionnaires. All qualified data were included in the final statistical analysis process and evaluated through several rounds of analyses.

3.3 Reliability and Validity of Instruments

In this study, a widely validated questionnaire was used to assess students, ensuring the standardisation and scientificity of the survey instrument. The questionnaire design is based on the teaching characteristics of Guangzhou University of Science and Technology and the actual situation of the students. It is carefully prepared by a team of experts in the professional field to ensure that the content of the assessment is closely related to the teaching of digital media.

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to test the questionnaire's internal consistency. According to the Cronbach's Alpha results of the pre-test and post-test questionnaires, the Cronbach's Alpha values corresponding to both questionnaires were more significant than 0.8, which indicated that the questionnaires had good internal consistency, so the survey results had excellent reliability. In conclusion, the data results of this study passed the reliability test.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used to verify the sampling adequacy and the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Refer to Table 1, the KMO value of the pre-test questionnaire is 0.74, which is greater than 0.7. while in the Bartlett sphericity test, the approximate chi-square value is 172.906, and the probability of significance is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis of Bartlett's test of sphericity is rejected, based on the fact that the data of the questionnaires of the present research fulfil the condition of conducting factor analysis.

Table 1. Validity Testing of the Pre-Test Questionnaire

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.735
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	172.906
	Degrees of Freedom (df)	21
	Significance (p-value)	0.000

Referring to Table 2, according to the test results in the analysis table of the post-test questionnaire, the KMO value of this study is 0.85, which is greater than 0.8. Moreover, in the Bartlett sphericity test, the approximate chi-square value is 195.829, and the significance probability is 0.000, less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis of the Bartlett sphericity test is rejected, and based on that, the questionnaire data of this paper meet the conditions for conducting factor analysis.

Table 2. Validity Testing of the Post-Test Questionnaire

KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.846
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	195.829
	Degrees of Freedom (df)	21
	Significance (p-value)	0.000

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Table 3. Paired Sample T-Test Results

Measure	Mean Difference (Pre-Post)	Std. Deviation (Difference)	T-value	df	Significance (Two-tailed)
Professional Skills	-1.106	0.346	-29.481	8	0.000
				4	
Teamwork	-0.965	0.241	-36.847	8	0.000
				4	
Innovation Capabilities	-1.094	0.397	-25.401	8	0.000
				4	
Understanding of Rural Revitalization	-1.153	0.394	-27.008	8	0.000
				4	
Role of Digital Media	-0.635	0.508	-11.525	8	0.000
				4	
Interest in Cultural Creativity & Media	-0.918	0.317	-26.716	8	0.000
				4	
Understanding of Concepts	-1.071	0.338	-29.233	8	0.000
				4	

This study aimed to assess the impact of integrating social practice with digital media teaching through the 'third classroom' model on digital media students' professional skills, teamwork, creativity and understanding of rural revitalisation. Analyses included pre- and post-test measurements and t-tests to determine the significance of observed changes.

Paired samples t-tests were used to compare the mean scores of students before and after the intervention. The results are shown in Table 3.

The study results, which used the paired samples t-test, are shown in Table 3. These results indicate that the student's professional skills, teamwork ability, creativity, understanding of rural revitalization, knowledge of the role of digital media in rural revitalization, interest in cultural creativity and communication, and understanding of the concept of "teaching by competition, learning by competition, practising by competition, and applying what they learned" were all significantly improved before and after the course intervention.

4.2 Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the effectiveness of the 'third classroom' model in improving the competencies of digital media students related to rural revitalisation. Significant gains were made in each area, reflecting the overall impact of the model on student learning and development.

The significant increase in average professional skills scores suggests that incorporating hands-on projects related to rural revitalisation into the digital media curriculum has effectively increased students' technical competence, and experiential learning can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application (Li et al., 2019).

Improvements in teamwork scores suggest that students can develop essential soft skills, including communication, coordination, and problem-solving skills, which are critical for professional success in the digital media industry (Qizi, 2020) by participating in rural projects.

The significant increase in creative skills highlights the importance of experiential learning environments in fostering creativity and innovation. Participation in the challenges presented by rural revitalisation projects encourages students to think creatively and develop novel solutions (Patricio et al., 2020).

Students' increased understanding of rural revitalisation reflects the success of the "third classroom" model in raising awareness of rural issues and the role of digital media in addressing them. This increased understanding is critical to producing graduates who are not only technologically proficient but also socially responsible and aware of broader societal issues (Blanchard & Thacker, 2023).

The increased understanding of the role of digital media in rural revitalisation suggests that students have gained valuable insights into how digital tools can promote rural development. This finding is consistent with the idea that digital media can document rural transformation, promote rural culture, and support rural branding efforts (Liu et al., 2020).

Interest in Cultural Creativity and Media A significant increase in interest in cultural creativity and media suggests that students are more engaged and interested in the cultural aspects of digital media through their participation in rural projects. This interest is crucial in developing a passion for cultural preservation and innovation in the media (Asrial et al., 2019).

Improved understanding of relevant concepts reflects the effectiveness of the Third Classroom model in deepening students' conceptual knowledge. This finding supports the idea that experiential learning can provide a more comprehensive understanding of theoretical concepts through practical application[9].

Combining social practice with real-world projects can provide students valuable experiential learning opportunities that enhance their technical skills and understanding of societal challenges. This approach aligns with global educational trends that combine practical experience with academic learning (Altbach et al., 2018).

5 Conclusions

This study demonstrates the significant impact of the "Third Classroom" model on enhancing digital media students' skills and understanding in the context of rural revitalization. By integrating social practice with digital media education, this model effectively bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, promoting comprehensive student development. Hands-on projects related to rural revitalization significantly improved students' technical competence, soft skills, creativity, and understanding of rural issues and the role of digital media in addressing them. Participation in rural projects also increased students' interest in the cultural aspects of digital media, fostering a passion for cultural preservation and innovation. These findings guide curriculum reform in vocational colleges' digital media programs, emphasizing combining practical experience with academic learning to enhance students' professional capabilities and prepare them to contribute meaningfully to societal development, particularly in rural areas.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study is limited by its sample size and geographic scope. Further research should expand the sample size and geographic coverage and conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term impact of this educational model on students and rural communities. The "Third Classroom" model represents a valuable educational innovation, fostering a new generation of digital media professionals with practical skills and a deep understanding of rural revitalization. Collaboration among colleges, universities, enterprises, and various sectors of society is crucial to creating diversified and practical teaching environments that continually improve education quality while advancing rural revitalization efforts.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the 2023 Guangdong Provincial Institute of Educational Research Private Education Research Base Project - An Empirical Study on the Social Practice Teaching System of Digital Media Major Courses in Private Colleges and Universities (Project Number: 2023JD14).

Moreover, this work was also supported by the 2023 Education Teaching Reform Project of Guangdong Higher Vocational Colleges and Universities Art and Design Teaching Steering Committee - Research on the Development and Construction of the 'Third Classroom' of Art and Design Majors in Vocational Colleges and Universities in the Context of Rural Revitalisation Strategy with Social Practice as the Core (Project Number: 2023YSSJ55).

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