



Exploration and Practice of Aesthetic Education Mechanism in Colleges and Universities in the New Era

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Abstract. Aesthetic education has become the top priority of the talent cultivation system in colleges and universities, and the Party and the State have pointed out a new direction for the work of aesthetic education in colleges and universities (AECU) in the new era. With the construction of the New Liberal Arts (NLA), AECU has also gained new development opportunities. Especially in the new era, the teaching reform, resource allocation, evaluation system, management mechanism, and educational effectiveness of colleges and universities have been subject to comprehensive demands. This paper combines the current development status of AECU and proposes the development goals of AECU in the new era, implementing the "three characteristics" of AECU, which are ideological guidance, cultural systematization, and educational comprehensiveness. Moreover, in response to a series of problems related to the inadequate design of the overall framework of AECU, the lack of curriculum resources, and the singularity of resources for aesthetic education, this paper, through practical research and summary, based on the concept of aesthetic education, with courses and activities as the carriers, supported by internal and external resources, puts forward the "three comprehensive" practical strategies of AECU, i.e., comprehensive cultivation, comprehensive coverage, and comprehensive integration of AECU. In this way, this paper explores the new routes and mechanisms for the development of AECU in the new era.

Keywords: New Liberal Arts; aesthetic education in colleges and universities; aesthetic education mechanism; development goals; practice strategies

1 Introduction

As an important part of the talent cultivation system in colleges and universities, aesthetic education is the work of cultivating roots and casting souls. General Secretary Xi pointed out that it is necessary to be guided by the concept of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, fully implement the Party's education policy, adhere to the socialist direction of school management, take morality as the foundation, be guided by socialist core values, aim to improve students' aesthetic and humanistic qualities, carry forward the Chinese spirit of aesthetic education, integrate aesthetic education

into the whole process of talent cultivation at all levels and in all kinds of schools, and conduct it at all stages of school education. In this way, socialist successors can be cultivated who are well-rounded in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and diligence. The "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving the Work of Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era" issued by the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council in 2020, and the "Opinions on Practically Strengthening the Work of Aesthetic Education in Colleges in the New Era" issued by the Ministry of Education in 2019 both put forward comprehensive requirements for the work of aesthetic education in colleges and universities. Therefore, the reform and innovation of aesthetic education work.

2 Current Status of the Development of Aesthetic Education in Chinese Colleges and Universities

In domestic colleges and universities, aesthetic education can be divided into three aspects: professional aesthetic education, public aesthetic education, and aesthetic teacher education. Public aesthetic education in Chinese colleges is inadequate, especially in polytechnic colleges. Aesthetic education has important functions of aesthetic understanding, education, entertainment, and experience. For college students, aesthetic education can improve emotional education, enhance aesthetic literacy, and promote cultural identity, it is also recognized as one of the most productive fields for encouraging creativity and a good way to foster students' creative consciousness and capacities[1]. Carrying out a variety of forms of aesthetic education theoretical research and practice allows aesthetic education to return to the theory of life. Maintaining a moderate balance between "self-discipline and perfectionism" and "instrumentalism" has gradually become a consensus in college education[2].

At present, however, there are still many problems in aesthetic education in colleges and universities (AECU), such as the inadequate design of the curriculum system of AECU, the lack of curriculum resources on campus, and the limited variety of aesthetic education resources.

During a visit to Tsinghua University in April 2021, General Secretary Xi said, "Art, fine arts, science, and technology are complementary, mutually reinforcing, and mutually enriching. It is necessary to enhance cultural confidence, use aesthetics as a medium, and strengthen international cultural exchanges." On November 3, 2020, the Ministry of Education issued the "Declaration on the Construction of New Liberal Arts (NLA)", proposing that the new era and new mission require liberal arts education to accelerate the development of innovation, adhere to the development path of liberal arts education with Chinese characteristics, and build a global standard and Chinese characteristic liberal arts personnel training system. However, the NLA aims to innovate through the intervention of external factors and establish a new system for the construction of the NLA[3].

In addition, in line with the pace of development of the NLA, there is also a new opportunity for the development of AECU. Meanwhile, AECU is also an important part of the NLA construction and promotes the innovative development of the NLA[4]. The

transformation of the NLA brings a new model of AECU and allows it to play a proper role in educating students[5].

3 Development Goals of Aesthetic Education in Colleges and Universities in the New Era

Under the background of the construction of NLA, the cultivation of talents in colleges and universities should always be based on the foundation of moral education, be oriented to the goal of the double first-class construction of colleges and universities, be based on the concept of aesthetic education with courses and activities as the carriers, rely on the resources within and outside the university, actively build a new system and mechanism of aesthetic education, and strive to achieve the "three characteristics" of aesthetic education in colleges and universities: ideological guidance, cultural systematization, and educational comprehensiveness.

3.1 Fulfilling the Ideological and Political Guidance of Aesthetic Education

In order to effectively improve the method of ideological and political education in colleges and universities, aesthetic education is an effective method. It can be seen from aesthetic thought and aesthetic process that aesthetic preference and morality are closely related, so aesthetic education is a way of moral education[6]. The process of AECU should be combined with the development of NLA construction ideas, giving full play to the ideological and political guidance of aesthetic education. Various forms of aesthetic education content make the originally boring ideological and political content more understandable. By improving the infectious atmosphere, acceptance and satisfaction of students can be improved. More importantly, the process of aesthetic education should become more flexible, which will enhance the motivation and internal drive of students in colleges and universities. Through the acceptance of aesthetic education, the interest of students in the pursuit of aesthetics can be increased, so that students will deeply understand the ideological concepts conveyed by aesthetic education, resonate with the ideological and political education in colleges and universities, thus contributing to the ideological and political education.

3.2 Improving the Systematization of Aesthetic Culture in Colleges

The basic purpose of aesthetic education is to help students form a correct aesthetic concept, develop sound characters and abundant personalities. Teaching aesthetic education to students is the most reliable way to foster their artistic creativity[7], which cultivates all-round talents in the new era[8]. The aesthetic level and artistic perception of teachers and students should be gradually improved to enhance the cultural atmosphere of aesthetic education in colleges and universities. Combining the characteristics of the new era and the needs of teachers and students, colleges should carry out a variety of art practice activities, hold special art exhibitions and forums, offer systematic art

appreciation, art evaluation, and related aesthetic courses, and insist on the parallel importance of art theory courses and art practice courses. This will enrich the daily life of teachers and students and public art education, systematically improve the art and aesthetic ability of college teachers and students, form a complete and systematic public AECU, and improve the cultural atmosphere on campus. In addition, the construction and improvement of aesthetic education teachers should be strengthened and paid more attention. Colleges should build a systematic and reasonable aesthetic education teaching team, focus on the interdisciplinary and integration of disciplines, and establish a diversified aesthetic education platform, thus effectively realizing the comprehensive and systematic development of aesthetic education courses.

3.3 Promoting the Comprehensiveness of University Aesthetic Education

At present, colleges and universities are not very clear about the specific work of college students' aesthetic education, and aesthetic education has not formed a complete system, so it is necessary to strengthen the holistic construction of college students' aesthetic education system. Specifically, colleges need to pay attention to the behavioral characteristics and perceptual cognitive characteristics of college student groups, care about their development needs, make reasonable and effective use of campus networks, public websites, student radio stations, and other online and offline on-campus media platforms. They should fully motivate the enthusiasm and participation of students and constantly stimulate students' aspirations and desires for the arts, carrying out all-around aesthetic education and cultivation of college students. By making full use of professional, characteristic, and active campus art clubs and related organizations that can provide colorful campus activities and organize a variety of art and cultural practice activities, colleges can improve the artistic and cultural atmosphere. Colleges should combine the excellent traditional Chinese culture and spirit with the development trend of the new era, establish a systematic and complete aesthetic education curriculum system, and incorporate the socialist core values throughout to promote the cultivation atmosphere. Aesthetic education should be integrated with moral education, intellectual education, physical education, and work education, and the comprehensiveness of aesthetic education should be expanded to promote the overall development of college aesthetic education[9].

4 The Practical Strategy of Aesthetic Education in Colleges and Universities in the New Era

4.1 Innovating the Mechanism of Aesthetic Education, Comprehensively Improving Students' Quality, Cultivating All-Round Talents, and Realizing the Comprehensive Cultivation of Aesthetic Education

AECU should attach importance to the interdisciplinary characteristics of aesthetics,

art, design, pedagogy, etc., be guided by a perfect talent cultivation management system that emphasizes the concept of all-round talent cultivation, and infiltrate aesthetic education into all aspects of human education. Colleges and universities should speed up the cultivation of teachers who are fond of aesthetic education, familiar with students and art, and capable of teaching all kinds of aesthetic courses. They should optimize the structure of the teachers' group, take the principle of establishing morality as the basis, study in detail the characteristics of aesthetic education and the principle of teaching methods, to establish an all-round talent cultivation model with aesthetic education as the core orientation. Colleges and universities should also integrate aesthetic education courses into their cultivation programs so that every student can choose aesthetic education courses through the curriculum. At the same time, the importance of aesthetic education should be emphasized through the guidance of teaching programs.

4.2 Improvement of Aesthetic Education Carriers, Formation of Multi-Level and Diversified Aesthetic Education, Enhancement of the Atmosphere of Aesthetic Education on Campus, and Realization of Comprehensive Coverage of Aesthetic Education

Building a Complete Aesthetic Education Curriculum System to Achieve Comprehensive Coverage of Aesthetic Education Courses. Colleges should build a new platform for aesthetic education by combining new media technologies for contemporary education and teaching, in order to achieve the goals of aesthetic education in terms of large coverage, in-depth curriculum content, diversified forms of teaching, and specific educational objectives. Colleges should also plan the curriculum scientifically and rationally, and establish a multi-level and multi-dimensional aesthetic education curriculum system. This plan should include the number of courses according to major categories, effectively using campus and social resources to increase the total number of courses, which will achieve the popularization of aesthetic education courses in education, ensuring that each student takes at least one aesthetic education course. Moreover, the construction of appreciation courses with larger class capacities should be strengthened to meet the high demand for course selection. A small number of experiential practice courses should be offered to meet the needs of more specialized courses.

To realize the curriculum system of aesthetic education, on one hand, students' aesthetic literacy can be improved through the combination of appreciation and practice, and students' aesthetic interest and aesthetic appreciation ability can be enlightened through the main appreciation courses with large class capacities to perfect their emotions and hearts. On the other hand, a number of practice courses with special characteristics should be built to provide convenience for students with in-depth learning needs. Meanwhile, through experiential practice courses, students' practical skills, image thinking, and abstract thinking methods can be improved, stimulating students' imagination and creativity. For example, the college should develop traditional Chinese handicraft art courses into ladder courses to achieve in-depth and specialized course content to meet the needs of students to further improve aesthetic education.

Colleges are required to integrate aesthetic education programs with daily life so that aesthetic awareness can penetrate deep into the lives and hearts of students. Specific

practices include: holding regular annual college art festivals with cultural performances, handicraft demonstrations, artwork exhibitions, and aesthetic lectures as the main content; art and craft markets with students selling and buying handicrafts and artworks as the main content. Colleges should also combine aesthetic education courses with life to make the goals of aesthetic education concrete. For example, courses on dress design combined with color composition and other contents, courses on home decoration combined with artistic creation, courses on ceremony and flower arrangement combined with ceramic art, etc. Through exhibitions, lectures, markets, art festivals, and other diversified forms of activities, more students should be involved in aesthetic education activities to solve the current reality issue that aesthetic education courses are not deep and narrow, and learning goals are not clearly defined.

Taking the Experience of Art and Culture as An Entry Point, Carrying Out a Variety of Aesthetic Education Practices. The process of aesthetic education attaches great importance to students' sense of experience, and participation in the process of artistic innovation can greatly enhance students' satisfaction and sense of aesthetics. The experience and inheritance of art and culture are closely related. Only by integrating traditional culture into the classroom teaching and extracurricular practical activities of aesthetic education, enhancing and improving college students' experience of art and culture, can we effectively integrate traditional culture into the aesthetic education system, enhancing the affinity and infectious power of Chinese traditional culture[10].

Although art theory learning is relatively professional and in-depth, making it relatively boring for students, education with a strong sense of art practice is more attractive to them, which is more likely to trigger the interest and response of students. It can be achieved through organizing a variety of art and culture public welfare activities to provide practice opportunities for students. Therefore, colleges and universities can stimulate students' interest in learning art and culture through diversified extracurricular practical activities, and enhance the interactivity, participation, and experience of classroom teaching through various forms, promoting the reform of aesthetic education teaching. Colleges and universities should make use of existing resources to establish various art and culture platforms and practice bases. For example, fully cooperate with museums and art galleries, and systematically build an aesthetic education system that can effectively stimulate learning interest and improve aesthetic quality with art and culture experience as the starting point.

Implementing Art and Design-Related Activities to Improve the Aesthetics of Life.

Zeng Fanren, a lifelong professor at Shandong University and a famous aesthetician, believes that "aesthetic education should not only have art courses, but also be integrated into the whole process of our university education and the whole life of college students." Aesthetic education can be seen, felt, and used in specific ways to bring aesthetic awareness into the lives and minds of students[11]. Specifically, it includes organizing art activities for college students with handicraft demonstrations, artwork exhibitions, and aesthetic lectures as the main content; organizing handicraft exhibitions with handicraft and artwork; and combining aesthetic education courses with

extracurricular activities, linking courses on art creation, art appreciation, and traditional handicraft production, etc., to make the goal of aesthetic education concrete.

China is a vast country with different cultural concepts, which can provide broad and rich artistic inspirations and sources for design and art, as well as promote national self-confidence and patriotic education for teachers and students. Colleges should introduce different cultures into the practice of aesthetic education. For example, introduce different craftsmen, local traditional arts, handicrafts, etc., into the practice of aesthetic education, thereby enriching the mode of aesthetic education, teaching forms, and campus activities.

Colleges and universities should strive to make art museums places where teachers and students can rest, socialize, and study on a daily basis, as well as places of emotional value. They should hold various special exhibitions on art, organize fine art and design in combination with various disciplines, and hold special lectures and forums in conjunction with the exhibitions, or art and innovation workshops, etc. In addition, colleges and universities can organize various forms of art and innovative design activities, hold relevant exhibitions and competitions to attract wide participation of students. Colleges should make full use of the strengths of associations and invite experts in the field of international art and design to hold regular exchange activities to carry out aesthetic education. Campus art festivals should be held to integrate art into life. Employ artists and designers in various fields to support various kinds of exhibitions on campus, such as painting, film, and design exhibitions.

4.3 Building Bridges for Aesthetic Education and Promoting Inter-Professional and Inter-School Cooperation and Communication Within Schools, to Achieve Comprehensive Integration of Aesthetic Education

The new concept of liberal arts provides a new way for the implementation of aesthetic education, which involves the interdisciplinarity of aesthetic education[12]. Colleges should engage in professional cooperation, interdisciplinary teaching, and scientific research, using disciplines and projects that include aesthetic elements in science and technology majors as key mediums for aesthetic education. For example: military equipment design, digital performance, large-scale conference pyrotechnics, artificial intelligence and art design, etc., to further integrate higher education in science and technology with aesthetic education. In addition, colleges should also make full use of the academic and professional advantages of higher art colleges and universities. For instance, academic communication and resource sharing with art colleges and universities such as Tsinghua University Academy of Fine Arts, Central Academy of Fine Arts, Central Conservatory of Music, and Chinese Academy of Theatre and Opera. The combination of professional lectures, art exhibitions, academic exchanges, and other opportunities enriches students' leisure time and improves the artistic atmosphere on campus. Therefore, it promotes exchanges and cooperation between higher education institutions and other professional art institutions, realizes the concretization of the means of aesthetic education, explores a new model of aesthetic education in polytechnic institutions, and achieves its promotion in other institutions.

5 Conclusion

AECU should be fully integrated with the New Liberal Arts construction concept, actively exploring new modes and paths of aesthetic education in colleges and universities (AECU) and aiming to achieve the 'three characteristics' and 'three comprehensiveness' of AECU (Figure 1). Colleges should build a multi-dimensional, scientific, and reasonable aesthetic education system to comprehensively enhance students' aesthetic awareness and realize the ideological guidance of AECU. Colleges should improve the artistic cultivation of college students while improving the quality of their education and the quality of their work.

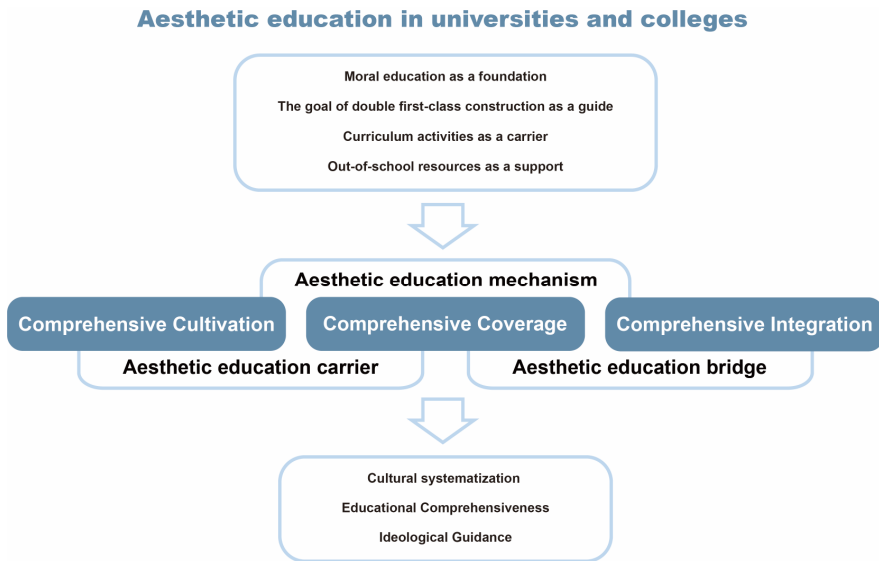


Fig. 1. Three characteristics and three comprehensiveness.

Moreover, colleges should make efforts to address the problem of insufficient design of the overall framework of aesthetic education courses by establishing a scientific and reasonable overall framework. This includes rationally allocating courses in the categories of fine arts, music, dance, and theatre, scientifically setting the capacity of classes according to the different types of courses, providing a wider range of choices for students, actively building appreciation courses, and offering various kinds of aesthetic education practices according to the categories to achieve comprehensive cultivation in aesthetic education.

In addition, the issue of inadequate design of the overall framework of aesthetic education courses should be addressed by establishing a scientific and reasonable overall framework, rationally allocating art, music, dance, theatre, and other kinds of courses, scientifically determining the capacity of classes according to different kinds of courses, covering a wider range of students' choices, actively building appreciation

courses, and offering all kinds of aesthetic education practices according to categories to achieve comprehensive cultivation in aesthetic education.

The status of insufficient curriculum resources on campus should also be changed. Combined with the existing conditions of aesthetic education programs in polytechnic colleges and universities, a professional institution should be established to provide management and implementation of AECU. The construction of an aesthetic education curriculum system should be improved to achieve comprehensive coverage of aesthetic education. The status of insufficient resources for aesthetic education should be coordinated, refining the teaching and practice of aesthetic education through the use of social resources and the integration of resources from art institutions. Professional teachers need to be introduced according to the planning of the curriculum system, and diversified teaching and practice of aesthetic education should be carried out to promote the sharing of resources within and outside the college and achieve comprehensive integration of aesthetic education.

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