

Practice of the Industry-Teaching-Research Integration Teaching Model in the Course "Cultural Symbols and Visual Design" within the Context of Rural Revitalization: A Case Study of the Yangfutan Project

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Abstract: The rural revitalization strategy imposes dual requirements on the "cultural literacy" and "practical capabilities" of design oriented talents. Nevertheless, the traditional teaching model of the course "Cultural Symbols and Visual Design" suffers from issues such as the disjunction between theory and practice and design's detachment from real world demands. This paper takes the Product Design major of Jingdezhen Ceramic University as the mainstay and Yangfutan Village in Changnan New District, Jingdezhen City as the practical subject, explores the reform of the industry-teaching-research integration teaching model for this course. Grounded in school-local cooperation, this model closely aligns course teaching with the visual image construction requirements of Yangfutan Village. Through leading students to conduct on site investigations and collate four categories of cultural symbols, namely, the village's historical legacies, red culture, industrial craftsmanship, and ecological geography, and with "village visual image design" as the core task, deliverables such as LOGOs and wayfinding systems are accomplished. By integrating project-based teaching theory, this research elaborates on the design and implementation process of the teaching model and validates its efficacy in enhancing students' cultural exploration, practical design, and service capacities. It aims to furnish a practical exemplar for the teaching reform of art and design courses against the backdrop of rural revitalization.

Keywords: Rural Revitalization; Cultural Symbols; Visual Design; Industry-Teaching-Research Integration; Project-Based Teaching; Yangfutan Village.

1. Introduction

The rural revitalization strategy is not merely a core initiative for promoting rural modernization but also embodies a profound demand for cultural inheritance and professional talent support. On one hand, rural revitalization should be grounded in regional culture. Through the excavation and activation of rural cultural symbols, as well as the inheritance of folk traditions and historical memories, the cultural identity of villagers can be enhanced. On the other hand, the implementation of this strategy urgently calls for design professionals who possess both "cultural literacy" and "practical capabilities." Such talents should be proficient in the extraction and transformation of cultural symbols and capable of applying design outcomes to meet the practical requirements of rural brand building, cultural and tourism promotion, and other aspects[1]. As the mainstay for cultivating design talents, art and design courses in institutions of higher education should not be confined to in-class skill instruction. Instead, they need to proactively align with local development needs, convert the real world issues of rural revitalization into teaching resources, and realize the dual values of "teaching for education" and "social service" while serving local cultural innovation and industrial development. This is not only the responsibility bestowed upon higher education institutions by the era but also the inevitable trajectory of art and design education reform[2].

Currently, the "Cultural Symbols and Visual Design" course has been offered for only two years in the Cultural Research and Innovative Design Studio of the Product Design major at Jingdezhen Ceramic University (hereinafter referred to as the "Studio"). The traditional teaching model falls short

of meeting the above mentioned requirements and has numerous limitations. The existing course still predominantly features theoretical lectures, and the practical components mostly remain at the level of "simulated topics." That is, students design around fabricated themes, neither conducting in-depth on site investigations into the local cultural fabric nor addressing the genuine needs of the market or the local community. This "isolated" teaching approach results in students having a superficial understanding of cultural symbols. Design works frequently deviate from real life scenarios, lack the distinctiveness of regional culture, and are also unable to meet practical demands. Students' practical abilities, communication skills, and service awareness are not effectively honed, presenting a significant disparity from the training objectives of comprehensive design talents.

In response to the above mentioned issues, the curriculum reform will closely integrate teaching with the actual needs of rural visual image construction.

2. The Core Logic and Theoretical Underpinnings of the Course

2.1. Construction of the Core Logic

Regional cultural symbols serve as the pivotal carriers embodying the history, culture, and distinctiveness of rural areas. In consonance with the "practical and service oriented" attributes of this course, the integration of industry, teaching, and research in this study is predicated on the core logic of "university based teaching, local demands, and application of outcomes". Jingdezhen Ceramic University, as a higher education institution, centers on curriculum instruction, imparting methodologies for the extraction and re-design of

cultural symbols, and integrating teaching with rural design research. The local government of Yangfutan Village, as the entity presenting the local demands, articulates requirements for visual image design and furnishes research resources and feedback. The design outputs of students are directly deployed for rural promotion, thereby actualizing a closed loop mechanism of "teaching generating outcomes, outcomes serving the locality, and local demands reinforcing teaching", thus transitioning design education from a virtual to a practical realm.

2.2. Theoretical Foundations

The project-based learning (PBL) constitutes the core theoretical rationale for undertaking the Yangfutan VI design as a major assignment in this course. Anchored by the "project" as its medium, it accentuates the construction of knowledge and competencies by students in the resolution of real world issues, which is highly congruent with the practical imperatives of visual design courses. The essence of this theory lies in the fact that the learning process unfolds around a comprehensive and pragmatically significant project task. Students, through stages such as independent planning, collaborative exploration, and practical creation, ultimately complete the project deliverables and effectuate the transfer of capabilities. In this course, the Yangfutan VI design major assignment is not a conventional virtual topic but a bona-fide design project grounded in the extraction of village cultural symbols and the forging of brand identities[3]. The application of this theory is initially manifested in positing "how to distill the rural cultural symbols of Yangfutan through VI design and contribute to rural brand development" as the central driving query, enabling students to delineate the tangible objective of design in the service of rural revitalization. Secondly, the course adheres to the full project cycle of "initiation, planning, execution, monitoring, and closure". From addressing the research requisites of the village government, to executing design components in groups, and then to presenting and defending the proposals, students are fully immersed in experiencing the entire commercial design process. Finally, this model surmounts the constraints of the "theoretical lecture plus case imitation" paradigm, necessitating students to integrate multi-faceted competencies encompassing cultural interpretation, design standards, and client communication. When grappling with real world challenges such as "balancing cultural symbolism with practicality" and "aligning design with rural settings", it effects a transition from "knowledge acquisition" to "competency application", which is in harmony with the objective of cultivating practice oriented design professionals through the integration of industry, teaching, and research.

3. Design of the Industry-Teaching-Research Integration Teaching Model Driven by the Yangfutan Project

3.1. Background and Objectives of Model Construction

Yangfutan, an ancient village with a millennium long history, harbors core assets for rural revitalization, encompassing its village layout, porcelain-making heritage, and folk cultural traditions. Nevertheless, in the realms of external promotion and brand establishment, the dearth of

visual design has emerged as a critical bottleneck impeding its progress. Through preliminary engagement and on site investigations with the Yangfutan village government, students in the studio have discerned the village's core design related requirements. These requirements not only highlight the practical challenges in rural development but also furnish a precise practical trajectory for the integration of industry, teaching, and research within the course.

Firstly, the absence of core visual image symbols in the rural context necessitates the construction of a unified cultural IP. The village government has conveyed that despite Yangfutan's historical pedigree as a "thousand-year-old village", it has long standingly lacked a systematic visual image plan. There is neither an exclusive LOGO nor a cultural symbol system capable of representing the village's distinctiveness. Whether in external publicity brochures, rural tourism guides, or the banners and materials for villagers' daily activities, there exists no uniform visual standard. Consequently, the external perception of Yangfutan is nebulous, and it is arduous to forge a brand impression of "instant recognition" through visual recall. There is an urgent imperative to design a set of visual image symbols that possess both distinctiveness and cultural depth. Secondly, cultural symbols have not undergone visualization, and the conduit between "cultural resources" and "visual representation" requires establishment. Research has revealed that Yangfutan preserves abundant cultural carriers, such as ancient camphor trees, ancient wharves, and red buildings. However, the majority of these cultural resources persist in the form of "static entities" and have not been transmuted into visual materials suitable for dissemination and promotion[4]. The village government aspires to convert them into specific visual symbols, such as LOGOs, color palettes, and auxiliary graphics, through design, rendering the culture "visible and accessible". This is not only conducive to villagers' formation of cultural identity but also provides visual support for subsequent rural tourism initiatives and agricultural product promotion.

3.2. Design of Teaching Model Elements

The redesign of the teaching model is segmented into three components: the reconfiguration of teaching content, the reengineering of the teaching process, and the establishment of a multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanism.

In respect of teaching content, with the actual requirements of the Yangfutan VI design project serving as the core orientation, the course content is reconstituted into three sequential phases: "extraction of cultural symbols, conceptualization of design proposals, and implementation and application of works", thereby deeply integrating the teaching content with the project execution sequence and actualizing "learning through doing and doing while learning".

In terms of the teaching process, this course operates on a four weeks cycle to construct a closed loop teaching process. In the first week, the emphasis is on demand introduction. Through collaboration with the Yangfutan village government, village cadres are invited to the classroom to expound upon the village's visual design requirements, and students are organized to conduct preliminary research to clarify the core objectives of the project. From the second to the third week, the scheme design stage is entered. Students, working in groups, undertake VI design in conjunction with the previously extracted cultural symbols. Teachers provide guidance throughout the process and facilitate mid-term

communication between the groups and the village government to gradually refine the design scheme. In the fourth week, the delivery of results is accomplished. Students submit a complete VI design scheme along with physical samples, present the results to the village government through a presentation and defense, and upon perfecting the details based on the feedback, formally deliver the results, thereby forming a complete teaching closed loop of "demand introduction, scheme design, and result delivery".

Moreover, the course has also established a multi-party collaborative teaching mechanism with a clear division of labor and close linkage, achieving resource integration and efficient collaboration via the four-week teaching cycle as the connecting link. Among them, under the leadership of the course instructor, several teachers and doctoral supervisors from the School of Design Art and the School of Ceramic Art at Jingdezhen Ceramic University are assembled to offer specialized guidance on professional issues such as the visual norms of VI design and the integration of ceramic culture and traditional patterns. The Yangfutan village government is deeply engaged in the collaboration, not only clearly defining and providing the specific requirements for rural visual design in advance but also furnishing transportation and venues for students' on site research. Students, organized into teams, serve as the main body of practice, and complete tasks such as research, design, and optimization through division of labor under the guidance of multiple parties. All parties form an efficient linkage through classroom seminars, mid-term communication, result defense, and other links, jointly propelling the implementation of teaching and project practice.

4. The Teaching Practice Process of Industry-Teaching-Research Integration Driven by the Yangfutan Project

4.1. Preliminary Preparation: School-local Docking and Task Allocation

Prior to the formal initiation of the teaching practice, the studio first conducted multiple rounds of docking with the Yangfutan village government in Changnan New District, Jingdezhen City. Through on site visits, symposiums, and other means, it thoroughly communicated the core requirements of the village's visual design and clarified the three major tasks that need to be accomplished with priority in this VI design: first, design the official LOGO of the village, with the requirement of incorporating core elements such as "thousand-year-old village", "agricultural culture", and "ceramic culture"; second, create promotional poster templates suitable for folk activities and tourism promotion; third, plan the internal wayfinding system design of the village, encompassing modules such as village entrance signs, road signs, and scenic spot introductions. The school and the local entity jointly determined the demand feedback mechanism and project delivery standards, charting a clear course for the subsequent teaching practice. Subsequently, the course issued tasks to students in the form of a "project kick-off meeting", making it clear that this course will take the Yangfutan VI design as the sole major assignment and emphasizing that the results must directly serve the actual needs of the village. In combination with the demand breakdown from the previous school-local docking, teachers

guided students to form groups of 2-3 members and adopted the "sub-task acceptance" model for work allocation. Each group focused on different cultural symbols of Yangfutan (such as "ancient bridge culture", "ancient camphor culture", and "ancient village architecture") and completed specific design contents respectively.

4.2. Mid-term Implementation: Classroom Instruction and Practice Advancement

In the mid-term phase, teaching is advanced with "cultural exploration, design practice, and dynamic adjustment" as the core to achieve a profound integration of classroom theory and rural practice. First, the work of cultural symbol exploration is carried out. In the classroom, rural cultural research (such as field survey methods and interview methods) and symbol extraction theories are taught, accompanied by case analyses[5]. Subsequently, students are organized to conduct on site research in cooperation with the village government, visiting historical sites and interviewing villagers to collect materials. Students, in conjunction with the regional cultural symbol extraction methods learned in the classroom (such as element decomposition, connotation mapping, and deconstruction and reorganization), visit historical sites like ancient wharves and ancient camphor trees and photograph village building textures, natural vegetation, and other materials[6]. After the research is completed, each group organizes the materials and engages in exchanges and brainstorming in the classroom, and finally integrates to form a unique design material library for Yangfutan, encompassing elements such as "ancient wharf patterns", "ancient camphor forms", and "Changjiang River colors", and ultimately completes the "Yangfutan Cultural Symbol Research Report", providing a cultural foundation for design practice.

During the design practice process, a promotion mechanism of "multi-tutor collaboration, in-group collaboration, and dynamic school-local communication" is established. Multiple tutors form a guidance team to provide targeted guidance on the cultural symbols and design tasks that each group focuses on, such as guiding the "Changjiang River Culture" group on how to abstract the river into LOGO lines. Each group has a clear internal division of labor, synchronizing the design progress and generating design inspiration through regular discussions. Simultaneously, the course organizes a periodic communication session every week, either inviting village government staff to the classroom or leading students to the village committee. Each group reports the initial design drafts (such as LOGO sketches and wayfinding system frameworks), and in light of the feedback opinions put forward by the village government, such as "highlighting the agricultural theme" and "simplifying the wayfinding text", adjusts the design direction in a timely manner, ensuring that the practice process remains in line with the actual needs of the village at all times.

4.3. Late Stage Outcome Conversion: Work Handover and Application

Following four weeks of teaching practice, over 40 sets of comprehensive Yangfutan VI design works were showcased. The content encompasses multiple modules, including the village LOGO, color palette, wayfinding system, promotional posters, and agricultural product packaging. Each set of works integrates the cultural symbols that respective groups concentrated on, creating a designoutcome repository characterized by both diversity and specificity.

Upon the presentation of the outcomes, the course organized the student team to conduct an official handover to the Yangfutan village government, elaborating in detail on the design concepts and the viability of implementation through an onsite defense. The village government, in accordance with practical requirements, screened from aspects such as cultural congruence and functionality, and ultimately selected one set of works as the official village LOGO, subsequently progressing with the phased implementation and application of the outcomes. During offline events, such as the National Day folk activities, the Agricultural Culture Festival, and the Crayfish Food Festival, the promotional posters, event emblems, and volunteer uniforms designed within this set were utilized uniformly. Simultaneously, the LOGO was applied to the cover and the internal page visual layout of external publicity brochures, and the profile picture and background image of the official social media platform were refreshed. This enabled the visual image of Yangfutan as a "thousand-year-old village" to be presented consistently across multiple channels, thereby achieving the conversion of teaching outcomes into practical value for rural development.

5. Practical Efficacy and Reflections of the Teaching Model

5.1. Analysis of Practical Efficacy

With the Yangfutan project as its vehicle, the teaching practice of industry-teaching-research integration has effectively gauged the outcomes of the teaching reform of the "Cultural Symbols and Visual Design" course within the ambit of rural revitalization. Its efficacy is principally manifested in three dimensions: the enhancement of students' capabilities, the conversion of teaching outcomes, and the dissemination of social benefits. Regarding the enhancement of students' comprehensive capabilities, by virtue of the full process practice of the Yangfutan project, through organizing students to undertake on site investigations, conduct questionnaire based interviews with villagers, collate cultural materials, and present results to the township government, among other activities in a series, students' core capabilities have undergone a transition from theory to practice. No longer confined to classroom case analyses, they have delved into the rural environment for visits and perused village chronicles, successfully extracting the core cultural symbols of Yangfutan. Their capacity for cultural exploration has shifted from "passive reception" to "active exploration". Concurrently, subsequent to clarifying the actual rural requirements, they have completed the full cycle design, ranging from scheme conceptualization, sketching, to finished product optimization, resolving the issue of "disconnect between design and rural needs". The implementability of their practical design capabilities has been notably augmented. Additionally, through repeated communication with villagers and township government personnel, their awareness of serving rural areas has evolved from a "nebulous concept" into "concrete actions", and their communication, expression, and team collaboration abilities have also been enhanced in tandem[7]. In terms of the conversion of teaching outcomes, this practice has yielded over 40 high quality visual design works, encompassing multiple categories such as LOGOs, brochures, wayfinding signs, and cultural and creative products. The outcomes are not merely adequate in quantity but have also achieved an efficient transformation from "classroom assignments to rural

practical items". The Yangfutan village government holds the students' works in high regard. One set of LOGO design schemes has been officially designated as the official image LOGO of Yangfutan village, and over ten sets of schemes, subsequent to integration and optimization, have been applied to the creation of the village's wayfinding system, tourist maps, and promotional posters. To commend the students' outstanding contributions, the township government has also specifically convened a results commendation ceremony, bestowing upon students awards including 1 special prize, 1 first prize, 2 second prizes, and 3 third prizes, and issuing corresponding certificates and bonuses, further affirming the practical value of the teaching outcomes. With respect to the dissemination of social benefits, the course practice is not merely a teaching activity but has also emerged as a "catalyst" for promoting the rural revitalization of Yangfutan. It has exerted a highly practical influence on the cultural promotion and image elevation of the village, effectively enhancing the subsequent publicity effectiveness, heightening villagers' recognition of the village's culture and image, and generating remarkable social impacts.

5.2. Reflection and Optimization of the Model

Upon summarizing the teaching practice of industry-teaching-research integration in the course, it has been identified that several issues persist during the four-week practice period. On one hand, communication between the school and the Yangfutan village government during project advancement predominantly takes the form of phased interactions, lacking a regularized communication mechanism. This has resulted in the untimely and inaccurate dissemination of certain actual rural demand information, thereby impacting the precision of students' designs. On the other hand, during the design process, students, constrained by their pursuit of aesthetic appeal and forward thinking in classroom learning, produce design proposals that exhibit a certain degree of divergence from real world rural application scenarios, villagers' levels of acceptance, and on site implementation conditions. The village government places greater emphasis on the practicality and operability of the proposals, whereas students often prioritize creative expression, giving rise to a disparity in demand perception. Simultaneously, the four-week course duration is notably insufficient when juxtaposed with the onerous tasks of exploring rural culture, completing multi-category design works, and facilitating the implementation of outcomes. This has led to students conducting less in-depth cultural research and refining some design proposals inadequately, to a certain extent affecting the practical outcomes.

In response to the aforementioned concerns, the following optimization recommendations are put forth for the teaching model. At the school-local cooperation level, a long term and stable school-local cooperation mechanism should be instituted, as opposed to merely ad hoc docking during the course. A long term cooperation agreement can be inked with the Yangfutan village government to delineate the responsibilities of both parties and the communication procedures, ensuring the efficient and seamless flow of information. In the course preparation phase, the teaching faculty and a select group of student representatives can be organized 1-2 months in advance to carry out in-depth rural demand research, collate and formulate a detailed rural demand inventory and cultural data package to assist students in promptly and accurately grasping rural needs. At the course

task setting level, the existing four-week concentrated advancement model should be overhauled, and task arrangements should be optimized in stages. The first stage centers on cultural research and symbol extraction. In conjunction with prior work, students are furnished with the prepared data package, and 0.5 weeks are allocated to ensure the progression of research result applications. The second stage emphasizes proposal conceptualization and draft design, with a 2-week allocation and the involvement of village government personnel for mid-term guidance to rectify design discrepancies promptly. The third stage reserves 1 week for proposal optimization, outcome integration, and report preparation, and the final 0.5 week is earmarked for outcome presentation and communication. Through staged progression, not only can the pressure of tight schedules and heavy workloads be alleviated, but also the quality and efficacy of teaching practice can be enhanced.

6. Conclusion and Prospects

This study utilizes the Yangfutan project as a practical medium to explore the teaching model of industry-teaching-research integration for the course "Cultural Symbols and Visual Design" within the context of rural revitalization. The outcomes of the practice have fully attested to the feasibility and efficacy of this model. By converting the genuine needs of rural areas into course teaching assignments, students' competencies in on site investigation, cultural excavation, practical design, and service related communication have been notably enhanced. Among the over 40 design deliverables, dozens of sets have been embraced and implemented by the township government. This not only actualizes the value transition from "classroom tasks to rural practical items" but also validates the propelling significance of the industry-teaching-research integration model for the reform of design courses. It dismantles the barrier in traditional classrooms where "theory is disjointed from practice", enabling the exploration of cultural symbols to transcend the limitation of case based analysis and visual design to align with real world demands. It furnishes an actionable practical paradigm for how design courses can serve rural revitalization and how to achieve the "teaching-practice-output" closed loop. Simultaneously, this model also constructs a bridge for collaborative talent nurturing between educational institutions and local entities. It infuses design impetus into rural cultural development and offers authentic scenarios for talent cultivation in higher education institutions, thereby achieving mutual benefits and a win-win situation for both parties.

Building upon the practical experience of the Yangfutan project, this teaching model of industry-teaching-research

integration holds the potential for dissemination in more rural regions and other design courses. Regarding the dissemination pathway, on one hand, a "long term school-local cooperation database" can be established to collate the cultural characteristics and design requirements of diverse rural areas, thereby formulating a replicable standardized procedure of "demand research, task decomposition, and outcome conversion" to offer a reference for the engagement of other township projects. On the other hand, course boundaries can be broken down, and this model can be applied to other design courses, including environmental design, product design, and digital media design. In the future, it is anticipated that commencing from this model, a greater number of design courses in higher education institutions will be propelled to deeply integrate into the rural revitalization strategy. Through the continuous optimization of the school-local collaborative mechanism and the refinement of the course evaluation system, more composite talents proficient in both design and rural affairs will be cultivated, providing more robust intellectual support for rural cultural revitalization. Concurrently, it will also offer more abundant practical exemplars for the industry-teaching-research integration reform of design courses in higher education institutions.

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