

Construction of a "Four-in-One" Extracurricular Practice Education System for Landscape Design Majors

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Abstract: The paper analyzes the current state and issues of practice-oriented education in landscape design majors, and based on theories, principles, and methods related to practice-oriented education, it elaborates on the basic situation, development trends, and advantages of the "four-in-one" practice-oriented education system, which integrates party construction, social practice, competitions, and traditional culture and arts. It summarizes the experience and significance of the practice-oriented education system as a model for landscape design majors, providing a reference for related professional educators to construct practice-oriented education systems and engage in research on practice-oriented education.

Keywords: Landscape Design; Practice-Oriented Education; Art Education; Party Building Innovation.

1. Introduction

Landscape design is a highly integrative applied discipline that emphasizes the infusion of rationality with art and the combination of theory with practice.[1] In the study of landscape design, there is a focus on cultivating students' practical abilities and nurturing their artistic literacy. However, current professional education practices tend to overemphasize students' professional knowledge and drawing design skills, neglecting the exercise of students' comprehensive practical abilities, which has led to numerous issues.

2. Current Status of Professional Education Practice and Cultivation

2.1. Predominantly Classroom Learning, Lack of Second-Classroom Ideological and Political Education Positions

The current ideological and political education is mainly focused on the study of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the first classroom, which is merely confined to textbooks. Students' understanding of the history of the Communist Party of China, the history of New China, the history of the development of socialism, and the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is only at the stage of rational memory, lacking emotional cognition. The degree of ideological and political education is insufficient. Currently, top talents in the landscape design major are draining away. After going abroad for professional study and further education, many choose to stay and develop in foreign countries, which is detrimental to the development of the landscape design industry in our country.

2.2. The Focus is Mainly on Professional Studies, But There is a Lack of Social Responsibility

Current landscape design education places too much emphasis on book knowledge, and students' design topics are often limited to sites provided by teachers during lectures, which are often remote and only supported by a few current

status photos and aerial videos. Students cannot feel the real scale of the site during the design process, have insufficient cognition of the site, do not come into contact with the real needs of clients, and are not aware of the social responsibilities that designers bear. Consequently, most students choose to rush through and merely cope with their drawing assignments, wasting a lot of manpower and resources, and the teaching outcomes are mediocre. The comprehensive nature of professional study itself brings a heavy workload, leaving students with little time to pay attention to the world beyond their major. For landscape design students, their third-year professional internships across the country feel more like a break than a learning opportunity, making it difficult for them to maintain a long-term, sustained passion for their studies. At the same time, the broad vision and inclusiveness required by professional study demand that students go out and see the world. In addition to the professional knowledge learned on campus, students' understanding of national and social development is limited to images and text on their phones and computers. The formalization of summer social practice in current colleges and universities is quite common, making it difficult for students to gain a good understanding of national and social development in such practices.

2.3. Theory-based Teaching is the Mainstay, With Drawing Simulations as A Supplement, and There is a Lack of Practical Teaching Components, making it Difficult to Meet Market Demands.

The current landscape design education focuses heavily on classroom theory teaching and hypothetical design exercises. In practical training, there is an emphasis on drawing effects and expression techniques, while on-site construction is often overlooked[2]. Students lack proper understanding of material varieties, properties, details, construction techniques, and maintenance methods, and they have weak hands-on skills. Prolonged classroom teaching greatly undermines students' enthusiasm for professional study, leading directly to a disconnect between what schools produce and what the market demands[3]. An overemphasis on theory and drawing

design also leads many students to overvalue design positions, excessively pursuing design roles in their job searches and undervaluing other positions such as construction, resulting in job competition and imbalance, indirectly contributing to employment pressure.

2.4. The Current Landscape Design Major is Primarily Focused on Professional Studies, with A Lack of Artistic Cultivation.

The current landscape design education focuses on practicality in course offerings, with teaching aimed at practicality. Students only have access to professional art training related to their major, such as composition art classes, sketching, watercolor, and landscape design presentation techniques. As a discipline that unites art and rationality, a small number of monotonous art courses struggle to ignite the interest of students who do not have a background in art or do not possess a strong artistic sensibility. Art itself is more intuitive; if students cannot empathize or fully identify with it, they cannot be inspired to take an interest in art[4]. Data from the 2016 graduating class of Nanjing Forestry University's College of Landscape Architecture on grade point averages and employment statistics show that students with a strong interest in their major or art often achieve higher grade point averages and maintain a high level of enthusiasm for their major, even in a time of high career-switching rates, and have promising development. It is noteworthy that a lack of artistic cultivation is a problem faced by the vast majority of landscape design students, which will greatly affect their interest in the landscape design major itself. Landscape design, being a highly integrated discipline that includes art, plants, ecology, architecture, engineering, and more, becomes difficult to excel in and graduate into a successful career in the landscape design industry without a strong interest as a driving force.

3. The Theoretical Foundation and Significance of Practice-Oriented Education

3.1. The Marxist Theoretical Foundation of Practice-Oriented Education

The viewpoint of practice is the core viewpoint of Marxist philosophy. Practice determines cognition, practice is the source and motive force of cognition, but also the purpose and destination of cognition, practice is the only standard to test truth. Therefore, in the process of practical education, we should realize the important significance of practice for understanding and testing the truth, and take better service for national rejuvenation and socialist modernization as the general goal of practical education, and practice education itself should be combined with the specific reality of the profession and with the excellent traditional Chinese culture.

3.2. The Practical Significance of Practice-Oriented Education: The Intrinsic Needs for the Growth, Talent Development, and Progress of College Students

Constructivist learning theory posits that learning is an active construction process, where students build knowledge through hands-on operation and problem-solving. John Dewey's educational perspective emphasizes that learning should occur through practice, experience, and reflection. He

believed that education is not just about preparing for future careers but about preparing for the all-around development of life through practical experiences. Kolb's experiential learning theory proposes a cyclical model that includes concrete experience, reflective observation, formation of abstract concepts, and finally testing in new situations, thereby promoting in-depth learning and personal development. These theories all stress the enhancement of understanding and skills through practice, which is an indispensable part of modern education.

From the perspective of college students' growth, talent development, and progress, practice-oriented education provides students with opportunities to engage with society, understand social development dynamics, and participate in social service activities, helping students to establish correct worldviews, life views, and values, and fostering a sense of social responsibility. Practice-oriented education is an important way for students to connect theory with practice, deepening their understanding of their major. Through various team collaboration activities, practice-oriented education offers a platform for students to collaborate, communicate, and exchange, enhancing their interpersonal communication skills and the ability to solve practical problems. During the process of practice-oriented education, students' innovative thinking and personal qualities will also be improved. In summary, practice-oriented education is a crucial pathway for students to establish their three views, professional qualities, and skill enhancement.

3.3. Practice-oriented Education Represents the Unity of Modern Educational Philosophy, Educational Models, and Educational Practice.[5]

The pedagogical methods of practice-oriented education integrate the core elements of modern educational philosophy, models, and practices, aiming to achieve comprehensive educational goals. In terms of modern educational philosophy, there is an emphasis on learner-centeredness, lifelong learning, and holistic education. It is believed that education should not be limited to traditional knowledge transfer but should more broadly focus on the cultivation of students' abilities, the shaping of values, and the development of personality. Educational models provide specific methods and strategies to realize these philosophies, especially the practice-oriented model, which emphasizes promoting the comprehensive enhancement of students' abilities through practical operations, social practice, and scientific research training activities. Educational practice applies these philosophies and models to specific teaching activities, covering the practical operation of curriculum design, teaching methods, and evaluation systems. These three aspects are integrated into the educational process of practice-oriented education, not only promoting students' in-depth understanding of theoretical knowledge but also fostering critical thinking, innovation, and social responsibility in the process of solving real-world problems. This integration reflects the ultimate goal of education: to prepare students for their future social life and cultivate them to become well-rounded individuals capable of meeting future challenges.

3.4. Principles for the Construction of Practice-Oriented Education System

Centering on Competency Development: In higher

education institutions, practice-oriented teaching, regardless of the form of instruction, types of courses established, or categories of activities organized, should focus on enhancing students' capabilities, forming a sharp contrast to traditional education methods that primarily focus on knowledge transmission. The goal of practical education is to enable students to transform theoretical knowledge into practical problem-solving abilities, including the cultivation of various skills such as hands-on operation, social adaptability, teamwork, and innovation and entrepreneurship.

Ensuring Comprehensive Education: Practice-oriented education in higher education should not be limited to a single practical link or the pursuit of short-term effects. Instead, it should follow educational principles and be integrated into the overall learning process of students. Educational activities should be centered around cultivation goals and gradually unfolded to ensure the comprehensive development of students' abilities. At the same time, higher education institutions should implement a full-process monitoring and evaluation system, optimizing educational strategies through regular checks and feedback to ensure that practice-oriented education achieves the desired goals.

Focusing on Professional Education as a Breakthrough: Practice-oriented education should highlight the characteristics of professional education, ensuring that educational activities align with professional requirements. Combining practice with professional education not only promotes the coherence of theory and practice but also helps to stimulate students' professional enthusiasm, strengthen professional concepts, improve professional skills, and accelerate the transformation from knowledge to capabilities.

Guiding with Educational Diversity: The design and implementation of practice-oriented education should be differentiated based on the differences in college types, disciplinary majors, student characteristics, and practical content. Educational content and targets should be adaptively designed for different levels and categories to ensure the targeted and effectiveness of practice-oriented education. Corresponding practice-oriented education goals and methods should be designed for students of different majors and grades to meet their specific needs and developmental stages.

4. The Construction of a "Four-in-One" Extracurricular Practice Education System

4.1. Party Building Practice-Oriented Education - Focusing on Ideological Guidance and Solidifying Political Foundations

Colleges and universities should prioritize morality in carrying out moral education and talent cultivation work. Moral education solves the problem of who to cultivate people for. President Xi Jinping pointed out that the development direction of higher education should be closely linked to the current goals and future directions of China's development, serving the people, serving the governance of the Communist Party of China, consolidating and developing the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, and serving socialist modernization and reform and opening up. The core of Party building practice lies in utilizing Party building activities to cultivate and improve students' ideological and

political qualities.

4.2. Social Practice Education - Focusing on National and Global Issues, Expanding International Perspectives

President Xi Jinping emphasized that writing papers on the vast land of China and actively engaging in social practice work is an important way for current college students to establish the "four correct understandings." Actively participating in social practice activities helps students apply theoretical knowledge to real-world problems, deepen their understanding of their major, and enhance their ability to solve practical issues. At the same time, engaging in social practice can accumulate valuable social experience, understand societal needs, and adapt to the social environment, helping students to more clearly recognize their career interests and development directions. Through community service and public welfare practices, students can also cultivate a sense of social responsibility. Undertaking social practice projects in different regions and countries provides opportunities to encounter diverse cultures, expand professional horizons, and strengthen the ability to communicate and understand across cultures. Social practice not only provides a practical platform for students' personal development but also lays a foundation for them to better serve the construction of socialist modernization in the future.

4.3. Competition Practice Education - Competitions Hone Skills and Build Physical Fitness

Competition practice should be regarded as an important platform for honing professional skills and broadening students' horizons. Through competitive activities, students are able to apply knowledge in practice, enhancing their ability to solve real-world problems and innovate. Such activities can comprehensively improve the quality of talent cultivation and create an all-round, full-process educational environment. From the perspective of college student development theory, college competitions have the characteristics of "high-impact educational activities," requiring students to apply knowledge in practice, invest a significant amount of time and energy, emphasize deep thinking, have frequent and effective interactions, and provide timely and rich feedback. The challenging problems in competitions demand that students mobilize their knowledge reserves and combine practice to discover, analyze, and solve problems, thereby improving their knowledge level, professional skills, innovation, cooperation, and communication abilities. The significance of competition practice lies in providing students with the opportunity to mobilize their knowledge reserves and combine practice to discover, analyze, and solve problems through challenging tasks, thus enhancing their knowledge level, professional skills, innovation, cooperation, and communication abilities. These capabilities are crucial for their future career development and the fulfillment of social responsibilities.

4.4. Traditional Culture and Art Practice Education - Broadening Artistic Horizons and Enhancing Cultural Confidence

Landscape design is a discipline that unifies art and rationality. In addition to rational thinking, the cultivation of artistic literacy is particularly important, and it can be said

that artistry is the most prominent feature that distinguishes landscape design from other engineering majors. Currently, landscape design majors often recruit students from across the country who majored in physics and history, and these students generally have a low level of artistic literacy. Moreover, professional education only includes various courses required for professional study, which is insufficient for cultivating students' artistic literacy, leading to a lack of interest in professional study. Traditional art is an important part of aesthetic education, and through practice, it can cultivate students' aesthetic abilities and art appreciation skills. The rich forms of expression and profound historical heritage of traditional art can stimulate students' creativity and imagination. The practice of traditional art also involves the cultivation of specific skills and craftsmanship, which helps to improve students' hands-on abilities. At the same time, inheriting and promoting excellent traditional culture and art is the responsibility of every Chinese person and is essential for enhancing cultural confidence.

4.5. To Support the Ability to Improve

Studying the experience of practice-oriented education in landscape design majors is crucial for understanding how to combine professional knowledge with practical application. Landscape design is a highly practical field that requires students to not only master theoretical knowledge in garden design, botany, ecology, and other areas but also to possess practical abilities in field research, design, planning, and management. Through practice-oriented education, students can apply their knowledge in real or simulated work environments, and this experiential education is highly effective in cultivating their professional skills and innovative thinking. The "four-in-one" extracurricular practice education

system, which integrates party-building practice to strengthen students' value orientation, social practice to enhance students' sense of social responsibility, competition practice to improve students' professional practice levels, and artistic practice to cultivate students' artistic literacy, comprehensively develops students' practical abilities from four different angles. Research on this practice-oriented education system can provide a reference for peers in landscape design professional education and offer insights for educators in other fields seeking to build their own practice-oriented education systems.

Acknowledgments

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