

***Reform and Practice of Project-Based Teaching Mode of Visual Communication Design
Course in the Context of Application Transformation***

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Abstract

Project-based learning, as a crucial component of the training objectives of applied undergraduate visual communication design talents, is the backbone and key to enhancing students' employability in light of the transformation and upgrading of the industrial structure of national and local economies. This article suggests reform strategies by interpreting the national strategy on "application transformation" and by appreciating and thoroughly analysing the issues with the visual communication design curriculum. It puts them into practice to serve as a guide for the creation of the visual communication curriculum's project-based teaching style. This essay starts with a change in how visual communication design is taught at higher education institutions. It talks about the unique project-based learning implementation strategy. To develop a cutting-edge project-based teaching approach, it is suggested to mix production and teaching, industry and teaching, and enterprise and teaching. The project-based teaching approach combines the ideas of production and instruction, industry and instruction, and enterprise and instruction to create a cutting-edge project-based teaching approach that will incorporate entrepreneurship education and practical operation in the course of experience and create a teaching mode that satisfies the demand for visual communication design talent in the new society. Ultimately, this will unite higher education and industrial development to play up better the features and functions of higher education institutions while also enabling us to establish a teaching model that fulfils the community's demands for visual communication design talent in the modern day.

Keywords: Applied Transformation, Visual Communication Design, Project-Based Teaching Model, Teaching Practice

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Introduction - Interpretation of the national policy on "application transformation"

In recent years, four documents at the national level have mentioned application transformation: first, the State Council's decision on May 2, 2014, to accelerate the development of modern vocational education, which made a strategic choice to guide several general undergraduate higher education schools to transform into application technology type higher education schools; Second, on June 16, 2014, six State Council ministries and commissions jointly created the Plan for the Construction of Modern Vocational Education System (2014-2020). "Type of Application Technology Higher Education Institutions Play a Vital Role in the System of Higher Education and Enjoy Parity with Other General Undergraduate Institutions," which put forth a plan to aid in the transformation of undergraduate higher education institutions situated in areas serving industry and regional economic and social development; thirdly On October 21, 2015, the Ministries of Education, National Development and Reform Commission, and Finance released the "Guidance on guiding some local general undergraduate colleges and universities to transform to application type," which made a comprehensive plan to guide some local general undergraduate colleges and universities to transform to application type and proposed to determine the number of pilot colleges and universities to explore the idea. fundamental concepts and type placement; Fourth, the State Council published "Several Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Industry and Education" on December 19, 2017, outlining work plans that included developing top-tier, application-oriented undergraduate colleges and universities as a pilot project and improving the undergraduate application- and talent-training systems. Each of the four papers that relate to application-oriented schools and universities explicitly identifies the sort of university being discussed. The goal of the development is also explained in detail in the "Guiding Opinions on Guiding Some Local Ordinary Undergraduate Colleges and Universities to Transform into Application-Oriented" and the "Several Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Industry and Education," which present the opinions of different parties. The "Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Industry and Education" outlined specific requirements for the development of high-level applied undergraduate colleges and universities, including the creation and improvement of a training program that focuses primarily on developing applied talents in response to market demands. As can be seen from the foregoing, application transformation is a prescriptive requirement for the development goals of local undergraduate colleges and universities based on university classification and management systems in the context of national development strategy deployment at the macro level and ultimately turning to application-oriented universities.

The etymology of application means "to adapt to the needs for use" (Zou, 2015). Transformation refers to the change of the structure and operation model of things, mainly reflected in the changes in structure and form (Wang & Shan, 2006). The same is true for the application transformation of regional general undergraduate colleges and universities; in other words, the application transformation of regional public undergraduate colleges and universities can be viewed as a change in the nature of universities and a move toward application to address societal needs. This involves the development of universities' structural components, organisational structure, and direction of development. In short, it means that the type of university points to application-oriented. 2011, the new version of ISCED issued by UNESCO divides higher education into four levels: 5, 6, 7 and 8, and application-oriented universities belong to level 6. Germany divides universities into two types: traditional comprehensive universities and applied universities. The three categories of higher education in China include research, application, and vocational skills, according to the "Opinions on

the Establishment of Higher Education Institutions in the Thirteenth Five-Year Plan" released by the Ministry of Education on January 25, 2017. The conventional categories of university kinds in China include research universities, teaching and research universities, and teaching universities.

In addition, at some level, the transformation of universities is objective and cannot hold any prejudice and misunderstanding about applied transformation. As Burton R. Clark pointed out: "The transformation of universities has been mentioned at the top of the agenda of modern universities" (Clark, 2007). To better fulfil the demands of sociopolitical and economic growth and to follow the goal of applied universities, the universities themselves, certain local undergraduate institutions, have evolved into applied universities as China's higher education has progressed to the current day. Application transformation is not a superficial level of university-type transformation but a deeper level of the practical process of university ideal to reality. This means that application transformation must run the university in accordance with the law of internal development of higher education, respecting the university itself, adhering to the university's fundamentals, and realizing the internal development of the university itself, in addition to running the university in accordance with the law of social development to serve society and raise the student employment rate.

Dealing with the relationship between staying true to the fundamentals of the university and promoting applied transformation. As Mannheim said: "Rebuilding a society in flux is much like replacing the wheels of a train in motion, not like rebuilding a house on a new foundation" (Mannheim, 2013). The same is true for local undergraduate institutions in transition today, which need to adhere to the university's fundamentals and achieve the transformation and construction of the university type, which requires dealing with the relationship between applying transformation and adhering to the fundamentals of the university.

To do an excellent job in the development of the humanities and arts disciplines and the orientation of the application of the transformation of institutions to build humanities and arts disciplines can not be done by the traditional "pure" liberal arts model to run liberal arts, as far as possible with the application of the transformation of the direction of development. To do this requires efforts in two areas: First, the humanities and arts disciplines' growth directions should be changed to support regional social and economic development. Application transformation is not only in the direction of applied technology universities but also in the direction of teaching and service universities, innovative and entrepreneurial universities and so on. The initial stage of China's application transformation has a relatively narrow understanding of the application transformation that the application transformation is just the transformation to the application of technical universities, "in fact, 'applied technology university' and 'applied university' can not draw equal numbers" (Hou, 2015). A new kind of institution that places more emphasis on developing application-focused talent at the undergraduate level than research universities is known as an applied university. Suppose the application of transformation is only positioned in the direction of the development of applied technology universities, humanities and arts disciplines due to the need for more technology. In these conditions, implementing the development transformation into practice is difficult, but developing humanities and artistic disciplines to move the service's orientation toward local economic and social development is quite achievable and should be done. Transformation is used wherever it may benefit local economic and social advancement. Local universities, for instance, can support the community by doing regional economic, cultural, and think tank research; what is it if not applied transformation? Second, they should

"choose those liberal arts majors close to natural sciences, technical sciences, engineering sciences, etc. as their targets" (Feng, Zou, Cao, & Chen, 1986). Suppose an institution transforms itself into a technically oriented institution specialising in philosophy. In that case, it should focus on more than just studying philosophical principles but on developing sub-disciplines such as the philosophy of science and the philosophy of technology. In short, applied technology institutions hosting liberal arts majors should highlight the characteristics of applied technology institutions.

To sum up, on the one hand, we should actively promote the application of transformation and insist that the confidence and determination of the application of transformation should not be shaken. However, on the other hand, we should keep a clear head, be patient and adventurous, and adhere to the fundamentals of the university. What belongs to the fundamentals of the university must be supported. This is the applied transformation dialectic and the core of the higher education philosophy.

Issues with the established methods of teaching visual communication design

1. The teaching mode is unreasonable. Due to the application transformation, the traditional professional practice teaching process of visual communication design has not been able to keep up with the standards and requirements. As a result, it is necessary to reform the current professional practice of teaching visual communication design to bring it more in line with student needs and social development. The field of graphic communication design is vast. Consider that educators must impart to pupils the necessary theoretical information and provide practice exercises that are both clear and effective. Many novices would feel like they need assistance in that situation. A strong sense of spatial imagination is necessary for the conventional practical teaching of visual communication design. Many helpful teaching concepts can only be understood but need to be communicated, which inevitably increases the difficulty for students in the learning process. Additionally, to finish the practical teaching task on time, many teachers fail to take into account the students' mastery of the pertinent knowledge and instead focus solely on drawing practice. As a result, some students leave the last class not knowing how to design but only "drawing from the cat," which is contrary to the definition of the profession of visual communication design. This is not the goal of practical instruction.

2. Not reasonably applied to new media technology. New media technology improves the quality of professional practice teaching visual communication design. Although many educators and students are unaware of the benefits of new media technology and utilise it for their own amusement, this has to change. New media technologies - catechism, micro-lessons, and flipped classrooms - can show students abstract content in vivid animations, which reduces the requirement for students' spatial imagination, minimises the difficulty of learning the content, enhances the effectiveness of classroom instruction and student learning by assisting students in better understanding the subject matter. This improves student comprehension of the lesson material, the standard of classroom instruction, and the effectiveness of student learning.

3. Between theoretical instruction and real-world application, there is a gap. Academic teaching is a service for practical application. The goal of theoretical instruction can only be effectively served when students' theoretical knowledge can be appropriately matched with practical application. According to recent studies on the practical teaching of visual communication design, the gap between academic instruction and real-world application is

more problematic; in the actual process of creation, many theories are not used, or sometimes in the process of design, many of the knowledge used has not been learned. On the one hand, the experimental operation process will be impacted by the gap between theoretical education and practical application, which is detrimental to the efficient advancement of the relevant task; On the other hand, it also instils in children the idea that the theoretical information they gain is pointless, which is bad for their ability to study.

4. There has to be a revision to how practical teaching courses are organised. Designing for visual communication should adhere to both theoretical and practical standards. However, in the actual teaching course layout, the theory courses have significantly longer class periods than the practical ones, which prevents students from naturally integrating their theoretical learning with practical instruction. By arranging more practical methods, students can better grasp theoretical knowledge and improve their practical skills more quickly.

5. Course content arrangement is not reasonable. To complete the teaching task on time, some teachers arrange the class contents haphazardly so that many students have to learn some more difficult content before they can learn the relevant basic knowledge, which increases the burden on students' learning and does not conform to the teaching law of moving from simple to complex and progressive. We know that for beginners, designing a high level of work is a very time-consuming and laborious process, and the requirements for beginners' basic skills are very high; if the teacher from the beginning of the lecture takes complicated drawing cases to students, it will undoubtedly affect the students' enthusiasm for learning, causing them a great learning force.

6. The teaching process must include developing pupils' capacity for autonomous invention. In order to fully utilise students' potential for independent design and maximise their future growth, the teaching process must incorporate the development of their capacity for independent creativity. Although studying, learning and understanding the essence of others' works in the early stages of configuration is necessary, over-reliance on others' methods can sap students' desire to design independently.

Examining how project-based learning may be improved in courses on visual communication design

The project has taken on a project-based teaching reform of our visual communication curriculum with the following particular revisions in response to how this study interprets national policy and the issues in the current visual communication design curriculum.

1. Construct a reasonable curriculum system

The curriculum should be skewed since the visual communication design course cultivates specialised abilities. Since the course's orientation is clear, it is necessary for professional teachers to have a thorough understanding of students' overall training plans when creating the syllabus, particularly the coherence and continuity of the courses taken before and after the course in visual communication design, in order to set the course's content reasonably and create a system for teaching it. The visual communication design course uses minor graphic design instances, such as book design, online design, electronic publishing design, etc., as teaching objects based on the current situation at our institution. Despite the fact that the course material is organised from simple to complicated and shallow to deep, it is easier to begin developing since these contents are more relevant to the major's pupils. The course in

visual communication design is practical and has a solid connection to society. In order to give students more opportunities to acquire professional knowledge, the school invites graphic designers, well-known designers in the domestic visual communication design industry, and professors from renowned universities in the field to give lectures and introduce the most recent development trends in the field of visual communication design. Additionally, we send students on field visits to examine excellent examples of visual communication design.

2. Increasing the quality of teachers' instruction and encouraging the development of dual-teacher instructors

The field of visual communication design is continually changing, necessitating that educators raise the bar on their instruction and refresh their expertise, particularly in the area of practical skills. To allow students to engage, experienced teachers might undertake in their leisure time visual communication design projects or research projects related to visual communication design. Students should first become interested in learning visual communication design during the teaching process. After completing a set of programming tasks, students can be encouraged to become more collaborative, which will increase communication between them and aid in the program's successful implementation. The evaluation program should enable students to become more independent thinkers, help them hone their design abilities, and motivate them to submit better ideas. Teachers can also guide students in making full use of internet tools to locate reliable data and acquire design materials. They might also recommend to pupils some reliable design reference books. Our school's teachers have recently improved their practical hands-on ability and teaching level through the in-depth development of activities like on-the-job practice, on-the-job training, and school-enterprise cooperation, combined with the actual visual communication design projects. They have also established a "double-teacher" teaching team with top-notch technology so that it can contribute more significantly to teamwork, scientific research, and instruction (Kang, 2011).

3. Modifying instructional strategies, incorporating building practice with competition projects, and introducing project-based learning

With "Milan Design Week," "Student Advertising Design Competition," and other national university students' visual communication design competition projects as our starting point, we adopt the project case teaching methodology. This method combines various skill competitions and practical training projects. The students will learn to report their design solutions, so they can gradually master the ability of visual communication design in terms of planar composition, effect drawing and presentation of visual communication design solutions. Secondly, through school-enterprise cooperation, students will be able to experience the actual projects and develop their perception of visual communication design through on-site visits to visual communication design companies and printing factories. To ensure that students have enough time to engage in social practice to grow their professional knowledge and abilities, a matching plan is developed each semester in line with the teaching arrangement. Finally, students are urged to take an active role in the project's design, engage in role-playing activities that put them in each student's actual role, visit the project site with them to explain the project's environment and the A party's requirements, and then have each group present their work in class while each student explains their design and engages in discussion with the others. The instructor will offer suggestions for improvement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the project-based teaching reform has produced specific findings for the future growth of the visual communication design professional direction to establish the groundwork, taking into account the real-world circumstances of our school and the teaching reform study of the course. This teaching reform's primary objectives are to improve teachers' levels of instruction, enlarge the curriculum, implement "project-based" learning based on actual visual communication design cases, foster students' ability to express themselves creatively in a comprehensive way, experiment with various teaching methods, and strengthen the links between theoretical and practical teaching. We also strengthen the depth of teaching through the preparation of teaching materials, reference books, the creation of pertinent courseware, and animation in order to improve students' mastery of visual communication design theory, deepen their understanding of the discipline of visual communication design, broaden their horizons, and cultivate their independent learning ability, theoretical thinking ability, and critical learning ability in practice. Students can build their complete abilities in visual communication design in a leapfrog fashion under the direction of the "project-based" teaching approach, allowing them to adjust to their profession more quickly after graduation.

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