

The Application of Visual Thinking Tools in Art Appreciation Teaching

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the new era, the demand for innovative talents in society is increasingly valued. In the new curriculum standards issued by the Ministry of Education, it is pointed out that students should be helped to cultivate innovative consciousness, enhance artistic cultivation, and develop a sound aesthetic system through their art appreciation learning. Therefore, it is crucial to have a correct understanding and do a good job in the education of art appreciation. However, there are still problems in current art appreciation teaching, such as insufficient student interest in learning and difficulty in developing creative thinking abilities. Visual thinking tools refer to the use of charts to "concretize" art knowledge and thinking processes, which are in line with the visual characteristics of art courses. Applying them to art appreciation teaching can stimulate students' interest, improve their appreciation of works, and cultivate their creative thinking abilities. This article mainly analyzes and explores the value of visual thinking tools in art appreciation applications and their practical application in specific teaching processes.

Keywords: Visual thinking, Art appreciation course, Art teaching.

1. INTRODUCTION

The "2020 Edition of the Art Curriculum Standards for Ordinary High Schools" clearly states that the fundamental task of art appreciation is to help students form good aesthetic judgment abilities, establish healthy aesthetic views, stimulate students' imagination and creativity, and develop innovative thinking and creative abilities. [1] However, there are still some issues that need to be addressed in the specific implementation process.

Firstly, the connotation of artistic works is difficult to understand. The art appreciation course covers a large amount of knowledge about Chinese and foreign art history and is closely related to other disciplines such as Chinese language, history, philosophy, etc. Ignoring these connections, students are unable to fully understand the connotations of artistic works. For example, when appreciating ancient Chinese art works, if people ignore the historical background, they will not be able to understand the influence of relevant culture, society, and politics on art, resulting in students being unable to fully understand the connotation and value of the works.

Secondly, it is difficult to develop creative thinking ability. Creative thinking ability refers to the creative consciousness and innovative spirit of thinking activities. Cultivating students' creativity in thinking is inseparable from their divergent and imaginative thinking. In current appreciation teaching, teachers dominate and adopt a theoretical indoctrination teaching method, imparting knowledge rather than guiding exploration and thinking, which is not conducive to stimulating students' divergent thinking and cultivating creative thinking abilities.

Thirdly, it is difficult to stimulate internal motivation in learning. Interest is the core driving force for students to explore knowledge, which directly affects learning outcomes. Interests come from activities, while knowledge comes from practical accumulation. However, in the teaching process, teachers overly emphasize knowledge transmission, ignore opportunities for students' practical experience, weaken students' aesthetic experience and subjectivity, and even gradually erode students' enthusiasm and initiative in learning appreciation courses.

2. THE CONCEPT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF VISUAL THINKING TOOLS

Visual thinking tools refer to the use of graphic technology to present invisible thinking methods and processes in a visual way, making the process clear and easy to present, understand, and internalize, thereby effectively improving the functions of information processing and transmission [2].

In teaching activities, visual thinking tools "concretize" students' learning thinking processes, and use visual tools such as charts to intuitively represent students' entire thinking processes, which can help to "visualize" students' learning processes. The most commonly used and effective tool in visual thinking is "graph". Among numerous visual tools for thinking, common ones, such as bubble charts, tree diagrams, mind maps, flowcharts, etc., all have significant advantages in accurately displaying thinking processes and methods, thereby significantly improving the efficiency of information processing and transmission.

Thinking tools have their own characteristics and applicable scenarios. Mind maps use color stimulation to facilitate learners' associative memory based on colors, making them suitable for organizing knowledge in the field of art; A flowchart sorts the flow of things and can be used to present the thought process of painting creation; Circle diagram helps with thematic brainstorming and is suitable for thematic creative associations in art teaching.

In art appreciation teaching, teachers can use visual thinking tools to visualize the analysis process and methods of art works, helping students better appreciate the charm of art works.

3. THE VALUE OF VISUAL THINKING TOOLS IN ART APPRECIATION TEACHING

Visual thinking tools have important value in art appreciation learning. Art courses play an important role in modern education, characterized by their visual appeal. Visuality is not only reflected in the selection of teaching content, but also runs through the entire teaching process, aiming to use visual language or images to express ideas, communicate emotions, cultivate students' aesthetic ability and creativity.

3.1 Improving Aesthetic Ability and Perfecting Aesthetic System

Art knowledge is extensive and rich, not only involving multiple fields such as painting, sculpture, and architecture, but also containing profound historical, cultural, and philosophical connotations. In the past art teaching process, due to the richness and diversity of art appreciation content, art appreciation teaching often presented fragmented characteristics. Although teachers provide clear and easy to understand explanations of art appreciation knowledge in the classroom, some students still find it difficult to integrate these knowledge fragments into a complete system, lacking a main line that can effectively connect various knowledge points. This teaching situation is not conducive to students' comprehensive mastery and in-depth understanding of art appreciation knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary to explore more systematic and coherent teaching methods to help students build a complete knowledge system of art appreciation. At the same time, students are required to systematically organize and summarize this knowledge. Through their own understanding and comprehension of the knowledge, students need to construct different connections between the contents, thus forming a complete and organized knowledge network.

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In art appreciation, visual thinking tools are used to guide students to deeply analyze the cultural connotations of works through intuitive images. This helps teachers to explain the deep connotations of the work layer by layer, allowing students to appreciate the artistic beauty and creativity of the author, and enhance their aesthetic judgment. At the same time, it is also conducive to the integration of knowledge in the field of art. Students can associate a keyword in their works with numerous related knowledge contents, thereby finding potential connections between art and

disciplines such as history, Chinese language, music, etc., forming an organic whole of knowledge and establishing a complete aesthetic system.

3.2 Promoting Thinking and Imagination and Cultivating Innovative Thinking

Different visual thinking tools have their own characteristics and are suitable for different forms of thinking activities. For example, circle diagrams are used to stimulate students' thematic associations, flowcharts are used to organize process logic, and bridge diagrams are used to guide analogical thinking. The purpose of thinking training is to achieve the unity of divergent and convergent thinking. Flexible use of these tools can enhance students' thinking abilities, promote their development, and use diagrams to visualize the thinking process, break through thinking limitations, and stimulate creativity and imagination.

In art appreciation learning, using illustrations or combinations of illustrations to showcase the thinking process of teachers and students can make information transmission more efficient. Simultaneously, the diagram resonates with the brain's thinking, which is more conducive to clarifying ideas and promoting cognitive development.

Through thinking activities such as association, description, comparison, and classification, students can constantly associate and reorganize their learned art knowledge, analyze and interpret art works from different perspectives, and trigger profound thinking about the works. This is of great significance for enhancing learners' practical and innovative abilities. When appreciating a painting, connecting it with one's own life experience, emotional experience, etc. through association can lead to a deeper understanding of the theme and emotions expressed in the work. This kind of association not only helps to understand the work, but also stimulates creativity and imagination, providing new creative inspiration.

3.3 Stimulating Learning Interest and Enhancing Classroom Participation

In traditional art appreciation teaching, students often feel bored and lack enthusiasm for in-depth learning. This stems from the singularity of teaching methods and content. If teachers only analyze works through oral narration and written description, students may feel that the content is

abstract and obscure, making it difficult to comprehend the essence. This hinders students from fully appreciating the cultural value and aesthetic connotation of the works, and affects their comprehensive understanding and appreciation of artistic works.

Visual thinking tools transform students from passive recipients to active participants. It breaks the single expression of traditional art appreciation teaching and injects vitality into teaching. Under specific themes, teachers and students can engage in in-depth discussions in a free and relaxed atmosphere.

In this process, the flexible use of visual thinking tools to collide different ideas and viewpoints can make everyone's thinking highly active, effectively promoting the activity and improvement of the overall classroom atmosphere. In the detailed analysis of the work, students closely follow the guidance of the teacher, gradually stimulate their thinking ability, and form a positive interactive situation. When students are immersed in their favorite classroom environment, they are more likely to fully engage in various classroom activities and demonstrate a strong willingness to participate. This teaching method helps to stimulate students' interest in art appreciation and make them more willing to engage in learning.

4. THE APPLICATION OF VISUAL THINKING TOOLS IN VARIOUS ASPECTS OF APPRECIATION TEACHING

There are various types of visual thinking tools, each with its own characteristics. Based on the content characteristics of the appreciation course, students can choose tool forms that are easy to understand and flexibly apply them in various teaching stages.

4.1 Work Introduction Session

Visual thinking tools display knowledge in the form of lines, images, etc., which conforms to learners' visual rapid learning mode and helps stimulate students' interest in learning and improve learning efficiency.

In art teaching, using visual thinking tools to explore innovative introduction modes can enhance the freshness of classroom teaching and students' expectations. Psychological research shows that

students have a higher retention rate of impressions towards the beginning and end of a course. Introduction is not only the beginning of the classroom, but its means and methods can also affect students' interest in learning, and even affect the operation of the entire class [3]. Therefore, teachers should carefully design and plan the teaching process.

Taking the appreciation content of "Sunday Afternoon on Big Bowl Island" as an example, teachers can set a theme of "Summer Riverside Vacation" in advance, and guide students to brainstorm and make associations. In order for students to express their associations more intuitively, teachers can stipulate that within 2-3 minutes, based on their vacation experiences, they should quickly draw a vacation scene in the form of a circle diagram (as shown in "Figure 1") and share and communicate with each other. Subsequently, teachers will present the artwork to be appreciated in this class, 'Sunday Afternoon on Big Bowl Island' (as shown in "Figure 2"), and guide students to use the circle diagram tool just now to extract the main objects in the painting. On this basis, teachers will further explore how painters skillfully construct a unique artwork by incorporating life scenes and elements.

This course introduction method not only provides students with the opportunity to showcase their thinking process, but also allows them to experience how professional artists draw inspiration from life and create amazing works of art, deepening their understanding of the connotation and creation of art works.



Figure 1 Circle diagram in the teaching introduction stage design.



Figure 2 Seurat "Sunday Afternoon on Big Bowl Island".

4.2 Appreciation and Communication Session

The art curriculum standard proposes that the implementation of art teaching should highlight the student-centered position and pay attention to the personalized needs of students. In teaching, students' subjective initiative, divergent thinking, and flexibility should be fully respected [4]. Visual thinking tools can use images to clearly demonstrate the thinking process, and students can think about problems from different perspectives through the divergent and correlated characteristics of their thinking.

In the classroom communication session, by using visual thinking tools, the guidance of the classroom will be left to the teachers and the leadership of the classroom will be left to the students, and appreciation learning will be completed through cooperation between teachers and students. Teachers are both guides and participants in teaching, and this efficient mode of teachers-students and students-students can change the traditional mode of imparting knowledge into active learning for students. Efforts should be made to enhance students' sense of identification with the art discipline and their enthusiasm for participating in teaching, fundamentally increasing their interest in art learning. Students should develop the habit of thinking and actively exploring in their studies, and develop innovative thinking abilities.

Taking the "Folk Art" unit as an example, folk art has a long history, rich varieties, and strong folk colors, and involves knowledge from multiple disciplines such as history, Chinese language, and geography. During the appreciation learning process, students are assigned tasks in groups to explore folk activities related to the types, characteristics, and applications of folk art, as well as the impact of these activities. After collecting

information and exchanging ideas, each group will collaborate to create a mind map with the theme of "folk art". The teachers will guide them on a tour and conduct in-depth inter-group communication.

Through mind mapping, students combine their preliminary understanding of folk art before class to diverge their thinking from a type of folk art, and explore the surface content and intrinsic value contained in folk art works layer by layer, achieving the integration of "fragmented" knowledge. Not only does it stimulate the enthusiasm for active exploration, but students will also be more willing to express their ideas and increase the subjectivity of the classroom.

4.3 Post-class Evaluation Session

Art classroom evaluation is an important component of art education evaluation, and it is an activity that runs through classroom teaching and has a significant impact on art teaching. Evaluation is the process of collecting information and making corresponding decisions based on the collected information [5]. During this process, some students' information can be directly obtained through observation, while others may not be able to present their information directly. To this end, teachers need to cleverly design a series of activities to guide students in presenting the necessary information, thereby ensuring the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the evaluation.

In this stage, visual thinking tools have certain advantages. By the display of visualizing knowledge, information sharing can be achieved, and it is also convenient for students to express their evaluation opinions, making it easy to obtain feedback information [6]. Teachers can intuitively understand students' learning outcomes and thinking processes, thereby evaluating teaching effectiveness.

Taking the teaching of "Traditional Chinese Painting" as an example, in the classroom evaluation stage, teachers can create relevant evaluation standard cards to identify common types of Chinese painting (such as flower and bird painting, landscape painting, figure painting, etc.), which is convenient for students to sort out the knowledge they have learned. Students can use visual tools such as mind maps or mind maps to graphically display their learning experiences and insights, in order to review and summarize what they have learned in class. This approach helps

students discover their strengths and weaknesses, providing reference for future learning. Effective art classroom evaluation plays a crucial role in art teaching. It can not only comprehensively collect different information about students' art learning process, but also optimize teaching strategies and improve students' learning effectiveness based on these valuable feedback data.

5. CONCLUSION

Faced with the requirements of the new curriculum reform, art appreciation teaching places more emphasis on cultivating students' aesthetic judgment and innovative thinking ability. In the context of the new era, the role of visual thinking tools in art appreciation teaching is increasingly prominent. This tool can not only effectively stimulate students' interest in learning, but also assist them in deeply understanding and analyzing art works, thereby further enhancing their aesthetic level and artistic cultivation, and cultivating students' innovative thinking ability. Therefore, in art appreciation teaching, teachers should actively use visual thinking tools to provide students with more diverse, efficient and convenient learning experiences, in order to achieve better teaching results.

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