# Exploration and Practice of Project-based Teaching in High School "Art Appreciation" Course

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## ABSTRACT

In the wave of information technology and education reform, the knowledge field covered by high school art appreciation is becoming increasingly extensive, and the traditional full house teaching model urgently needs to inject new vitality. Project-based learning, with its advanced educational philosophy and practical model, is highly compatible with the needs and goals of high school art appreciation courses, and can provide strong support for students' comprehensive development. This study selects the Renmei version(version of People's Fine Arts Publishing House) of high school art appreciation textbooks as the blueprint, uses project-based teaching mode, starts with the analysis of teaching status, combines theory and empirical research, and further puts strategies into practice through goal setting and teaching design. The aim is to enhance the teaching effectiveness of high school art appreciation courses and achieve teaching optimization.

*Keywords: "Art Appreciation", Project-based teaching, Practice.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of the development of the new era, the demand for innovative composite talents in China is increasing day by day, and education reform has become a key way to cultivate such talents. The three-step strategy proposed in the "National Innovation Driven Development Strategy Outline" provides macro guidance for the cultivation of innovative talents (the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "National Innovation Driven Development Strategy Outline" in 2016). Under this framework, the education department actively responds by implementing curriculum reforms, especially the "General High School Art Curriculum Standards (2017 edition, 2020 revision)", to incorporate "creative practice" into the core literacy of the art discipline, emphasizing the cultivation of students' artistic creation ability through innovative thinking and practical activities. However, traditional high school art appreciation courses often lack opportunities for practical experience and project-based learning, making it difficult to meet students' needs for comprehensive development of artistic literacy. To address this issue, project-based learning has been proposed and promoted as an open and diverse teaching method.

## 2. CURRENT SITUATION OF TEACHING OF HIGH SCHOOL "ART APPRECIATION" COURSE

### 2.1 Course Content

The Renmei version of the high school art appreciation textbook is developed based on the "General High School Art Curriculum Standards(2017 version)". The textbook includes relevant content information such as unit context, unit overview, keywords, and evaluation on the homepage of each unit (as shown in "Figure 1"). Professor Yin Shaochun also proposed in his paper that future art teaching will be based on the core competencies of the subject, and the norm may be thematic unit based.[1] This teaching model emphasizes the integration of interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary approaches, as well as the ability to solve problems in real-life situations, thereby more comprehensively cultivating students' core artistic literacy.

Figure 1 One of the units in the Renmei version of the high school art appreciation textbook.

In terms of the five core competencies1 in fine arts, the course particularly emphasizes the importance of "image recognition, aesthetic judgement, and cultural understanding", which occupy a prominent position in teaching and deeply shape students' abilities. Art expression and creative practice may not be the most prominent, but their importance cannot be ignored.[2] This arrangement aims to encourage students to further explore the depth of appreciation and understanding, while also reminding teachers to pay attention to these areas in teaching, ensuring that students receive comprehensive and balanced development in artistic expression and creative practice.

## 2.2 Teaching Methods

The art appreciation course covers knowledge and information from various fields. Although traditional methods of teaching by example and multimedia in high school art education are mature and effective, the rapid iteration of information and the diversified development of the times make it difficult for these methods to meet the needs of higher quality and efficient teaching. The traditional single teaching method has certain limitations and lag, which not only limits the effectiveness of teachers in educational activities,

but also affects the development of students' comprehensive learning skills, and is not conducive to students' comprehensive absorption and learning of art appreciation knowledge.

The lag in teaching methods hinders the achievement of the goal of comprehensive innovative development in high school art appreciation classrooms. Students find it difficult to expand and practice teaching content based on their own development goals and directions, resulting in a separation between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. This kind of problem not only affects students' profound understanding of teaching knowledge content, but also hinders the exploration and development of innovative practice paths.[3]

## 2.3 Teaching Resources

Art teaching resources play an important role in the school education system and are the cornerstone for the smooth progress of art education and learning activities. Art teaching resources not only include teaching tools and equipment, such as various painting materials, sculpture tools, multimedia facilities, etc., but also include teaching theories, such as teaching strategies, course content, etc.[4] The richness of these resources plays an important role in cultivating students' cultural understanding, aesthetic appreciation, and creativity. Art teaching resources provide students with an opportunity to explore and express themselves, as

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1.    Yin Shaochun, Culture, Core Competencies, and Art Education: Reflections on Core Competencies [J]. Journal of Educational Development, 2015, (09): 17-18. DOI:10.16215/j.cnki.cn44-1371/g4.2015.09.004.

well as diverse teaching tools for teachers, which can help students improve their art appreciation learning.

The development of curriculum and teaching resources is a carefully designed and constantly upgraded process, with the core goal of stimulating students' interest in learning art and fully mobilizing their enthusiasm. This process involves integration and innovation at multiple levels.

# 3. PROJECT-BASED TEACHING OBJECTIVES FOR HIGH SCHOOL "ART APPRECIATION" COURSE

Project-based learning advocates students to work together in groups to tackle complex and challenging problems. Its application in high school art appreciation courses is an effective educational method. It is student-centered, project-based, inquiry based, and goal oriented, laying the foundation for students' comprehensive learning and development. The teaching of high school art appreciation advocates a curriculum structure centered on unit themes, which creates problem scenarios as backgrounds and uses driving questions to guide students to engage in group cooperation and independent exploration in order to complete learning tasks. This learning method is consistent with project-based learning teaching methods.[5]

## 3.1 Knowledge Goals

In the teaching of high school art appreciation courses, the knowledge objective refers to enabling students to master and understand relevant art knowledge after completing the course. In the process of exploring art classroom teaching during the internship (as shown in "Figure 2"), the author found that achieving the knowledge objectives of high school art appreciation classroom teaching has a certain degree of insignificance and difficulty. The images in textbooks and PPTs limit students' horizons and make it difficult for them to truly understand knowledge areas outside of textbooks. After the course ends, students only gain shallow knowledge cognition. The setting of knowledge goals can not only provide students with clear learning directions, but also help teachers clarify teaching design and implementation paths. It is important to project the knowledge objectives of high school art appreciation courses, and transform the knowledge objectives into engaging students in learning activities through carefully designed teaching activities, inspire their fighting spirit and fun, and learning to independently explore and deeply understand the course content knowledge. The goal of project-based knowledge is to ensure that students can learn established learning outcomes in the field of art appreciation, thereby deepening their understanding and appreciation of art works.



Figure 2 Internship process diagram.

### 3.2 Ability Goals

Ability goals are crucial as they represent a range of skills and abilities that students acquire during course learning. The project-based ability goal is an extension and realization of the ability goals in high school art appreciation courses. Based on the art appreciation classroom, the learning of art knowledge needs to break through space, not limited to the classroom, but more focused on applying knowledge to other environments. Teachers encourage students to engage in group activities and independent exploration through carefully designed project activities, and put knowledge content into practice, thereby improving students' learning ability, appreciation ability, and hands-on practice ability through practical experience.

### 3.3 Literacy Goals

The application of project-based teaching in high school art appreciation courses is a positive response to the goals, core competencies, and new curriculum standards of high school art education. Project-based teaching is committed to comprehensively enhancing students' core artistic literacy, emphasizing the stimulation of their exploratory practice and innovative spirit. The literacy goals cover multiple dimensions such as knowledge and skills, emotional attitudes, and values. The achievement of literacy goals in high school art appreciation teaching is not significant enough, and classroom content is not easy to arouse students' emotional sublimation and practical experience. The goal of project-based literacy requires a series of comprehensive qualities and multidimensional development that students should achieve during project-based teaching activities. It has a targeted approach to the entire teaching process. By setting project-based literacy goals, the art appreciation teaching process will pay more attention to the comprehensive development of students' overall qualities and further improve teaching effectiveness. For example, the curriculum co-construction practice activity of Huanggang Siyuan Experimental School - "Artistic Painting of Mangzhong". ("Figure 3")



Figure 3 Practice activity of "Artistic Painting of Mangzhong".

## 4. PROJECT-BASED TEACHING DESIGN FOR HIGH SCHOOL "ART APPRECIATION" COURSE

The design of high school art teaching is based on cultivating students' artistic theoretical foundation. This design mainly stimulates students' creative and aesthetic abilities through perceptual experience, thinking and exploration, creation, and evaluation, thereby helping art education improve the cultivation of students' personality and emotions. Teaching design has precise analysis of teaching objectives and content, which can accurately grasp the needs in teaching. The teaching design process includes determining the theme, analyzing the teaching content, analyzing the learning situation, designing the teaching process, and reflecting on and modifying it. This process not only provides a standardized path for the teaching process, but also provides specific teaching plan directions for teachers, ensuring that the implementation of teaching can steadily develop and achieve the improvement of teaching quality. Through such meticulous teaching design, solid and powerful support is provided for students' learning.

### 4.1 Design Ideas for Project-based Teaching

The teaching design concept of project-based learning applied to art education has been supported by multiple academic papers. Project-based learning has been explored in STEAM education (interdisciplinary teaching model), emphasizing long-term learning, interdisciplinary, and student-centered artistic activities. This helps to improve the teaching strategies of art projects, assist students in understanding course content, enhance communication skills, and strengthen leadership and creativity.[6] The application strategy of project-based learning in primary school art teaching has also been proposed to promote students' comprehensive development in the field of art. These strategies include strengthening top-level design, rebuilding project-based art learning objectives based on curriculum standards, and emphasizing the reconstruction of core knowledge in the art field.[7] These studies emphasize the importance of project-based learning in art education, such as promoting students' creativity, critical thinking, and collaborative inquiry abilities.

During the project-based learning process, students will acquire a series of key skills, including mastering the fundamental knowledge of artistic creation, being familiar with the entire process of project planning and implementation, and learning how to select, analyze, and deeply understand art works and improve teamwork skills. The project is divided into four stages: teaching analysis, project theme and plan, project implementation, and project communication and evaluation. The following "Table 1" is a flowchart for instructional design:

Table 1. Teaching design idea diagram

| Teaching analysis | Project theme and project plan | Project implementation | Project communication and evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Analysis of high school "Art Appreciation" textbooks<br><br>Teaching content analysis | Determining the theme of "Exploration and Creation: Artistic Exploration of Public Space Sculpture" | Group collaboration<br>Field research<br>Creating sculptures | Display results<br>Group Report |
| Learning situation analysis | Case analysis<br>Proposing questions<br>Thinking innovation | Teachers' assistance<br>Tracking progress | Multi-dimensional evaluation |
| Teaching goal analysis | Group creating<br>Teachers' assistance | | |

### 4.2 Project Implementation Progress

In the implementation process of project-based teaching, teachers should focus on the actual needs of the teaching project, carefully organize the teaching process, and organically integrate knowledge points and skill projects to construct project-based teaching unit courses. As the main target of this teaching mode, students need to undertake their own tasks in group cooperation and

jointly promote the completion of project activities. Through such teaching practice, students can not only learn and exercise in practical operations, but also achieve the transfer and internalization of knowledge, and truly experience the teaching philosophy of "learning by doing, practicing by practice"[8]. During this process, teachers act as guides, assisting students in solving difficult problems and improving the completion rate of their works. In the evaluation and feedback process, teachers are responsible for establishing a multidimensional evaluation principle that includes not only evaluating students' works, but also evaluating their creative process, critical thinking, and understanding of the cultural background of sculpture. After the project is completed, teachers guide students to reflect and summarize their experiences, and adjust the teaching plan design based on student feedback and project results to improve the quality and effectiveness of subsequent teaching.

### 4.3 Expansion and Summary

After class, teachers guide students to review the main content of the course and deepen their understanding of its concepts, theories, and skills. Teachers can motivate students to participate in other creative activities based on classroom discussions and project implementation processes, such as artistic creation or research project, in order to demonstrate their understanding, expansion, and application of knowledge. After class teachers should pay more attention to each student's learning experience and feedback, and through teaching

reflection and summary, timely optimize and adjust subsequent teaching project plans to ensure that teaching content and methods meet students' learning needs and promote effective learning for every student.

## 5. PRACTICE OF CURRICULUM PROJECT-BASED TEACHING REFORM

### 5.1 Mastering the Core Concept of the Project and Creating Course Exploration Activities

In high school, the curriculum of art is divided into seven modules, each equipped with specialized textbooks. The high school art curriculum, through teaching content and project-based learning methods, can promote students' deep understanding of art and enhance their comprehensive literacy, while also providing teachers with more teaching resources and methods to meet the educational needs of the new era.

Taking the third theme of Unit 3 "Sculpture in Public Spaces" in the People's Education Press High School Art Appreciation (2019 edition) textbook as an example, traditional classroom teaching is shifted towards project-based teaching of deep learning. "Sculpture in Public Space" is a teaching content that focuses on exploring the interaction between sculpture art and public space. By analyzing the teaching content of this unit (as shown in "Table 2"), the project-based learning method will be applied to the course.

Table 2. Content analysis of "Sculpture in Public Space"

| Teaching content analysis | Concrete content |
| --- | --- |
| Teaching content positioning | This unit is located on the theme of "Craftsmanship - Sculpture Art" and transitions to the unit of "Silent Rhyme - Architectural Art" |
| Teaching emphasis | Emphasizing the relationship between sculpture and public space, and exploring the types of sculpture works required for new urban construction, and how to use sculpture components to create public spaces |
| Teaching difficulties | Understanding the impact of multiculturalism on the development of sculpture, how sculpture works bring new changes to space through interaction with the public, and how to appreciate sculpture works of different styles |
| Teaching objectives | Enabling students to appreciate sculpture works using methods such as the four step method, understanding traditional and modern, abstract and concrete sculpture works, and conducting in-depth analysis from a historical and cultural perspective |

This project aims to guide students to deepen their understanding of the artistic value and social significance of public space sculpture through research and creation. Students will experience the complete process from concept to implementation through activities such as field trips, data research, creative design, and model making. The following "Table 3" is a project-based learning design analysis with the theme of "Sculpture in Public Spaces":

Table 3. Analysis of project design content

| Project background and significance | Project-based learning application | Project features |
|---|---|---|
| Sociocultural background: Sculptures in public spaces reflect the culture, history, and social values of a region. | Field visit: Stepping out of the classroom and observing the public space environment. | Interdisciplinary learning |
| Environmental aesthetics: Sculptures in public spaces can enhance the functionality and attractiveness of the space. | Data research: Collecting and analyzing background information on sculpture works. | Hands on practice |
| Interdisciplinary learning: Combining knowledge from various disciplines to comprehensively understand the significance of sculpture in different cultures and environments. | Creative design: Encouraging students to design sculptures that are suitable for specific public spaces. | Innovation driven |
| Critical thinking: Analyzing sculptures in different public spaces can cultivate critical thinking. | Model making: Hands on creation of 3D sculpture models to experience the process of artistic creation. | Cultural experience |

The creation of the "Sculpture in Public Space" exploration activity is an educational activity aimed at exploring the multidimensional value and significance of sculpture art in public spaces. The following "Table 4" is the general framework of the project:

Table 4. Project framework of "Exploration and Creation - Artistic Exploration of Public Space Sculpture"

| Project name | Project objectives | Project duration | Project overview | Project process | Evaluation method |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "Exploration and Creation: Artistic Exploration of Public Space Sculpture" | Knowledge objectives, ability objectives, and literacy objectives | 4 weeks | Stepping out of the classroom and encourage everyone to create art on campus, learning about the cultural background of sculpture | Determining theme - Setting project - Hands-on practice - Multidimensional evaluation | Process evaluation, thinking evaluation, outcome evaluation |

This project is a comprehensive learning area that integrates art knowledge and practical skills, providing students with a platform for exploration and learning. Students will have the opportunity to directly interact with and analyze sculptures in public spaces, thereby cultivating their aesthetic appreciation and critical thinking skills.

### 5.2 Integrating Multiple Disciplines and Refining Project-based Teaching

In the tide of contemporary educational reform, interdisciplinary project-based learning has gradually become the focus with its innovative teaching model. Interdisciplinary project-based learning is a deep integration that requires students to master the core concepts of various disciplines and promote the cross integration and innovative application of knowledge through project practice. In practice, interdisciplinary project-based learning can adopt different prototypes, such as combination, progression, and conflict, to adapt to different educational contexts and learning needs. Such as a case study of the "To Yayoi Kusama" project at Shanghai Shiwai Primary School, an experimental school of the three-year action plan for project-based learning in Shanghai (designed and implemented by Gong Hao, Zhu Yilin, etc.), the driving problem of this project integrates mathematics and art. By breaking down the interdisciplinary into two sub projects and creatively integrating the project results of the two disciplines, an interdisciplinary artwork was completed[9]. The "Joyful Cultivation Action" practical project, which combines interdisciplinary theme learning with actual teaching, specifically elaborates on the characteristics and practical strategies of interdisciplinary theme learning in primary school mathematics under the guidance of literacy. Through project-based learning, students are able to view real problems from multiple dimensions, which promotes the development of their thinking[10].

Throughout the project, students need to integrate knowledge from different disciplines such as art, history, and society to form a comprehensive and in-depth understanding and creative process. Using project-based design as a carrier, students are encouraged to participate in the planning, design, and implementation of public space sculptures, with the goal of solving practical problems and achieving the comprehensive application of interdisciplinary knowledge.

### 5.3 Relying on the Unit Design Goals, and Focusing on the Core Artistic Literacy

In instructional design, teachers should take core competencies as the guiding ideology, adopt large unit teaching design methods, comprehensively integrate knowledge and skills of art disciplines, and cultivate students' creativity and

imagination. This teaching method requires teachers to value students' aesthetic experience in the classroom, strengthen students' connection between art and daily life, and promote students' understanding of different cultural backgrounds.

The core positioning of project-based learning is to stimulate teachers' attention to literacy-oriented teaching, emphasizing the integrity of unit design, the authenticity of situations, and the integration of knowledge. Its ultimate goal is to cultivate students' core competencies, that is, through project-based learning activities, to deeply explore and shape students' comprehensive qualities and key abilities[11].

The combination of large-scale unit design and project-based learning is a student-centered teaching model that integrates subject knowledge, skills, and thinking to solve practical problems. This teaching model emphasizes students' active exploration and collaborative learning to achieve deep learning, and promotes the development of students' core competencies. In specific teaching practice, teachers can design large unit projects with local characteristics and cultural values based on curriculum standards and students' actual situations.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The project-based teaching model encourages students to actively explore and apply their learned knowledge to analyze and solve specific problems, thereby achieving internalization of knowledge and improvement of abilities. Although project-based teaching of high school art appreciation is an effective teaching model, there are also some shortcomings. In order to overcome these shortcomings, high school art education needs to increase investment in teaching resources, enrich teaching content, cultivate a teacher team, transform the concept of exam-oriented education, establish a diversified evaluation system, and enhance the position of art discipline in the education system. At the same time, educators need to explore teaching methods that are more in line with students' interests and stimulate their enthusiasm for learning.

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