

Research on the Construction of Postgraduates Training Path in Art Design in Agricultural and Forestry Universities in the New Era——Taking Northwest A&F University As an Example

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Abstract: Since the ancient times, China has taken the Central Plains culture as the main body of its culture, and its artistic forms which is of long history, diversified forms and abundant connotations are deeply influenced by farming culture. Therefore, the infiltration education of agricultural culture has important significance. The implantation of "farming culture" into the higher education and teaching system is not only the mission of agricultural and forestry universities, but also an important way to cultivate modern college students who "know and love agriculture". This paper focuses on the "cultivation features of Master of Fine Arts in agricultural and forestry universities", and discusses the gradual construction of a postgraduate talent training mode in Art Design with prominent agricultural and forestry characteristics by means of optimizing the curriculum structure, making the curriculum content compact, updating the teaching methods, expanding practical teaching and improving the training system, so as to make the ancient agricultural culture shine in the contemporary art design context.

Keywords: Farming culture; Master of Fine Arts; Talent training; Agricultural and Forestry Universities

"Culture is the soul of a nation. Prosperous culture leads to a thriving country."^[1] Art is an important form and way to express culture, which is most popular and acceptable to people. It is untenable and unreliable to talk about art without culture. Since the ancient times, China has taken the Central Plains culture as the main body of its culture, and its artistic forms which is of long history, diversified forms and abundant connotations are deeply influenced by farming culture. Among them, the most prominent one is the protection projects of material and cultural heritage. Therefore, the infiltration education of agricultural culture is particularly important. The implantation of "farming culture" into the higher education and teaching system is not only the mission of agricultural and forestry universities, but also an important way to cultivate modern college students who "know and love agriculture". In 2020, the National graduate education Steering Committee in art issued "the guiding training program for postgraduates majoring in Art (revised version in 2020)" (hereinafter referred as the guiding training program), which contains three documents, namely, the guiding training program for Postgraduates of master of fine arts (revised in 2020), the writing standards for professional dissertations of master of fine Arts, and the basic requirements for master of arts in the direction of music education. The guiding training program has made specific and detailed elaboration from eight aspects: training objectives, enrollment objects, learning methods and term of years, training methods, curriculum setting, graduation assessment, degree awarding and academic archives. According to the new requirements of the guiding training program, combined with the current situation of the postgraduates training in art design in our university, this paper tries to analyze and discuss from the following aspects.

1. Highlight the training characteristics and optimize the course structure

At the beginning of the establishment of the degree program, in order to highlight the auxiliary role of art design in comprehensive colleges and universities, two training direction including environmental design and visual communication design were established according to the needs of social development and the teaching resources in the University. In recent years, with the national strategic policies such as "cultural confidence" and "Rural Revitalization", postgraduates majoring in art and design play a significant role in promoting traditional culture and protecting intangible cultural heritage, which has a vital impact on rural and social developments.

Therefore, in the revision of the training plan for postgraduates majoring in art and design of 2018, the curriculum was further refined and some basic courses related to intangible cultural heritage and traditional culture were added, including Chinese painting theory, intangible cultural heritage and folk art, traditional culture and design, which help improve students' understanding of agricultural culture, traditional Chinese techniques and folk art. Besides, the course structure has been further adjusted and optimized. Especially for the problems of its single form and narrow field of optional courses, we further summed up the prominent characteristics of design major in agricultural and forestry universities, formed modular teaching, and solved the issue of course structure transformation.

2. Make the course content compact and optimize course connection

Course content is the basis of talent training and the strong guarantee for course connection. In the cultivation of postgraduates

majoring in art design of Northwest A&F University, great emphasis is put on the construction of course content. Guided by the needs of enterprises, taking the nature of the course as the unit, and relying on the research direction of teachers, we carried out teaching discussion regularly. After several years of practice, it is found that teaching discussion is a good impetus in avoiding the repetition and lack of curriculum content and promoting the effective connection among courses.

In terms of course content construction, we take agricultural culture as the starting point, and focus on various artistic forms which regard "agricultural civilization as the aesthetic basis of Chinese people"^[2], including calligraphy and painting, folk songs, folk dance and rap art etc. Farming culture is a cultural collection of national system, etiquette and customs system, and culture and education formed by farmers in a long-term agricultural production, which is adapt to agricultural production and living need^[3]. At present, due to the development of society and the change of lifestyle, the connotation of agricultural culture is also changing. Therefore, it is necessary for the art discipline to do in-depth research on how to protect and inherit agricultural culture as well as its art forms. Northwest A&F University has always attached importance to the research and development of agricultural science and technology and agricultural history, stressed the implantation of agricultural culture, internalized and implanted agricultural culture into the curriculum, so as to make the curriculum content more diverse and distinctive. Relying on the advantageous disciplines of agricultural and forestry universities, the next step of this degree program is mainly to increase the proportion of corresponding general optional courses, hold reports, lectures and art exhibitions with the characteristics of agricultural culture, integrate agricultural culture and related art forms into the classroom as ideological politic elements, and connect basic courses of art design, theoretical courses and practical courses so as to form an invisible link which serve as a breakthrough to solve the problem of curriculum connection, and then sum up the teaching module of agricultural culture and art.

3. Integrate theory with practice and expand practice teaching

Under the premise of theoretical guidance, practice teaching is actively carried out. There are specific requirements in the guiding training plan. Firstly, practical courses should be composed of "classroom teaching practice courses" and "open practical courses", in other words, one is the teaching of theory and practice in class, and the other is the teaching of pure practice. The latter is not confined to the classroom, but in the fields, factories or studios. In the guiding training plan, open-practical courses mainly refer to practical activities relevant to art design such as internship, sketch from nature, social investigation and research. The credits of these open practical courses are not calculated according to class hours. Secondly, there are specific requirements for the proportion of credits. "Open practical courses account for about 20-30% of the total credits of practical courses. That is why we pay more attention to open practical courses.

This degree program adheres to the teaching and training of practical courses, and focuses on informing students of the knowledge of Chinese farming culture, history, science and technology, gardens and other aspects through practical teaching. The university has granted a space for practical teaching, and we carried out on-site teaching in "this area" together with Shenzhen AoYa Design Co., Ltd, The students' comprehensive practice and exploration from the initial design to the problem solving, team cooperation, design implementation and other aspects in the whole process let us deeply feel that a relatively mature process from design to construction is an operation mode of fully immersing project. This innovative curriculum practice mode is not only a way for students to learn by doing, but also has a significant effect on improving students' sense of participation, learning interest and the transformation of classroom content.

4. Extend practical teaching and serve the countryside with art

In terms of practical teaching of master of Arts in our university, in addition to the joint design with leading enterprises and design studios in the industry, according to the national strategic policy, relying on the school's Rural Revitalization Office (formerly Poverty Alleviation Office), Rural Revitalization Research Institute and other departments, we exert the full advantage of our discipline and specialty to achieve a "win-win" result of "poverty alleviation and education" in poverty alleviation and Rural Revitalization. Meanwhile, students are able to have close observation of the countryside, understand the countryside, serve and understand the rural culture, and further understand the expression of design language in the contemporary rural culture.

At present, we have built the "industry-university-research integration demonstration base of NWSUAF and Heyang intangible cultural heritage and creative industry" which continues to provide platforms and bridges for "local places and school", "rural culture and design" and "intangible cultural heritage creation and market". In addition, two special teaching bases, "Hancheng cultural and Historical Park" and "Dangjia Village", have been established. Graduate students and tutors serve various undertakings in urban and rural areas with art design, including packaging design of agricultural products, logo design, the design of scenic spot visual identification system, cultural and creative design, landscape improvement design, colored painting design and implement of building façade. It is worth mentioning that the packaging design of agricultural products impelled the built of six e-commerce and wechat platforms for special agricultural products, helped sell more than 6 million yuan of agricultural products, which directly involved more than 2400 poor households (more than 13000 people). Our design also assisted the relevant agricultural products win many prizes such as the first place in the audition activity of CCTV-7 "treasure hunt for agricultural products", the first place in the product sales track of "I create ideas for poverty alleviation" in Shaanxi Province, etc. These are the specific practice of serving "Rural Revitalization" with professional design ability.

5. Conclusion

"Farming culture is the precious wealth of China's agriculture and an important part of Chinese culture. It should be carried forward continuously."^[4] Master of art degree program in Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University has always focused on the implantation of farming culture into training. In order to cultivate high-level art design special talents who know and love agriculture, it closely combines the national development strategies of "western development, belt and road initiative, ecological civilization construction and rural revitalization", tries to meet the need of talents with better aesthetic ability and practical ability in environmental

design, and exerts the advantage of agricultural and forestry universities. Our postgraduate program gradually forms a cultivation mode which has specific features of agriculture and forestry through optimizing curriculum structure, making course contents more compact, renewing teaching methods, expanding practice teaching, and strengthening training system. This mode also stresses the landscapes of leisure agriculture along the Belt and Road, the brand construction of agricultural products and many other related directions, which in turn makes the ancient agricultural culture shine in the context of contemporary art and design.

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