Exploration of Basic Curriculum Reform of Design Major in Art Colleges

Dongxia Chen, Cesar P. Liwanag

University of Baguio, Baguio City, Philippines, 2600

Abstract: *In recent years, the development of modernization in China has become more and more perfect, and the work types of design students in art colleges are more abundant, and there is a broader practice space, coupled with the rapid development and update iteration of offline media technology. Through in-depth analysis of this phenomenon, the purpose is to provide useful suggestions for improving and optimizing the basic course of design, so that it can better adapt to the contemporary design environment, and train the design talents with practical application ability and forward-looking thinking. Through the discussion of this paper, it is expected to arouse the attention of design educators and practitioners, and stimulate the discussion on the reform of the basic course of design.*

Keywords: *Art School, Design specialty, Foundation curriculum, Curriculum reform, Research*

1. Introduction

As students majoring in design, in the relatively backward curriculum system, they do not give full play to the subjective initiative of traditional painting majors, and many courses tend to traditional painting skills and design concepts, which greatly restricts students' creativity and design. In addition, due to the lack and imperfection of school-enterprise cooperation courses, the content knowledge of design courses learned by students in school is far away from the work skills actually required by market enterprises, so that students cannot quickly and effectively participate in the creative output of the workplace in the initial stage of entering society, and they need to re-learn and accumulate more relevant practical work skills and knowledge. The core of what makes most art and design students will make most art and design students trouble and question their own professional courses and even their own design industry, having a negative impact on their own design creation path(Liu, 2019)[1].

Huang (2021)[2] pointed out that traditional teaching methods are still used in the teaching of art and design majors, with too much emphasis on the learning of theoretical knowledge and lack of practical training and evaluation of teaching content. Some colleges and universities have set up art design practice courses. Practical lessons. But more choose virtual proposition for simulation design, this hollow teaching method leads students to work in actual society. Students in the actual social work, practical problem-solving ability is low, after graduation, it is difficult to find a suitable role for their own. After graduation, it is difficult for students to find suitable roles for themselves, and they need to spend material resources and energy to re-learn and train, which leads to a serious waste of resources.

Han (2020)[3] said that the integration of industrial teaching under the teaching mode of art design in colleges and universities can well cultivate students' practical ability, enable students to accumulate work experience, and lay the foundation for future employment. The implementation of this teaching mode of teacher-student cooperation in colleges and universities is conducive to the all-round development of students, and also improves the efficiency of enterprises. This win-win teaching mode is very beneficial to both students and enterprises.

Li (2023)[4] emphasized that the core goal of the basic theory curriculum system should attach great importance to ability training, and guide students to understand and digest the basic theoretical knowledge in practice, so as to achieve the basic goal of learning through practice. The basic goal of innovative thinking. Thinking and exploring the characteristics and rules of teaching; Establish an open exchange and interaction platform, formulate professional topics, actively guide and encourage students to engage in scientific research activities, and deeply tap students' innovative thinking and ability. At the same time, teachers should guide students to enter the society and enterprises to carry out field visits, and deepen students' employment sensitivity from city to city.

The training program of science courses can ensure that the basic design skills and theoretical

knowledge of design required by students and art and design students can better adapt to the needs of the market, and better reflect the needs of the integration of theory and practice(Zhou 2018)[5].

The purpose of this paper is to explore the discrepancy between theory and practice in the basic course of design major under the current background of design education, and to put forward the deep thinking of related problems.

2. Objectives of the Study

The design industry is a field of constant development and change, and the reform of the basic course theory of the design major in art colleges can make the course more closely adapt to the current and future design trends. By introducing the latest ideas, technologies and methods, students are trained to be sensitive to changes in the industry, making it easier for them to adapt and lead trends after graduation.

To enhance students' innovation ability, reform can promote the combination of basic courses and innovation, and cultivate students' ability to think independently and create. By stimulating the creative potential of students, the Foundation of Design professional course can be a platform for students to develop their creativity and make them more competitive in their future careers.

Interdisciplinary collaboration drives synthesis, design is no longer an isolated field, but one that permeates with other disciplines. The reform of curriculum theory can promote the interdisciplinary cooperation between design majors and other disciplines, cultivate students' cross-border thinking, improve their comprehensive literacy and multi-field problem-solving ability (Chen, 2020)[6].

To strengthen practical experience, the reform of basic course theory of design major in art colleges should emphasize practical experience, so that students can apply what they have learned in real projects. Such reforms will not only enhance students' practical skills, but also better connect schools with industry, making students better prepared for their careers.

To improve the employment competitiveness of graduates, the reform of the basic courses of design majors is helpful to make students better adapt to the vocational needs and enhance their comprehensive quality. This will make graduates more competitive, easier to find the ideal job opportunities, for the design professional job market to send more excellent talents.

On the whole, the reform of basic course theory of design major in art colleges is of far-reaching significance for training creative talents to meet the needs of The Times and promoting the development of design education.

The purpose of this paper is to study whether the content of the basic courses for design majors in art colleges is consistent with the actual needs of the current design industry, and whether the practical experience gained by students in the basic courses can be directly transformed into the ability to solve practical problems, so as to improve their career competitiveness. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1) How do students evaluate the basic courses of design majors in art colleges?

2) What are the challenges encountered by the students in the basic courses?

3) What recommendations are put forward for the reform of basic course theory of design major in art colleges?

3. Methodology

Students majoring in design in art colleges and universities were selected as the survey objects. 30 students from these three universities: Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute and Nanjing University of the Arts, were selected by random sampling method to participate in the questionnaire survey. The selection criteria are senior students or students of this major who have graduated and joined the work force.

The researchers used a quantitative-qualitative study design. Quantitative research refers to normative scientific research that determines the quantity of a certain aspect of something. It is a research method and process in which problems and phenomena are expressed quantitatively, and then analyzed, tested and explained to obtain meaning. Through quantitative-qualitative research design

investigation and research, this paper can deeply study the current situation of the integration of the content of basic courses for design majors in art colleges with the actual needs of the current design industry, the reasons for this situation, and further explore how to put forward suggestions for the theoretical reform of basic courses for design majors in art colleges.

4. Results And Discussion

4.1 Students Evaluate The Basic Courses Of Design Majors In Art Colleges

Table 1 presents the questionnaire data on the 30 student participants' perceptions of the basic courses.

Table 1 Participants' perceptions of the basic courses

Indicator	Mean	Std	Interpretation
The basic courses provide me ample training on my chosen major.	3.27	0.42	Strongly Agree
There are basic courses that do not align with the necessary skills in my major.	1.97	0.47	Disagree
The activities in these basic courses are well-planned with personalized learning opportunities.	3.17	0.63	Agree
The basic courses prepare me on the current employment situation of the profession corresponding to my major.	3.27	0.60	Strongly Agree
The basic courses give me full confidence in the future development prospects of my major corresponding to my career.	3.03	0.63	Agree
The basic courses engage me in work related to my major in the future.	2.90	0.52	Agree
The basic courses provide me the specific work content of my major corresponding to my career.	3.07	0.52	Agree
The basic courses provide me professional knowledge and skills corresponding to the professional needs of my major.	3.27	0.76	Strongly Agree
The basic courses can meet the needs of students.	3.07	0.73	Agree
The current teaching content of these basic courses can provide some help for my future work.	2.87	0.60	Agree
The existing teaching methods of these basic courses are effective in imparting the basic knowledge of design.	3.43	0.53	Strongly Agree
The basic courses have a good theoretical foundation.	3.40	0.47	Strongly Agree
The basic courses provide strong practical ability in work.	3.33	0.58	Strongly Agree
The curriculum and training objectives of my major through the basic courses meet the market demand.	3.27	0.54	Strongly Agree
The school can provide enough support, such as laboratories, libraries and technical equipment of these basic courses.	2.53	0.80	Agree
The basic courses provide the skills and qualifications required for my occupation.	2.83	0.62	Agree
Overall Mean	3.29		Strongly Agree

Table 1 presents questionnaire data on the perceptions of 30 design student participants about the foundation program. The indicators cover students' perceptions of the foundation course in terms of professional training, alignment with professional skills, activity planning, preparation for employment, confidence in future prospects, job relevance, specific job content, professional knowledge and skills training, satisfaction of students' needs, help in future work, effectiveness of teaching methods, theoretical foundations, practical competence, fulfillment of market demand for the course and the

training objectives, support from the university, and the Vocational skills and qualifications provision.16 The mean value of the indicators is 3.29, which can be interpreted as "strongly agree", indicating a high level of agreement with the idea that basic courses can help them.

Specifically, the highest scoring item was "The existing teaching methods of these basic courses are effective in imparting the basic knowledge of design" (Mean=3.29). " (Mean=3.43) and "The basic courses have a good theoretical foundation."(Mean=3.40), both items received a "Strongly Agree" interpretations. This indicates that participants generally agreed that current teaching methods are effective in teaching design fundamentals and that the basic courses have a good theoretical foundation.

It is worth noting that although the indicator "There are basic courses that do not align with the necessary skills in my major" received the lowest score of 1.97, the textual information for this indicator was actually Negative, meaning that students were actually positive, not negative, about the connection between basic courses and the necessary skills. Thus, the lowest scoring item was "The school can provide enough support, such as laboratories, libraries and technical equipment of these basic courses. " (Mean=2.53), which received an "agree" interpretation, but had a significantly lower mean compared to the other items. This suggests that participants felt that the support provided by the school in these areas may have been inadequate and may have affected their overall satisfaction and learning outcomes in the foundation program. This view is also related to the specialization of the arts institutions, and the support facilities they require. Unlike science and engineering institutions, arts institutions generally do not have laboratories or libraries where they teach and students practice on their own, which leads to a contingent deficiency in the provision of public study and research spaces in arts institutions.

In addition, the indicators related to employment generally scored poorly.The basic courses engage me in work related to my major in the future (Mean=2.90), The current teaching content of these basic courses can provide some help for my future work (Mean=2.87), and The basic courses provide the skills and qualifications required for my occupation (Mean=2.83). These indicators suggest that the students are not optimistic about the view that the basic courses can help them in their future employment. Arts colleges, unlike comprehensive colleges, have a stronger connection between the delivery of basic courses and specialized courses, and the emphasis is not on general education. However, this leads to a more homogeneous employment direction for graduates of arts colleges and universities and more intense competition for jobs. Some students inevitably worry about their future employment prospects.

4.2 The Challenges Students Face In The Basic Courses

Table 2 presents the data from the open-ended question of the 30 student participants on the challenges encountered in the basic course.

Table 2 Challenges encountered by the participants in the basic courses

Main Challenge	Frequency	Sample responses
Concerns about job prospects	6	R7: The basic courses is quite stressful, and I hope these experiences will really help me to be comfortable at work in the future. R8: Don't study design, you won't be able to find a job in the future. R13: I hope the basic course can provide more help for future work in design. R15: There is a disconnect between the curriculum and training objectives and the market demand. I expect the school to pay more attention to the market dynamics in order to meet the industry demand after graduation. R18: The basic courses are obviously insufficient in terms of career guidance. I hope there will be more internship opportunities and practical career guidance courses. R24: There are few opportunities for cooperation between the school and enterprises.

Insufficient teaching resources	4	R2: Many students, few teachers, fewer opportunities to receive guidance. R9: The location of the studio is too small and the zoning is not reasonable. R30: The resources provided by the school are limited. R25: There is no proper place to keep the works after design practice, and it is easy to be lost, affecting the next practice.
Imbalance between theory teaching and practice	7	R3: The link between the curriculum and the professional skills is not close enough, making me feel that the basic knowledge is lacking when I enter the professional skills. R5: Although the creative conceptualization and teamwork training in the foundation course is quite good, I am more looking forward to directly participating in practical projects related to professional skills to gain more concrete experience. R11: There is a gap between the curriculum and the actual needs, and expects courses and practical activities that are in line with the cutting edge of the industry. R14: Expect to really master the basic knowledge in practice, not limited to theoretical learning. R19: The basic courses do not provide certification at all, which is not very helpful for practical expertise. R22: The foundation course is not useful, and nothing taught is professional. R23: There are too few workshop opportunities, no field trips to understand the specific design process.
Insufficient interest in learning:	2	R6: Can't get into learning. R28: Not interested in learning in basic courses.

The table presents the challenges encountered by 30 design major students in their basic courses at art colleges, based on their responses to an open-ended question in the questionnaire. The most frequently mentioned challenge is the imbalance between theory teaching and practice, with 7 students highlighting this issue. They feel that the link between the curriculum and professional skills is not close enough, and they are more interested in participating in practical projects related to professional skills to gain more concrete experience. Some students also mentioned a lack of certification in the basic courses and too few workshop opportunities or field trips to understand the specific design process.

The second most common challenge is concerns about job prospects, with 6 students expressing this issue. They feel that the basic courses are stressful and hope they will help them in their future work. Some students also mentioned a disconnect between the curriculum and market demand, expecting the school to pay more attention to market dynamics and provide more career guidance and internship opportunities.

The third challenge is insufficient teaching resources, with 4 students raising this concern. They mentioned issues such as too many students and too few teachers, leading to fewer opportunities to receive guidance, as well as a lack of proper space to store design works after practice.

Finally, insufficient interest in learning was mentioned by 2 students. They expressed difficulty in getting into learning and a lack of interest in the basic courses.

In summary, the main challenges faced by the students in the basic courses are concerns about job prospects, imbalance between theory and practice, insufficient teaching resources, and insufficient interest in learning. These challenges suggest a need for improvements in curriculum design, teaching resources, and career guidance to better meet the students' needs and expectations.

4.3 Suggestions on the Reform of Basic Course Theory Of Design Major in Art Colleges

With the rapid development of the design industry and the ever-changing job market, there is an urgent need to reform the theoretical teaching of basic courses for design majors in art colleges and universities to meet the new educational needs and student expectations. Based on a number of suggestions made by students, the researcher has synthesized and compiled five reform proposals

aimed at improving the quality of teaching, enhancing students' practical skills, and better paving the way for their future employment.

Strengthening the interface between the curriculum and professional skills. To ensure that students enter professional skills studies with sufficient basic knowledge, the contents of the foundation courses need to be revisited to ensure that they are closely linked to the subsequent professional skills courses.This can be achieved by incorporating more examples and projects related to professional skills in the foundation courses, so that students can learn theories while gaining an understanding of practical applications.

Increase opportunities for practical projects.In order to enhance students' practical skills, they should be given more opportunities to participate directly in practical projects related to professional skills. This can be achieved by cooperating with enterprises, carrying out on-campus practical projects or organizing design competitions. Through these practical projects, students can better apply their theoretical knowledge to actual design and enhance their professional skills and innovation ability.

Optimize the structure of basic courses.Although the basic courses are crucial for design students, too many basic courses may crowd the time for students' professional skills learning.Therefore,the basic courses need to be streamlined and optimized to ensure that they contain the necessary basic knowledge without being too lengthy. At the same time, we should also pay attention to the balance between the basic courses and professional skills courses to avoid the phenomenon of "partiality".

Strengthen career guidance and internship opportunities. In order to help students better adapt to the job market, we need to strengthen career guidance services and provide more internship opportunities and practical career guidance courses.This can be achieved by establishing close cooperative relationships with enterprises, inviting industry experts to give lectures or organizing employment fairs. Through these activities, students can better understand the dynamics of the employment market and industry needs, so as to enhance their professional skills and employment competitiveness in a targeted manner.

Improve teaching facilities and environment. In order to enhance the learning experience and practical effect of students, it is necessary to improve the teaching facilities and environment. For example, we need to expand libraries and studios to provide more learning resources and practice space; increase the supply of teaching materials such as paints, gesso, canvas, etc. to meet students' practical needs; and extend the opening hours of studios and workshops so that students can have more time for independent learning and practice.

Enriching the content and methods of basic courses. In addition to optimizing the structure of basic courses, the contents and methods of basic courses should be enriched. For example, we should introduce more design-related cutting-edge knowledge and technology; adopt new teaching methods such as project-based learning and flipped classroom to stimulate students' interest and initiative in learning; and encourage students to participate in interdisciplinary learning and research to broaden their horizons and ways of thinking.

In summary, the reform of the theory teaching of basic design courses in art colleges and universities is a systematic project, which needs to be improved and optimized from many aspects. Through the implementation of measures such as strengthening the connection between courses and professional skills, increasing the opportunities for practical projects, optimizing the structure of basic courses, strengthening career guidance and internship opportunities, improving teaching facilities and environment, and enriching the content and methods of basic courses, we can provide design students with better educational resources and growth environment, and help them realize their personal values and career development.

5. Conclusion And Recommendations

Design students generally rated the basic design courses in art colleges and universities highly, believing that the current teaching methods effectively imparted basic design knowledge and that the basic courses had a good theoretical foundation. However, students' ratings on employment-related indicators were low, showing concerns about the basic courses' help in future employment. In addition, students faced challenges such as imbalance between theory and practice, insufficient teaching resources, and lack of interest in learning. These issues suggest that there is still room for improvement in curriculum design, teaching resources and career planning guidance.

Art colleges and universities offering design majors should strengthen their cooperation with industry enterprises, adjust their curricula according to market demand, and ensure a close connection between basic courses and professional skills. At the same time, increase the number of practical projects and internship opportunities to enhance students' practical ability and employment competitiveness.

Students of design major should actively participate in various practical projects and internship opportunities provided by the school, combining theoretical knowledge with practice to enhance their personal ability and experience. At the same time, take the initiative to seek guidance on career planning, understand the dynamics of the job market, and prepare for future career development.

Policy makers of the Ministry of Education should encourage and support art colleges to strengthen cooperation with enterprises and industries to jointly develop practical courses and internship programs. At the same time, increase investment in teaching resources for art colleges, including laboratories, libraries, and technical equipment, in order to improve the learning environment and practicing conditions for students. In addition, the establishment of a vocational qualification certification system in the field of art and design can be promoted to enhance students' competitiveness in employment.

References

[1] Liu Xiaoyan. (2019). Exploration of the Reform of Public Basic Courses in Vocational Colleges of Art and Design: A Case Study of the College of Art, Wuhan Jiaotong Vocational College. Daguan (11), 55-57.

[2] Huang Lu. (2021). On the Teaching Modules of Fine Art Foundation Courses in Design Majors. Art Education Research (15), 112-113.

[3] Han Hongbin. (2020). Exploration of the "MOOC + Flipped Classroom" Teaching Reform for Basic Courses in Design Majors. Popular Literature and Art (03), 242-243.

[4] Li Zhiwei. (2023). Design Ideas and Teaching Positioning for Professional Basic Education: A Case Study of Basic Curriculum Teaching in Art Design Disciplines. Shanghai Fashion (12), 110-112.

[5] Zhou Dapeng.(2018). College of Industry: An exploration on the integration of production and education of Art design major in Higher vocational colleges from the perspective of collaborative education. Exploration of Higher Education (03),105-108.

[6] Chen Rujuan. (2020). Discussion on the Teaching Reform of Painting Foundation Courses in Art Design Majors at Universities. Drama Home (15), 170.