

# On How to Cultivate Students' Innovative Thinking in Art Education in Colleges and Universities

Fan Zhang

College of Applied Arts and Sciences, Beijing Union University, Beijing, 100083, China

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history

Received: 11 June 2025

Accepted: 18 June 2025

Published Online: 30 June 2025

### Keywords:

art education

Cultivation of innovative thinking

Art education in colleges and universities

## ABSTRACT

Art education is a typical educational content for cultivating students' innovative thinking, and art education in colleges and universities undertakes the function of cultivating artistic and innovative talents. The purpose of this paper is to study how to cultivate students' innovative thinking in college art, and make a systematic analysis from three aspects: the importance of innovative thinking cultivation, the entry point of innovative thinking cultivation, and the cultivation strategy of innovative thinking. This paper discusses the systematic construction of a framework for the cultivation of innovative thinking, and proposes the integration of interdisciplinary training and international education. This study proposes specific strategies for cultivating innovative thinking, and the results provide theoretical and practical references for the cultivation of innovative thinking in art education in colleges and universities.

## Introduction

Innovation is an important driving force to promote social development, and the country and society have an increasing demand for innovative talents, and the cultivation of innovative talents has become an important teaching task of higher education. Art education is an important part of the higher education system, and it is also the mainstream major that cultivates students' innovative thinking. Traditional colleges and universities have a rigid mode of cultivating students' innovative thinking in art education, and there are problems such as single curriculum and lack of teaching methods, and the level of students' innovative thinking ability is insufficient. In order to improve the level of students' innovative thinking,

art education in colleges and universities should be fully reformed to improve the ability to cultivate innovative thinking.

## 1. The importance of cultivating students' innovative thinking in art education in colleges and universities

(1) Promote the development of students' artistic level

Innovative thinking includes the three constituent elements of innovation, creativity and creation, as well as the deductive process. Innovation is the starting point of innovative ideas, and creativity is based on the extension and development of the starting point, and creation is a form and realm formed after innovation is developed<sup>[1]</sup>.

The deductive process of which element of students'

\*Corresponding Author:

Fan Zhang,

female, undergraduate, lecturer,

Research direction: art.

Email: zhangfan@buu.edu.cn

innovative thinking is in has a profound impact on the development of their artistic level. If students are innovative, they may not be able to realize their ideas, and if they realize their ideas, they may not be able to achieve their creativity. At present, the cultivation of students' innovative thinking ability in art education in colleges and universities is still at the stage of allowing students to transform innovation into creativity, and students' works are often the modern transformation and interpretation of classics, which cannot form a real originality, and the artistic level is not high. Focusing on the cultivation of students' innovative thinking is an effective way to promote the improvement of students' innovative thinking ability and make them reach the realm of creation, so that students' innovative thinking can be stimulated, and the works created can also be used to break the routine in artistic practice, improve the personalized level of students' artistic expression, and then promote the improvement of students' artistic level and professional quality.

(2) Improve students' ability to innovate

Innovation ability is one of the core requirements for high-quality talents in contemporary society, and art education has a natural soil for cultivating innovation ability. Art education in colleges and universities is more open and inclusive, and through the cultivation of high-level innovative thinking, students can have more intense imagination collisions in a broader artistic horizon, and exercise students' ability to observe and solve practical problems. In addition, with the increase of students' exposure to art content, students will continue to try more new elements, new perspectives and new styles in the process of art creation, seek innovative practices of self-expression in exploration, and improve students' independent thinking, innovation ability and expression ability.

(3) Cultivate innovative and high-quality talents

For colleges and universities, cultivating students' innovative thinking is an inevitable measure to provide innovative and high-quality talents for the society. With the development of the knowledge economy, the society has generally recognized the importance of innovation-driven development, and the country's demand for innovative talents is also very urgent. As an important field for talent training, colleges and universities shoulder the mission of cultivating high-quality talents for the development of national society. Therefore, cultivating students' innovative thinking in college art education is an important part of fulfilling the obligations of college education. At the same time, the cultivation of innovative thinking is not only the cultivation of students' professional ability, innovative thinking can be applied to many fields, and can be migrated to different industries in the future, which is of great

significance for improving the overall adaptability and competitiveness of talents.

## **2. The entry point for cultivating students' innovative thinking in art education in colleges and universities**

(1) Improve the diversification and openness of teaching content

How to carry out the cultivation of students' innovative thinking is a key issue to be discussed in art education in colleges and universities. The cultivation of innovative thinking education is not the implementation of concepts, but the construction of a systematic innovative thinking education and training system from the aspects of teaching content, teaching methods, and teaching evaluation system, so as to achieve practical and effective educational results. Teaching content is the teaching foundation of innovative thinking and the source of inspiration in the cultivation of innovative thinking. Traditional art education is relatively step-by-step in terms of teaching content, emphasizing the teaching of classical content and fixed knowledge system, although students can be exposed to a certain amount of multicultural and innovative expression content, but it is still slightly insufficient. Therefore, the teaching content must be diversified and open, and the breadth and depth of the teaching content must be expanded. Specifically, we should take the initiative to incorporate interdisciplinary knowledge content, modern artistic thoughts, emerging digital art and other contents into the art education system, guide students to think about art problems from multiple perspectives with diversified artistic perspectives, and stimulate students' innovative thinking vitality.

(2) Reform and apply innovative teaching methods

Diversified teaching content needs the support of innovative teaching methods, and teaching methods are the key means to cultivate students' innovative thinking. The teaching methods of traditional art education are characterized by "learning more and practicing more", and students need to master a certain artistic skill through repeated exercise, although there are typical practical characteristics, but they do not perform well in interaction, experience, and active learning. There is a separation between teachers' teaching and students' learning, and it is still teacher-centered education. The innovative teaching method is student-based and emphasizes students' active construction of knowledge. Teachers should actively mobilize students' learning initiative in teaching, and promote the development of students' innovative thinking by allowing students to engage in independent learning and inquiry-based learning. Taking project-based teaching as an example, project-based learning starts from problems

in real society or real life, aims to solve problems, and students play specific social roles in it, using the basic concepts and principles of the discipline through investigation, observation, inquiry, communication, display, sharing, etc., and with the help of a variety of resources, to solve problems within a certain period of time [2]. In this process, students should not only take the initiative to learn and interact with knowledge, but also think about how to use knowledge to solve practical problems, emphasizing students' active thinking, which is of great significance for stimulating innovation consciousness and cultivating innovation ability.

### (3) Optimize the teaching evaluation system

The teaching evaluation system is an important means to feed back teaching and learning, and the optimization of the teaching evaluation system is based on perfect teaching content and diverse teaching methods. The traditional evaluation of art education focuses on whether students are proficient in a certain artistic skill, and lacks the evaluation of students' abstract ability such as innovative thinking. Even if students show strong innovation potential and unique thinking ability in the learning process, it is difficult for them to obtain excellent evaluation results in the overall evaluation. To carry out the cultivation of innovative thinking, it is necessary to attach importance to the cultivation of innovative thinking in the teaching evaluation system, and to integrate innovative thinking ability and innovative expression ability

## **3. Strategies for cultivating students' innovative thinking in art education in colleges and universities**

### (1) Use mature and innovative thinking to cultivate models

In the process of cultivating students' innovative thinking, art education in colleges and universities should consider absorbing the more mature training models in the social system, introducing these models into teaching, improving the cultivation effect of students' innovative thinking ability, and opening up the connection channels between education and future employment and social development. This kind of training mode is mainly based on SYB entrepreneurship training mode, six thinking hat training mode, SCAMPER training mode, etc. In the process of applying the SYB entrepreneurship training model, experienced teachers can be organized to form a professional team, with the help of entrepreneurial practice activities, to achieve more scientific guidance, to ensure the implementation of the corresponding plan, to encourage students to actively learn from experience, to achieve a more ideal training goal, to enhance the basic

sense of innovation, and to carry forward the corresponding entrepreneurial spirit [3]. In practice, the SYB model can be combined with competitions, so that students can put the projects formed in the SYB training into competitions, and deepen students' understanding of the projects through competitions [4]. The Six Hats Training Model is a mature thinking training tool, which can be used for multi-dimensional thinking training, group activity thinking training, improving students' collective creativity, and cultivating students' critical thinking ability and decision-making ability development. SCAMPER pays more attention to cultivating students how to think about problems from different perspectives, and stimulates students' innovative inspiration through the transformation of problem thinking perspectives, so as to promote students to make breakthroughs in artistic creation and expand the boundaries of artistic creation.

### (2) Create a good atmosphere for campus innovation culture

The campus of colleges and universities is the place where students have the most contact in their daily lives, and it is an important environmental factor for cultivating students' innovative thinking. Creating a good culture of innovation on campus can fully encourage students to engage in active artistic innovation activities. The key point is to encourage students to innovate, tolerate students' innovation failures, and support students' independent exploration. Beijing Union University has carried out a variety of activities to create a campus innovation culture atmosphere, such as the "Zhiyong Cup" College Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition, which encourages students to actively innovate. The School of Arts has launched competitions such as the Beijing Intangible Cultural Heritage Fashion Innovation Design Competition and the Beijing Time-honored Brand Design Competition, integrating innovation and culture and creating a positive cultural atmosphere for cultural innovation [5].

(3) Carry out interdisciplinary integrated teaching  
Interdisciplinary integrated teaching is a teaching mode that expands education from the aspects of content and teaching form. Art education can carry out comprehensive interdisciplinary education with other disciplines, so that students can learn more about artistic creation and learn to explore more novel forms of expression and expression. Beijing Union University has actively opened a variety of majors in the aspect of discipline integration education, such as intangible cultural heritage protection, arts and crafts, etc., and has taken the first step in the integration of discipline construction. In specific teaching activities, Beijing Union University has also carried out a variety of teaching courses, and introduced a variety of interdisci-

plinary educational resources for students through joint education with other fields. For example, he went to the Beijing Jade Carving National Intangible Cultural Heritage Training Base and the Beijing Daxing Gongmei Master Base to carry out special activities to visit enterprises and expand posts. In teaching and scientific research activities, some professors of the School of Arts have proposed to integrate the concepts of cross-integration of advantageous disciplines, and the School of Arts has made significant interdisciplinary teaching achievements in discipline construction, such as the construction of the emerging interdisciplinary platform of Peking University, and the remarkable achievements in the interdisciplinary construction of intangible cultural heritage protection, such as the 8th China Intangible Cultural Heritage Expo of the cloisonne memory digital experience of the School of Arts<sup>[6]</sup>.

#### (4) Construction of practice and innovation platforms

The construction of practice and innovation platform is a key way for colleges and universities to provide students with rich practical teaching opportunities. On the one hand, the practice and innovation platform can provide students with a broader display platform, and on the other hand, it can provide students with more innovative thinking education resources, so that students can fully exercise their innovation ability in practice. In terms of the construction of practice and innovation platforms, Beijing Union University held the Grand Canal Intangible Cultural Heritage Education Inheritance Youth Seminar and Postgraduate Academic Exchange Meeting, as well as the Grand Canal Intangible Cultural Heritage Comedy and Quyi Seminar and the Grand Canal Shadow Puppet Show, the Grand Canal Intangible Cultural Heritage Traditional Crafts Seminar, the Grand Canal Intangible Cultural Heritage Music and Dance Seminar, and the Grand Canal Digital Intangible Cultural Heritage Seminar. It also went deep into primary schools to hold a variety of activities, such as Peking Opera mask painting and paper-cutting experience, traditional Chinese costume and costume experience activities, graduation design exhibitions, and community theater projects<sup>[7]</sup>.

#### (5) Promote international exchanges and social cooperation

International exchange and cooperation is an important way to absorb foreign multiculturalism and broaden students' artistic horizons. Through active exchanges and cooperation with foreign universities and art organizations, students can get in touch with more artistic creation methods and creative ideas, and fully stimulate the vitality of students' innovative thinking. International art exchange projects and international art exhibitions and

competitions are all effective ways. The promotion of social exchange and cooperation will help to improve the degree of contact between students and the society, so that students can go deep into the social practice to exercise their innovation ability, and for students, the cooperative contact with the society can make them have an in-depth understanding of the practical problems existing in the society, so that students can think about how to use artistic ability and innovative thinking to solve practical problems in life, and improve students' social practice ability. In 2024, Beijing Union University will carry out exchanges and cooperation with well-known universities such as the University of Novi Sad in Serbia and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and hold a number of activities such as the "Exhibition of Art Works of Teachers and Students of Chinese and Serbian Universities" and "Blue Out of the Blue - Silk Road Dyeing and Valerian into Hong Kong". The teachers and students who went to Serbia and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University also gained a lot from international cultural exchanges<sup>[8]</sup>.

## 4. Concluding remarks

It is of great significance to cultivate students' innovative thinking in college art, which is an important way to improve students' personal ability and fulfill their social obligations in colleges and universities. To cultivate students' innovative thinking, teaching content, teaching methods, teaching evaluation, and platforms should be taken as the starting point, and the application of mature training models, the creation of innovative cultural atmosphere, interdisciplinary integrated education, and the construction of practice platforms should be used as practical teaching strategies to form a systematic support for the cultivation of innovative thinking in college art education. Innovative thinking is the core goal of art education, and it is also the key driving force for the development of modern society. For personal growth, the improvement of innovative thinking ability can help them better cope with challenges and solve life problems in life. Art education in colleges and universities should recognize the importance of cultivating innovative thinking, actively carry out targeted education on the cultivation of innovative thinking, promote the improvement of students' innovation ability and comprehensive ability, and contribute to the promotion of cultural innovation and social progress.

## References

- [1] Guan Ning. *Fujian Forum (Humanities and Social Sciences)*,2018,(12):57-65.)
- [2] Hang Yuenan. *Biology Teaching*,2024,49(08):26-30.)

- [3] Zhang Mengya. Reflections on cultivating students' innovation ability in art education in colleges and universities under the background of "entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship"[J]. *Drama House*, 2020, (14): 189.
- [4] Wu Zhifeng. *Journal of Guangxi University of Education*, 2012, (06): 167-169 175.
- [5] Ren Xiaoran. On the cultivation of students' innovative thinking ability in art and design teaching[J]. *Oriental Culture Weekly*, 2023: 112-114.
- [6] Sun Shaomin. On the penetration and inheritance of traditional music culture in art education in colleges and universities[J]. *Oriental Culture Weekly*, 2023(6): 88-90.
- [7] Quan Tian Tian. The inheritance of traditional culture in art education in colleges and universities from the perspective of multiculturalism[J]. *Grand View: Forum*, 2023(9): 142-144.
- [8] Cao Yidan. Research on the Path of Traditional Dance Aesthetic Education in Colleges and Universities[C]//2024 Academic Forum on "Aesthetic Education Infiltration and Empowering the Future". School of Arts, Beijing Sport University, 2024.