

New Thinking on the Mission of Aesthetic Education in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

With the rapid development of high-tech, humanity is gradually entering the era of artificial intelligence, and the new era endows different fields with new missions. Under this background, college aesthetic education also faces new challenges and opportunities. The essence of the intelligent era lies in creating a more convenient, efficient, energy-saving and comfortable experience for users. Aesthetic education, as the basic education for cultivating the aesthetic ability of the whole people, bears the important responsibility of transforming aesthetic ability into productive force, and is also an important driving force for promoting the high-quality development of the economy. Research has found that there is still an imbalance between college aesthetic education and the development needs of the new era. Therefore, colleges and universities should review the trend of aesthetic education, take the value leadership, cultural inheritance and innovative development of students by aesthetic education as the focus of talent cultivation, and focus on cultivating future talents to meet the needs of future work. In addition, artificial intelligence also provides new teaching ideas and resources for aesthetic education. Many colleges and universities have integrated aesthetic courses into professional courses in terms of curriculum setting, realizing interdisciplinary integration, which not only expands the field of aesthetic education teaching, but also enriches the ways of aesthetic education. This study aims to explore theoretical references for the mission of college aesthetic education in the era of artificial intelligence, promote colleges and universities to better respond to the needs of the times, and achieve high-quality development of aesthetic education.

Keywords

Artificial Intelligence; College Aesthetic Education; Aesthetic Education.

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, people's tools have evolved from those of the Old Stone Age to ones that can simulate human thinking, decision-making, and reasoning, and the artificial intelligence of computing has realized the intellectualization of production tools. However, how to seize opportunities in the era of artificial intelligence, improve production efficiency, and produce innovative products that are good and beautiful to meet the needs of all mankind is a demand of this era. Aesthetic education, as the basic education to improve the aesthetic literacy of the whole people, directly determines the aesthetic ability of producers. In 2020, the Ministry of Education established the first National College Aesthetic Education Teaching Guidance Committee, which fully reflects the country's emphasis on aesthetic education. At the same time, the arrival of the artificial intelligence era has also endowed aesthetic education with new connotations. Future producers need to use artificial intelligence technology for high-dimensional creation, and design products that can meet consumers' needs in terms of functions and be recognized by consumers in terms of creative concepts^[1]. All these require

college aesthetic education to pay more attention to cultivating students' unique aesthetic perspectives and innovative thinking in talent cultivation, so that students can still maintain a sharp aesthetic perception when facing massive information. Therefore, in the era of artificial intelligence, how to apply artificial intelligence to better serve aesthetic education? How to improve the aesthetic literacy of future talents to meet the new mission of aesthetic education in the intelligent era? In recent years, some scholars have conducted relevant theoretical research, but it only focuses on the relationship between the era of artificial intelligence and aesthetic education, and there is still a need for further research.

2. The Guidance of Aesthetic Education on Students' Aesthetic Values

In this era of global integration and cultural diversity, the primary mission of aesthetic education in higher education institutions is to guide students' value formation. The development of students' values not only shapes their perception and judgment of beauty but also influences their cultural identity, value orientation, and spiritual cultivation. Currently, some students are increasingly exposed to fast-food culture and consumerism, leading to superficial aesthetic appreciation and utilitarian value orientations^[2]. Through systematic curriculum design, practical activities, and cultural immersion, university aesthetic education can help students establish a scientific, healthy, and diversified aesthetic value system. This approach helps students break free from vulgar aesthetic tastes while cultivating their ability to discover, appreciate, and create beauty.

First, aesthetic education in higher education helps students develop rational standards for aesthetic judgment. In this age of information overload, where cultural products of varying quality flood online platforms and daily life spaces, some students may fall into vulgar or utilitarian aesthetic pitfalls. Through systematic instruction in art history and aesthetics principles, aesthetic courses guide students to rationally analyze the formal beauty, content beauty, and ideological beauty of artworks. In literature appreciation classes, students compare classic masterpieces with online literature to understand the importance of humanistic spirit and artistic value in literary works. In art appreciation courses, they analyze the creative backgrounds and aesthetic concepts of different artistic movements, gradually cultivating the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood and discern highbrow from lowbrow, thereby establishing objective and comprehensive aesthetic criteria.

Secondly, aesthetic education in higher education promotes the formation of students' diverse and inclusive aesthetic values. Aesthetic education emphasizes respect and understanding for different cultural and artistic forms. By introducing artistic works and cultural heritage from various ethnic groups worldwide, it breaks students' singular aesthetic perspectives. In music appreciation courses, students can appreciate the rigorous structure of Western classical music, experience the ethereal ambiance of traditional Chinese folk music, and engage with the primal vitality of African drumming, thereby recognizing the diversity and richness of beauty. This immersion in multiculturalism enables students to abandon aesthetic biases, learn to embrace different artistic expressions with an open and inclusive attitude, cultivate cross-cultural aesthetic empathy, and lay the foundation for cultural exchange in the globalized era^[3].

Furthermore, aesthetic education in higher education institutions guides students to connect aesthetic values with social responsibility. Aesthetic education is not merely about perceiving and appreciating beauty, but also pursuing the values of truth, goodness, and beauty. Through artistic creation and social practice, students transform aesthetic ideals into a sense of social responsibility. In public art courses, students create murals with community environmental improvement as their goal, integrating aesthetic expression with public welfare. In drama performance courses, they convey humanistic care and moral strength through classic plays. These practices help students recognize that aesthetic values are not just about personal taste,

but should serve social progress and human well-being, thereby fostering a positive and socially responsible aesthetic orientation.

In summary, aesthetic education in higher education institutions systematically constructs students' aesthetic value systems through three dimensions: rational judgment, pluralistic inclusiveness, and social responsibility. This process not only shapes students' spiritual world but also provides solid value support for their future participation in social cultural development and advancement of civilization. College students are at a critical stage in shaping their outlook on life, world view, and values, with their perception of beauty transitioning from theoretical understanding to practical application^[4]. How to utilize aesthetic theories in classrooms to guide students in comprehending the essence of aesthetics from a philosophical perspective, broaden their aesthetic horizons, distinguish truth, goodness, and beauty while rejecting falsehood, evil, and ugliness—these are crucial for developing college students. In the information deluge of the AI era, aesthetic education acts as a natural green barrier, helping students filter out vulgar aesthetics that prioritize lowbrow entertainment and attention-seeking traffic, thereby cultivating scientific, healthy, refined, and meaningful high-level aesthetics. This represents the new mission bestowed upon aesthetic education by our times.

3. The Enlightenment of Aesthetic Education on Students' Life Aesthetics

Higher education aesthetic education serves as a beacon illuminating students' life aesthetics. Within the vast realm of university education, this form of aesthetic cultivation shines like a luminous pearl, shouldering the crucial mission of nurturing students' appreciation for life's beauty. More than mere art instruction, it nourishes and enlightens students' souls, opening doors to perceiving, understanding, and creating beauty. Through diverse art courses, universities expose students to painting, music, dance, and theater. In art classes, students gaze at Vincent van Gogh's swirling starry skies and Monet's hazy water lilies, where the interplay of colors and lines guides them to perceive emotional intensity and life rhythms in visual arts. During music appreciation sessions, Beethoven's passionate symphonies and Chopin's delicate nocturnes flow through the air, with musical notes making students experience both grandeur and tenderness in soundscapes. These artistic experiences continuously enhance students' aesthetic perception, enabling them to view the world through fresh perspectives and discover beauty lurking in everyday life.

Aesthetic education provides students with a platform for free expression and creative exploration. Through artistic practice, learners infuse their inner emotions, reflections on the world, and unique imagination into their creations. Whether it's a painting with distinctive personal style, an original musical composition, or a self-written and performed play, each work embodies their unique interpretation of life's beauty. In this process, students break free from conventional thinking patterns, courageously express themselves, and through the creation of beauty, gain deeper self-awareness while discovering life's endless possibilities.

Furthermore, aesthetic education in higher institutions guides students to achieve spiritual elevation through engagement with artistic masterpieces and interactions with peers. By interpreting classic artworks, students transcend time and space to converse with artists, experiencing life philosophies and value pursuits across different eras and cultural contexts. Through artistic activities and collaborative group work, they learn to appreciate others' creativity and talents, respect diverse aesthetic perspectives, develop empathy and inclusive thinking, thereby building a richer and more multidimensional spiritual world.

Higher education's aesthetic cultivation serves as a beacon, illuminating students' life journeys and planting seeds of beauty within their hearts. Over time, these seeds will take root and sprout, empowering them to embrace life with renewed passion and heightened sensitivity, ultimately crafting their own beautiful destinies.

4. The Inheritance of Chinese Traditional Culture by Aesthetic Education

Amid the global wave of globalization and rapid technological advancement, the wisdom and charm embedded in traditional aesthetics urgently need to be awakened and preserved. Leveraging its unique educational advantages and innovative vitality, aesthetic education in higher institutions has become a pivotal force in revitalizing traditional aesthetics for contemporary relevance. This approach holds epoch-making significance for cultural inheritance, innovation-driven development, and the renaissance of national spirit.

First, aesthetic education in higher education institutions can serve as a modern platform for traditional aesthetics^[5]. The philosophical concepts, artistic paradigms, and aesthetic wisdom embedded in classical aesthetics often struggle to resonate with contemporary youth due to outdated formats and limited dissemination methods. By developing digital aesthetic courses, organizing online exhibitions of traditional art, and utilizing virtual reality technology to recreate ancient aesthetic scenes, universities break through temporal and spatial constraints. This allows students to experience the poetic essence of the Book of Songs, the magnificent imagery of Song Dynasty lyrics, the understated elegance of blue-and-white porcelain, and the poetic ambiance of gardens through vivid aesthetic presentations. The "Digital Dunhuang" initiative launched by the Central Academy of Fine Arts employs 3D modeling and dynamic rendering technologies to integrate the colors, lines, and narratives of Dunhuang murals into teaching. Through immersive experiences, students gain a deeper understanding of traditional aesthetic principles, transforming classical culture from "textbooks" to "digital archives" and achieving modern dissemination of traditional aesthetics.

Secondly, aesthetic education can serve as a bridge between traditional aesthetics and modern life. Universities guide students to transform classical aesthetic elements into contemporary design languages, breathing new life into them. In opera clubs, students explore the ritualistic beauty of Peking Opera and the refined elegance of Kunqu Opera through studying every gesture and vocal nuance. At intangible cultural heritage workshops, hands-on practice with traditional crafts like paper-cutting, embroidery, and pottery allows students to experience the craftsmanship spirit and the warmth of artisanal artistry firsthand. Some institutions leverage modern technology to combine traditional aesthetics with virtual reality and digital media, creating immersive cultural experiences. For instance, VR technology recreates the vibrant scenes of Dunhuang murals, enabling students to "time-travel" and appreciate ancient artistic charm through technological empowerment. In product design courses, students integrate traditional techniques like blue-and-white porcelain patterns and mortise-and-tenon joints into modern furniture and electronics designs, preserving Eastern aesthetic charm while meeting contemporary functional needs. Fashion design programs deconstruct traditional garment tailoring and embroidery techniques to create garments blending cultural depth with modern style. These innovative practices transform traditional aesthetics from historical relics into cultural connectors bridging past and future, endowing them with new practical value and market vitality.

Finally, aesthetic education in higher institutions bears the mission of innovating traditional aesthetic theories. Through interdisciplinary research, it integrates classical aesthetic concepts with contemporary philosophy, sociology, and psychology, endowing them with new theoretical dimensions. In aesthetics courses, educators guide students to reinterpret the Taoist "harmony between heaven and humanity" philosophy through an ecological aesthetics lens, offering cultural insights for addressing modern environmental challenges. Teachers can also apply phenomenological theories to interpret the "negative space" technique in Chinese painting, deepening understanding of the interplay between form and void in aesthetic principles. This theoretical innovation collectively propels the academic development of traditional aesthetics.

Therefore, through curriculum teaching, practical innovation and cultural exchange, aesthetic education in colleges and universities breaks the barriers between tradition and modernity, revives traditional aesthetics in contemporary society, not only nourishes students' cultural soul, but also lays a solid foundation for the sustainable development of traditional culture^[6].

5. The Empowerment of Aesthetic Education to the Social Creative Class

In today's society, the creative class plays a key role in promoting economic development, cultural prosperity and scientific and technological innovation. As the cradle of cultivating the creative class, aesthetic education in colleges and universities has a profound significance for the innovative and sustainable development of the future society.

First, aesthetic education can stimulate students' innovative thinking. Traditional professional education often focuses on imparting knowledge and skills, whereas aesthetic education emphasizes cultivating students' unique perceptiveness and imagination. In art appreciation courses, students encounter various artistic works from ancient and modern times, both domestic and international. The rich forms of expression and profound connotations in these works can break students' mental rigidity and inspire them to view issues from different perspectives. For instance, when analyzing Picasso's Cubist paintings in art appreciation classes, students can grasp the unconventional thinking that transcends conventional visual cognition. This mindset can be transferred to other fields, helping them generate unique creativity in future careers^[7].

Secondly, aesthetic education in higher education institutions significantly enhances students' aesthetic literacy. Creative professionals require acute aesthetic judgment to discern and create beauty. Through aesthetic courses, students study art theories and engage in artistic practices, gradually developing unique perspectives on beauty and discernment skills. Taking fashion design majors as an example, students not only master garment production techniques but also cultivate aesthetic capabilities in color coordination, style composition, and material pairing through these courses. This enables them to create high-quality works that balance visual appeal with market value.

Third, aesthetic education can also cultivate students' cultural literacy. Rich cultural knowledge is the source of creativity. Through guiding students to engage with diverse cultures and gain a deep understanding of their histories, traditions, and values, university aesthetic education provides abundant material for their creative endeavors. For instance, in opera appreciation courses, students can appreciate the unique charm of China's traditional culture and draw inspiration from it. For students who will pursue careers in the cultural and creative industries, profound cultural literacy enables them to tap into cultural resources, integrate traditional elements into modern creative works, and promote the inheritance and innovation of culture.

Fourth, aesthetic education significantly contributes to shaping students' personal qualities. The creative class requires individuals with independent thinking, courageous exploration, and tenacity. Through artistic creation and practical activities in aesthetic education, students develop these qualities through continuous experimentation. When creating oil paintings, students must constantly experiment with different color applications and brushwork techniques. They must persist through challenges and setbacks, thereby cultivating independent thinking and a spirit of bold exploration – qualities that are indispensable for the creative class.

Therefore, aesthetic education in higher education institutions lays a solid foundation for cultivating future creative talents by fostering innovative thinking, aesthetic literacy, cultural depth, and individual qualities. Universities should prioritize aesthetic education by continuously improving curricula, diversifying teaching content and methods, thereby

nurturing more outstanding creative professionals to drive social innovation and cultural prosperity^[8].

6. Conclusion

In this era of rapid AI advancement, the intelligent transformation of human production tools presents both new challenges and opportunities for aesthetic education in higher education institutions, while also endowing it with fresh missions. This article delves into the value and direction of aesthetic education in universities during the AI age, offering theoretical references for relevant educational practices.

The article focuses on the three core missions of aesthetic education in higher education institutions. First, guiding students to build scientific aesthetic values. In the face of multiculturalism and information overload, some students exhibit superficial and utilitarian aesthetic tendencies. Aesthetic education in higher education institutions helps students establish rational aesthetic judgment standards through systematic courses, cultivates inclusive aesthetic perspectives via diverse cultural art forms, and guides students to connect aesthetics with social responsibility, thereby forming a responsible value orientation. In the age of artificial intelligence, it filters out vulgar aesthetic information for students. Second, enlightening students' understanding of life aesthetics. Aesthetic education is not merely about imparting artistic knowledge, but enhances students' aesthetic perception through diversified courses such as painting, music, and drama, creates platforms for students to interpret life aesthetics, and elevates their spiritual realms through classical art interpretation and collaborative exchanges. Third, inheriting China's traditional culture and empowering the creative class. In cultural inheritance, higher education institutions utilize modern means like digital technology and virtual reality to disseminate traditional aesthetics, promoting their integration with contemporary life and theories. In cultivating the creative class, aesthetic education stimulates students' innovative thinking, enhances aesthetic literacy, enriches cultural heritage, shapes outstanding personal qualities, and supplies talents for social innovation and development.

In summary, this article clarifies that aesthetic education in higher education institutions during the AI era must align with contemporary demands. By focusing on value guidance, cultural heritage preservation, and innovation empowerment, it advocates cultivating talents who meet future societal needs through curriculum system optimization and interdisciplinary resource integration. The paper also charts a clear path for high-quality development in university aesthetic education, offering significant theoretical and practical guidance.

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