

Practice research into the design education inspirations and teaching patterns of design studio of German Braunschweig University of Art

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Abstract

Germany is the birthplace of modern design. From Bauhaus, the design education of Germany has formed the teaching pattern based on “studio”, which has developed so far and exerted positive influence on design education in the world. This thesis raises a set of teaching pattern of design studio that introduces domestic and foreign design competitions and commercial projects into classroom teaching by investigating the design education pattern of *Braunschweig University of Art* and applying this author’s design studio teaching experience in recent years.

Key words: German design education, teaching patterns, studio mode

Introduction

Braunschweig University of Art founded in 1962, located in north-central Germany, is a well-known art and design university in Germany. It is an international-oriented public art university whose majors offered include Visual Communication Design, Products Design, Liberal Arts, Art and Communication, etc.

In April 2013, I won DAAD, a scholarship provided by German government, to study in *Braunschweig University of Art (HBK)* for a year and a half. During this time, my major work was to research its design education patterns and to conclude a set of teaching patterns of design studio in which design competitions at home and abroad, and commercial projects were introduced into teaching.

1. Teaching patterns of design studio of HBK

In the teaching mode of *HBK*, what the most distinctive method of design education is mainly embodied in project-driven module curriculum in which instructors introduce their own design projects into the class to provide students design projects. Teaching is sometimes conducted in its teaching studios while sometimes in extracurricular enterprises or museums (Fig. 1). During the course, the exchange and discussion teaching is conducted by studio which is limited in number to achieve good teaching effect. Discussing and investigating around topics, students come up with their design plan usually reported in the form of PPT. Then, the professors will make suggestions on revising and perfecting their proposals after mutual discussion between students.



Fig. 1 The professor took students to Westermann Map Company in Germany to discuss with its staff.

2. Inspirations and research on practice: teaching model of design studio

From the investigation of the teaching model of UBA, we find that it pays more attention to improving students’ practical ability, and combines classroom teaching with social practice and needs, which provides an open teaching practice environment for professors and students. Besides, instructors combine with the demand for talents by design companies to cultivate students. The studio teaching mode is introduced into the teaching of design education. Through the development of design projects in the studio, bridging with enterprises, the teaching model of UBA introduces the professional design competition into course teaching, which can really improve the students’ design practice ability and train useful talents for society.

2.1 Combing theoretical teaching with practice, this teaching model cultivates a number of practical talents to meet the need of market

Traditional teaching for art design major--teachers lecture in class and then grade students’ assignment accomplished after class, apparently, can hardly cultivate art design talents who are able to meet current market’s demand for practical ability. In the teaching model of design studio, students are organized to participate in domestic and foreign design competitions to improve their conceptual understanding and design innovation ability for design propositions. In addition, it is also a good

practice for students to participate in commercial design projects, by which can avoid students acquiring just theory or their textbook content in college. Commercial design process consists of six main steps: communication with customers, investigation into market, design proposal, put into market, design feedback and design perfection. Through repeated practice of these six steps, it can improve students' practical ability and avoid the phenomenon of "be fastidious but incompetent" after their graduation.

2.2 Studio teaching patterns rely on enterprises and cultivate design talents for them

Design studio cooperates with enterprises. In a way, they are an integration, which means that studying in the design studio is just the same as entering enterprises. In this way, it is called a win-win project: for enterprises, not only can design studio deal with consumption of time and fund, but also it designs products for them; for schools, because of practical projects and design funds, provided by enterprises, students can be fully trained. At the same time, their employment problem can be addressed.

3. Teaching contents and methods of teaching patterns of studio

3.1 Teaching content of teaching patterns of design studio

In traditional teaching, teaching content of art design courses always depends on certain textbook or a virtual proposition, which may not enable students to put theory into action. Teaching model of design studio of art design major requires that teachers should convey latest pattern of design companies and design development trend at home and abroad to their students to help them contact with the front-line professional knowledge. There are two main methods to achieve this: introduce design projects into teaching and organize students to participate in professional competitions at home and abroad.

3.2 Teaching contents of teaching patterns of design studio

(1) Introduce design projects into teaching

In the teaching patterns of design studio introduces practical design projects into teaching and consciously integrates the new technology and designing methods into the practice of the teaching process. Furthermore, design projects, depriving from enterprises, are students' assignments. And the requirements of enterprises are considered as their requirements of assignments whose final assessment of level will be judged by a trinity of teachers, enterprises and markets.

On the one hand, it can effectively promote the integration of design instructors and society, for example, design instructors will take the initiative to find projects in teaching patterns of design studio. On the other hand, through this process students are able to know more about the market and gain designing payment during learning process with their design products recognized by the community, which will effectively stimulate students' interest in design and drive them to study more actively, thus enhancing the overall teaching atmosphere.

(2) Organize students to participate in professional competitions at home and abroad

Because of introducing domestic and foreign professional competitions and considering the proposition collection of

design competitions as requirements of course assignments, the design works of students will be tested by experts and design masters at home and abroad. It is professional competitions that promote a benign professional competition and stimulate their interest in learning for some international competitions need teamwork to complete. Team members are responsible for illustration, photography, execution, post-processing and other roles. Improving students' sense of teamwork through the formation of design teams is in line with the operation mode of the professional design company.

3.3 The teaching methods of design studio: group teaching model

The group teaching patterns of design studio, changing the traditional passive teaching mode—learning by teachers' teaching, emphasizes an interactive discussion teaching on design plan (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 The group teaching model of design studio launched by pro. Yang

For one thing, the group teaching mode of design studio conforms to the way of the proposals discussion of the professional design company, that is, the form of the scheme discussion of the design teaching scene simulation design company. Students act as designers, and take the design scheme to the proposal meeting to explain. And the 'designers' treat students under the stage as customers and persuade their customers. At this time the students play the role of customers, and then they will gradually understand the psychology of customers so as to achieve the effect of transposition thinking, which lay a good foundation for future design promotion; for another thing, in the 'group teaching' mode of design studio, students' autonomy and team spirit are trained. Besides, such interactive teaching mode can stimulate the students' advantages and potentials, and fully enhance their professional practice ability.

3.4 Teaching means of design studio

(1) Design studio sets up long-term cooperation with enterprises and introduces their projects into teaching.

The teaching space of design studio can be in the studio, but also in the design department and production department of enterprises. The introduction of enterprises projects into teaching can not only improve students' ability of design, but create commercial value for enterprises themselves.

Conclusion

With rapid development of domestic cultural and creative industries, our country's demand for applied creative designers is gradually increasing. The application of studio teaching mode, and the introduction of design competitions at home and abroad enterprises projects can achieve stunning teaching results, improve the quality of our practical design teaching, and realize the purpose of training applied talents.

References

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(2) Seminars on design proposals jointly composed by students, instructors and representatives of enterprises.

During the seminar, students express their own design in the



form of PPT proposals. After this, their teachers and representatives of enterprises will propose their suggestion on design proposals, which effectively and accurately promotes the marketization of students' design (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3 : Students' PPT design proposals report

(3) Market feedback of design products

Representatives of enterprises are invited to attend discussion of design studio with regular feedback to products in the market. On the one hand, it can timely adjust the design strategy; on the other hand, it plays a direct and effective role in training 'future designers' prospectively.

4. The fruits of teaching patterns of design studio

After application and practice of teaching patterns of studio for 4 years, from 2014 to 2018, we have obtained a lot of achievements. And our students have won many awards in domestic and foreign design competitions, including "4TH BLOCK" Ukraine International Poster Exhibition, University Students in Jiangxi Creative Design Contest. In addition, we have completed many commercial design projects such as WOWTAO logo design and so on. The details of our achievements are shown as follows:

TABLE I
 AWARD-WINNING SITUATION OF DESIGN COMPETITIONS

International Design Competition	Domestic Design Competition
6	37

TABLE 2
 COMPLETED COMMERCIAL DESIGN PROJECTS

Logo Design	Brand Image Design	Poster Design	Ceramic Decoration Design	Other Design Projects
12	2	25	10	7

