

Exploration of the Pathways for Cultivating International Talents in Design at Universities under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative

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Abstract:

Under the backdrop of educational globalization, the cultivation of art and design talents in universities requires both “going out” with international high-quality applied talent educational resources and “bringing in” internationally recognized advanced concepts and standards. On one hand, China’s Belt and Road Initiative has provided new opportunities for the talent cultivation in art and design specialties, focusing on nurturing applied talents that meet international demands. By aligning China’s educational resources with international standards, the education system for university art and design professionals can become a highlight of Chinese education. On the other hand, the cultivation of art and design talent in universities should also draw on international advanced standards and practices. For the construction of art and design specialties in universities, we should review the deficiencies of existing models and establish new standardized professional assessment criteria to ensure they meet the development needs of international vocational education. At the same time, in various aspects such as faculty recruitment and training, curriculum design, and practical training, it is necessary not only to reflect the characteristics of applied education but also to align with international standards by introducing advanced professional concepts and teaching content. Faced with the current new situation, the cultivation of art and design talent in universities should adopt an applied development model that coexists with “going out” and “bringing in”, vigorously creating a new era of international education that belongs to the art and design specialties.

Keywords:

International Teaching, Cross-Cultural Communication, Innovative Teaching Model, Teaching Methodology

1. The Strategic Background of the Belt and Road Initiative and New Opportunities for Educational Development

The “Belt and Road” initiative is a significant strategic measure by China to promote the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind and to foster the healthy and sustainable development of globalization. It upholds the banner of peace, cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning, and mutual benefit, aiming to create a comprehensive, multi-level network of new partnerships with countries along the route. As an integral part of the “Belt and Road” construction, cultural exchanges and educational cooperation play a key role.

Against this strategic backdrop, China’s educational endeavors have gained unprecedented new opportunities for development. On one hand, with the continuous deepening of educational exchanges and cooperation with countries along the route, the “Belt and Road” has expanded China’s educational openness to a vast space and market. Chinese universities can fully utilize this opportunity to export high-quality educational resources and expand international influence. On the other hand, construction projects along the “Belt and Road” provide an excellent practical platform for cultivating talents with an international perspective. Universities can encourage teachers and students to participate deeply, cultivating lifelong international capabilities through practical experience.

At the same time, educational exchanges and cooperation help to enhance mutual understanding and trust between different countries and ethnic groups, inject new impetus into the mutual learning and exchange of different civilizations, and gather strong force for building a community with a shared future for mankind. More importantly, the “Belt and Road” injects new vitality into the internationalization reform of China’s higher education, which will force universities to benchmark international standards, optimize talent cultivation models, and improve internal management, thereby comprehensively improving the quality of education and international competitiveness.

It can be said that the “Belt and Road” has created a brand new historical opportunity for educational development. Only by closely aligning with the national strategy and actively integrating into it, can Chinese education ride the trend, go far and steady, and contribute educational wisdom and strength to the realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the Chinese Dream.

2. Construction of an International Design Talent Capability Framework from the Perspective of the Belt and Road Initiative

Under the broad context of the “Belt and Road” initiative, the discussion on constructing an international design talent capability framework has transcended a mere reform of educational models; it demands a comprehensive and profound strategic review of design education. The construction of this framework must be based on an in-depth understanding of talent needs in the era of globalization, as well as a comprehensive consideration of the cultural diversity, economic development levels, and policy orientations of the countries along the “Belt and Road”.

From the literature background, globalization theory (Friedman, 2007) provides us with a macro perspective, emphasizing the international vision and global competitiveness that design talents need in the process of globalization. Intercultural communication theory (Hofstede et al., 2010) further elaborates on the importance of

effective communication and collaboration for design talents in a multicultural environment. At the same time, the theory of innovation diffusion (Rogers, 2003) and the theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983) provide theoretical support for the cultivation of innovative ability and professional skills of design talents. In addition, the concept of lifelong learning (Jarvis, 2007) emphasizes the necessity for design talents to continue learning and adapting in a constantly changing world.

Guided by this theory, the construction of the international design talent capability framework should focus on the comprehensive cultivation of the following core elements:

International Vision and Intercultural Competence: Design talents should have a profound understanding of the cultural diversity of the countries along the "Belt and Road" and be able to communicate and collaborate effectively in different cultural backgrounds. This requires educators to integrate cross-cultural learning and international exchange opportunities in curriculum design.

Innovative Thinking and Professional Skills: Design talents need to have innovative thinking, and be able to continuously explore and try new methods and solutions in design practice. At the same time, they must master advanced design tools and software to adapt to the rapid development of the industry.

Global Market Insight and Strategic Planning: Design talents should have a keen insight into global market trends and be able to formulate corresponding strategic plans to meet the needs and challenges of the international market.

Project Management and Team Collaboration: In a cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural environment, design talents need project management capabilities to effectively organize and coordinate team members to successfully implement design projects.

Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development: Design talents should have a strong sense of social responsibility and be able to consider the sustainable development of society and the environment in design, bringing a positive impact to society.

Lifelong Learning and Self-Renewal: In today's rapidly changing technology and market, design talents must have the ability for lifelong learning, constantly updating knowledge and skills to adapt to new challenges.

The construction of the international design talent capability framework under the "Belt and Road" initiative is a systematic and strategic project. It requires us to find a balance between theory and practice, and cultivate design talents who can adapt to the challenges of globalization and have international competitiveness through educational innovation, industry cooperation, and policy support. The implementation of this framework will provide strong talent support for the construction of the "Belt and Road" and promote the international development of the design industry.

3. Challenges in Cultivating Art and Design Talents from an International Perspective

Under the auspices of the "Belt and Road" initiative, the Chinese government has embarked on a strategic endeavor to internationalize its educational landscape, with the aim of nurturing a cadre of talents who are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of a globalized world. The "National Medium and Long-term Education

Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010-2020)” articulates the pivotal role of educational openness and sets forth a strategic objective to cultivate individuals who possess an international perspective, are well-versed in global norms, and are capable of engaging in international affairs and competition. This policy framework provides a foundational guide and impetus for addressing the challenges inherent in the cultivation of art and design professionals.

To confront the issue of unfamiliarity with international rules and standards among art and design professionals, national policies advocate for the alignment of academic curricula with global design industry benchmarks. By integrating advanced international educational paradigms and pedagogical approaches, academic institutions are encouraged to fortify the international dimensions of their curricula. Such initiatives are designed to not only familiarize students with international design protocols but also to bolster their competitiveness on the global stage.

Addressing the barriers in cross-cultural communication, policies endorse the enhancement of exchanges and collaborations between domestic and international art and design institutions. This is achieved through initiatives such as student exchange programs, international symposia, and design exhibitions, which collectively serve as conduits for cross-cultural dialogue and understanding. These engagements are instrumental in refining students’ linguistic proficiencies and fostering an appreciation and respect for diverse cultures, thereby enhancing their cross-cultural communicative competencies.

In the realm of innovation capability development, national policies champion the adoption of innovative educational models, such as project-based learning and design thinking methodologies, to stimulate students’ innovative consciousness and capabilities. Engagement in practical design projects and competitions provides a platform for students to apply and refine their innovative thinking, thereby cultivating their adeptness in tackling sophisticated problems.

To ameliorate the disparities in educational resources, policies such as the “Double First-Class” initiative are implemented to facilitate the equitable distribution of high-quality educational assets. Leveraging modern educational technologies, including online learning platforms, these policies aim to bridge the gaps between different regions and institutions, thereby elevating the overall quality of art and design education.

Practical teaching is also underscored by national policies, which encourage collaborative efforts between academia and industry. By offering internships and practical training opportunities, these policies seek to conjoin theoretical learning with real-world applications, thereby enhancing students’ practical skills and their capacity to address tangible challenges.

Furthermore, the cultivation of sustainable development awareness is underscored by national policies, which advocate for the integration of environmental stewardship and social responsibility within educational frameworks. In the context of art and design education, this involves instilling in students the principles of sustainable design that take into account environmental, social, and economic equilibria.

Lastly, the expansion of international cooperation networks is facilitated by national policies that endorse global academic partnerships. By establishing collaborative ties with international design institutions and engaging in global design projects, alongside inviting renowned international design figures for lectures and mentorship, students

are provided with ample opportunities to interface with cutting-edge international design practices.

In essence, the support and guidance of national policies have positioned the educational sector to effectively navigate the challenges in the cultivation of art and design professionals. Through a multifaceted approach that includes curriculum reform, faculty development, cross-cultural exchange opportunities, enhanced practical teaching, and the promotion of international cooperation, a new breed of art and design talents is being cultivated. These individuals are not only aligned with international standards but also possess the innovative spirit and practical acumen necessary to contribute meaningfully to the “Belt and Road” initiative and to propel the internationalization of Chinese art and design education forward.

4. Specific Practices for the Reform of Art and Design Talent Cultivation from an International Perspective

4.1. Forging the Industrial Chain Education Characteristics of 'Industry-Specialty Colleges, Sector-Specialty Clusters, Enterprise-Specialty Modules, and Product-Course Modules

Implementing the industry-chain-based education model requires a seamless integration of industry and enterprise needs throughout all aspects of school operations, with a deep infusion of industrial development elements. The key to this model lies in closely aligning with the actual demands of industries and enterprises, which is the foundational basis for establishing distinctive colleges and clusters of specialties.

Firstly, in-depth research on industry and talent needs must be conducted to understand the practical demands for talent in pillar industries, advantageous sectors, and emerging industries. This understanding is essential for setting up characteristic colleges and groups of majors that are responsive to market needs.

Secondly, there should be a strong promotion of the collaborative education mechanism that integrates industry, academia, research, and practical application. Schools should establish extensive cooperative relationships with related industries, enterprises, research institutions, and industry associations to jointly formulate talent training programs. Enterprises should be deeply involved in various stages such as specialty construction, curriculum development, internships, and teacher training, forming a long-term mechanism for collaborative education.

Furthermore, it is crucial to construct a modular curriculum system centered around the actual product lines and job clusters of enterprises. Integrating real work task scenarios from enterprises into teaching organically allows students to gain extensive practical experience alongside their professional knowledge. The construction of practical training bases both inside and outside the school should simulate enterprise production processes, providing a hands-on environment for modular courses that can directly connect with actual enterprise production lines.

Additionally, there should be an emphasis on cultivating a “dual-teacher” faculty familiar with actual enterprise production, possessing professional knowledge, and vocational teaching capabilities. This includes full-time teachers from vocational colleges and frontline technicians and skilled craftsmen from enterprises, who will be responsible for the development and implementation of modular courses.

In conjunction with this, it is imperative to establish a comprehensive quality monitoring and evaluation system, setting scientific quality standards and evaluation indicators. Regular assessments of the education model should be conducted to ensure seamless alignment with the talent demands of enterprises and industries. At the same time, the employment quality of graduates should be closely tracked, serving as an important basis for adjustments and improvements.

Through sustained long-term efforts to integrate industry-chain elements into all aspects of school operations, the deep integration of the education chain with the industry chain can be truly achieved. This approach will ensure a continuous supply of high-quality, compound technical talents that meet the demands of enterprises and industries.

4.2. Constructing the “Design Development - Product Packaging - Brand Communication - Sales Space Design” Industry Chain Specialty Cluster for the Design Industry

To cultivate international compound design talents who can adapt to the development needs of the design industry chain, it is crucial to integrate international elements into every aspect of specialty cluster construction and talent cultivation. Firstly, closely connect with the design industry chain to establish a complete training system for the design industry chain by setting up specialty clusters such as visual communication design, product design, packaging design, and environmental art design. During the specialty construction process, refer to advanced international design education concepts and standards to optimize and adjust the training plan and curriculum, invite internationally renowned designers to participate in teaching, offer bilingual courses, and ensure that the specialty cluster construction is in line with international standards.

In terms of training objectives and curriculum content, focus on cultivating compound international design talents with an international perspective, cross-cultural communication ability, and proficient foreign language communication skills. Incorporate cross-cultural design elements into professional courses, and pay attention to cultivating students' global awareness and international perspective. Enhance international practical abilities by encouraging students to participate in international design projects and competitions for practical training.

At the same time, vigorously carry out international cooperation in running schools and teacher-student exchanges. Cooperate with well-known foreign design schools and enterprises at multiple levels, such as cooperative education, teacher-student exchange, and joint training. Regularly send outstanding students to study abroad and invite international design masters to be visiting professors to give lectures.

In the practical teaching link, strive to create an international training platform. Schools and enterprises co-build international training bases that simulate the operation of multinational companies, and cooperate with international brand merchants and design companies on real international design projects. Set up an international design studio to undertake global design outsourcing services, allowing students to directly face an international work environment and tasks.

In terms of the teaching team, form an international faculty team that includes domestic and foreign design masters, industry seniors, and young design talents, and regularly send teachers to study and visit foreign design institutions and schools to form a combination of Chinese and Western teaching strength.

Finally, actively participate in international design education certification, such as the British Council for Art and Design accreditation, to continuously enhance international influence and teaching quality. Encourage students to obtain international design professional certifications and qualifications to lay a solid foundation for the future international development.

Through a comprehensive international cultivation, it will effectively promote the development of Chinese design education and the design industry, allowing more Chinese design talents with international standards to stand out and make a strong voice for Chinese design on the world design stage.

4.3. Establish a dual-crossing, triple-integration international design professional teaching team

Cultivating outstanding design talents with an international perspective and global literacy is inseparable from a high-level international teaching team. This team needs to have “dual-crossing boundaries and triple integration,” that is, it must have the characteristics of “dual-crossing” disciplines and transnational cultures, and achieve the “triple integration” of teaching theory, practical experience, and international vision.

The teaching team must have the “dual-crossing boundaries” characteristics. On the one hand, it is necessary to cross the boundaries of disciplines and specialties, including not only various fields of design such as visual communication, product, environment, interaction, etc., but also covering related disciplines such as art, humanities, science, and engineering, forming a multidisciplinary integrated compound teaching team. On the other hand, it is necessary to cross national boundaries and cultures, widely recruiting domestic and foreign design masters and senior practitioners, integrating Chinese and Western design concepts and cultural elements, reflecting distinct international characteristics.

The teaching team must achieve the “triple integration.” The combination of theory and practice, not only has senior design education experts but also has industry elites with rich practical experience in design. The school can hire well-known designers in the industry as visiting professors to directly impart practical experience to students. The combination of education and industry, establishing in-depth cooperation mechanisms between schools and enterprises, inviting corporate designers to teach on-site in classrooms, or arranging students to learn and practice in enterprises. The combination of tradition and innovation, inheriting the basic skills of Chinese design, while also keeping up with the forefront of international design trends, focusing on the cultivation of innovative awareness and innovative ability.

The teaching team needs to improve its international level in various ways. Young teachers can be regularly sent to foreign design colleges and enterprises for study and exchange to pick up the latest design concepts and teaching methods. Foreign famous designers can be hired as visiting professors to give lectures or short-term courses. Teachers are encouraged to participate in international design projects and competitions to expand their international horizons.

The teaching team must cultivate a good cross-cultural understanding and communication skills. It can not only proficiently use foreign languages to impart design knowledge but also integrate Chinese and Western design cultural characteristics, guiding students to form an inclusive, open, and inclusive international design thinking.

A “dual-crossing boundaries and triple integration” international design professional teaching team will lay a solid foundation for the cultivation of Chinese design talents to the world, allowing Chinese design education and the design industry to keep up with international trends and progress in sync with the world's outstanding design civilization.

4.4. Construct an international platform for design professional education to broaden students' international horizons

Cultivating design talents with an international perspective and global literacy hinges on integrating international elements throughout professional education, providing students with multi-platform opportunities for international learning and practice.

Firstly, actively expand international cooperative education programs, such as joint cultivation, credit mutual recognition, and teacher-student exchanges with world-renowned design schools. Invite distinguished professors from abroad to offer courses or short-term lectures, and select outstanding students for study tours overseas, allowing them to experience international teaching philosophies and campus cultures firsthand.

At the same time, align the curriculum system and teaching materials with international standards. Draw on advanced international design education concepts to optimize the setting of professional courses. Introduce excellent design textbooks and teaching resources from abroad, and offer bilingual or fully English-taught courses to familiarize students with international professional expressions.

Additionally, create more opportunities for students to engage with the forefront of international design. Actively organize their participation in world-class design competitions and exhibitions, such as the Red Dot Award and the iF Design Award, to immerse them in global design trends. Regularly invite international design masters as visiting professors to impart concepts and provide demonstrations, allowing students to experience the thinking of international masters up close.

In practical teaching, strive to build an international platform. Cooperate with schools and enterprises to establish simulated international studios with internationally renowned design companies or brands, set up international design studios, and undertake international design projects directly targeting the global market, allowing students to hone their practical skills in a realistic environment. Also, provide financial support to encourage students to intern at foreign design companies, enhancing their international practical experience.

Meanwhile, the teaching team itself should focus on international construction. Regularly send teachers to study and exchange at foreign design institutions or enterprises to learn advanced international concepts and methods; invite overseas designers as visiting professors to promote cultural exchange and integration.

Through a multi-faceted approach, starting from all levels such as the teaching team, curriculum system, practical teaching, and cooperative exchanges, integrate international elements into the entire process of design professional education, creating a favorable international learning atmosphere for students, broadening their international horizons, and comprehensively improving their global literacy. Only by being rooted in Chinese design culture while also possessing an international

perspective can Chinese design talents better integrate into the international stage and showcase the greatest charm of Chinese design.

Cultivating design talents with an international perspective and global literacy requires integrating international elements into every aspect of professional education, providing students with multi-platform opportunities for international learning and practice.

Firstly, actively expand international cooperative education programs, such as joint cultivation with world-renowned design schools, mutual recognition of credits, and exchanges of teachers and students. Invite famous professors from abroad to offer courses or short-term lectures, and select outstanding students for exchange studies overseas for a period, allowing them to experience international teaching philosophies and campus cultures firsthand.

At the same time, align the curriculum system and teaching materials with international standards. Draw on advanced international design education concepts to optimize the setting of professional courses. Introduce excellent design textbooks and teaching resources from abroad, and offer bilingual or fully English-taught courses to familiarize students with international professional expressions.

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4.5. Establish an international platform for design vocational education and build overseas teaching bases

Cultivating fashion design talents with an international perspective and global literacy requires integrating international elements into every aspect of professional

education, providing students with diverse opportunities for international learning and practical experiences.

Firstly, actively expand cooperation with renowned institutions in countries and regions where fashion design education is advanced, establish multi-level, comprehensive long-term cooperative relationships, carry out projects such as credit mutual recognition, joint training, and teacher-student exchanges, and integrate high-quality international educational resources. At the same time, set up overseas fashion design incubation bases in cities with developed design industries to serve as platforms for students' overseas practice, simulating the operation process of real international design companies and providing hands-on training venues.

In terms of curriculum development, regularly invite masters and senior practitioners in the international design field as visiting professors to offer cutting-edge courses and lectures, directly imparting advanced international concepts and practical experience to students and inspiring innovative thinking. In conjunction with this, establish industry-academia-research cooperative relationships with internationally renowned fashion brands to jointly formulate talent training programs and develop customized international curriculum systems, providing internship positions for students.

Additionally, strongly support and organize student participation in top-tier global design competitions and exhibitions, such as the Red Dot and German IF, allowing them to immerse themselves in the forefront of global design trends and broaden their international horizons. Utilize modern information technology to build an online teaching resource sharing platform with foreign partner institutions, carry out real-time online teaching, design work display, and other remote collaborations, innovating teaching models.

Through the organic integration of various methods such as school cooperation, base construction, faculty introduction, industry-academia-research alliances, competition exchanges, and online platforms, infiltrate international elements into every aspect of design professional education, making the concepts, courses, practices, and faculty international. This creates a rich international learning atmosphere for students, continuously broadens their international horizons, enhances global professional literacy, and truly cultivates high-end design talents who can take on the international stage and showcase Chinese charm on the global design stage.

5. Conclusions

The "Belt and Road" initiative has brought new opportunities and requirements for the cultivation of international design talents in colleges and universities. Institutions of higher learning must seize this significant development opportunity and promote the internationalization of design education from multiple aspects, including specialty construction, teacher team, practical teaching, cultural education, and international cooperation, to cultivate high-end design talents with an international perspective, international concepts, and international practical experience.

Specifically, it is necessary to optimize the professional curriculum system, introduce internationally advanced concepts, and offer bilingual courses; build an international teacher team by inviting foreign masters to impart knowledge and education; build an international practice platform and establish design studios facing the global market; focus on cross-cultural training to enhance cultural confidence; and

expand educational cooperation with countries along the "Belt and Road" to promote multicultural exchanges.

Only by integrating international elements into every aspect of the cultivation of design talents and producing a large number of international design talents with global competitiveness can we promote Chinese design to keep pace with world design, provide strong intellectual support for the construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative, present more Chinese designs on the world stage, showcase the charm of Chinese culture and design to the world, and contribute Chinese wisdom to the development of human civilization and the construction of a community with a shared future.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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