

# Comparison of the Status of Art Education - Taking China, the United States, Japan and France as Examples

Yangyang Liang<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, China

## Email Address

1448623180@qq.com (Yangyang Liang)

\*Correspondence: 1448623180@qq.com

Received: 28 April 2024; Accepted: 23 June 2024; Published: 27 August 2024

---

## Abstract:

The stones of those hills may be used to polish gems. The development of China's art education is inseparable from the study of art education in the world. The United States is one of the more powerful countries in terms of comprehensive national strength, and its art education development history and reform experience is worth learning from. Japan and China belong to the same East Asian cultural circle, they have a deep historical affinity, which also makes the comparative study of practical significance. In addition, the establishment of China's art education system, especially in basic training, cannot be separated from the profound influence of French art education. For this reason, this paper selects the above representative countries in art education, and vertically compares the development status of the above countries in primary and secondary art education, higher art education, and museum art education, so as to better grasp the trend of its reform, and then construct an art education system with Chinese characteristics.

## Keywords:

Chinese Art Education, Foreign Art Education, Comparative Study

---

## 1. Introduction

The current state of development reflects the trend of reform. Art education occupies an important part in the wave of education reform in the world today. Due to the significant achievements in pedagogy, psychology, brain science, multiple intelligences, successful intelligence, constructivism, etc., the important position and special role of art education in cultivating high-quality talents are becoming more and more prominent. Countries all over the world are using various methods to reform art education and art education in their accelerated talent cultivation strategies. Against this background, a new worldwide upsurge in art education is approaching. [1]

## 2. Materials and Methods

This paper will mainly use the comparative research method which can be understood as a method of examining two or more connected things according to

certain criteria, looking for their similarities and differences, and exploring universal and special laws.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### *3.1. Analysis and Comparison of the Current Situation of Primary and Secondary Art Education*

At present, the content of Chinese primary and secondary art courses is ample, such as painting classes, handicraft classes, design classes, and the study of national culture. The ever-developing new technologies are gradually integrated into classroom teaching, like AR animation, digital teaching materials, etc., and almost all of the learning about art can be added to the primary and secondary art education courses. However, on the whole, some traditional classrooms are still dominated by “knowledge and skills”, and there are many problems such as neglecting the main position of students, over-emphasis on professional art education, lack of cultivation of students’ professionalism, untimely updating of teachers’ teaching concepts, lack of innovation in the teaching mode, insufficiently complete content system of art teaching and relative lack of resources for art education in the countryside. Many issues need to be addressed urgently.

The mainstream American education thought that the quality of life we are pursuing nowadays should be full of art, and every student should cultivate and exercise his or her core quality of art according to their own interests in the primary and secondary education stage. The major breakthrough in the curriculum of “DBAE” (Discipline-Based Art Education) has made it possible for the four disciplines (Art Creation, Aesthetics, Art Criticism, and Art History) to progress from kindergarten to high school in a gradual, step-by-step manner, forming an organic whole and ultimately bringing art into the core of American basic education alongside such disciplines as mathematics and foreign language. To the 21st century, the STEAM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ART, MATHEMATICS) model of comprehensive education has emerged, which is mainly devoted to cultivating students’ observation, imagination and creativity, and shaping their aesthetic sensibilities. In the actual teaching process, open classroom teaching pays more attention to the role of “brainstorming”, encouraging and guiding students to explore the artistic effects of different media. [6]

In Japan, the focus of art education is on the children’s stage of character and moral formation, and the theoretical study of art education is mainly aimed at children in primary and secondary schools and kindergartens, with the process of cultivation focusing more on artistic “expression” and “appreciation”. In Japan, art education in primary and secondary schools carefully emphasis age-specific teaching, and primary school art classes are arranged for 2-4 hours per week, ensuring children’s learning in terms of time. In school education, art subjects have the same status as other subjects such as language and mathematics, and drawing, three-dimensional production, and the production of household items account for a large proportion of the art curriculum. The facilities for art education are well developed, making it easy for students to make craft items made of different materials according to their needs and to devote themselves to the study of art. [6]

France puts the role of art education on human and social development into an extremely important position, and offers compulsory art courses from primary school

to high school, placing the main goal on cultivating students' aesthetic emotion and cooperation ability. In France, art classes are held twice a week in primary and secondary schools and three times a week in high schools. The French Ministry of National Education specifies that art classes are offered for two purposes: to cultivate a sense of aesthetics, and to study art history in order to train students to express their thoughts and feelings through art and to improve their social communication skills through art learning. [2] The French art education programme makes clear provisions for the learning tasks at each stage of study, with the kindergarten stage placing emphasis on the enlightenment of young children, the primary stage on creativity, and the secondary stage on the cultivation of personal cultivation.

From this it can be seen that the above countries have all recognized the important role played by art education in the cultivation of sound and fully developed human beings, and governments are willing to give greater support to the primary and secondary art programmes, which are increasingly rich in content and form. However, each country shows different characteristics in terms of educational purpose, teaching organization, teaching characteristics and the current state of development.

### ***3.2. Analysis and comparison of the current situation of higher art education***

China's academy-style art education in modern times began by imitating the art education of France and the Soviet Union. Since the 21st century, the scale of China's art disciplines has been expanding, and higher art education has shown a diversified mode of schooling. At present, there are a total of 3,072 colleges and universities nationwide, [8] with more than 80 per cent of colleges and universities offering art majors, and less than 20 per cent of colleges and universities not offering art majors. Gradually, art education has been popularized and spread under the condition of developed media technology, and art education in the country has shown a prosperous scene. Accompanied by the rapid development, China's higher art education presents the characteristics of the stage of development, there are more prominent problems in the characteristics of schooling, curriculum, teaching content, teacher quality, professional direction and other aspects.

American higher art education presents diversification. From drawing on the early European traditional art academy management mode and school running ideas, to the modernist teaching concept of change, in the United States comprehensive university art department teaching, traditional, modern, post-modern teaching concepts coexist at the same time, a variety of concepts can be free to develop, the students can choose according to their own needs to obtain knowledge. [3] The current higher art education in the United States has three main modes: a. art colleges; b. art departments of comprehensive universities; c. art departments of community colleges. Most current American art colleges use an altered Bauhaus curriculum plan in which students experiment with different materials and media before finally deciding to specialise in a particular medium.

Japanese collegiate art education began in the Meiji period. In terms of discipline construction, art creation, and talent cultivation, Japanese art universities have travelled the road from purely Western to a combination of East and West, establishing a multi-level, multi-disciplinary, three-dimensional and multi-dimensional art education system, and cultivating art talents at all levels to be active in the field of art in the world. Under the guidance of advanced educational concepts

and policies, contemporary Japanese art practice and teaching activities have a mature methodological system, showing distinctive regularity.

France's art and design has always been the French government's attention and attention, public institutions in the entire education structure occupies a large proportion of the tuition fee is usually only 300-500 euros in registration fees. In the university art discipline construction, France based on the reality of social development and the law of educational development of the appropriate layout, pay great attention to the concept of student thinking and independent thinking ability training, and requires teachers to teach according to the material, for different students to take targeted education. [6]

The current domestic and foreign higher art colleges and universities are basically divided into three major categories: public institutions, private institutions, independent institutions, public institutions are funded by the government, the tuition fee is lower, the difference is that foreign private institutions tend to bring more learning resources to students, and in the characteristics of the curriculum, school characteristics, tuition fees show a great deal of difference, but the countries are currently more focused on the curriculum of the comprehensive and interdisciplinary nature.

### ***3.3. Analysis and comparison of the current situation of art education in museums***

Museum art education is a vital force for social aesthetic education to improve the aesthetic quality of the whole population, and educational activities are carried out with the help of lectures, exhibition hall explanations, guided appreciation or art experience classes. Teaching in the exhibition halls is a necessary prerequisite for the implementation of art education in museums, and provides basic teaching content for art practical teaching. The public acquires skills and knowledge of art disciplines through the public teaching platform of museums, and the museums expand the public's knowledge of open and comprehensive disciplines such as humanities, nature, science and history through the practice of art education, and guide the public to cultivate their aesthetic interests and realize their ability to aesthetically appreciate and create beauty through the explanations and guidance of the museum educators.

In May 2021, the nine departments of China issued the Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Reform and Development of Museums, which clearly set out the goal of building a "strong museum country". [9] In recent years, museums, art galleries and other public cultural and museum institutions across the country have been constantly innovating their exhibitions and displays, exploring different paths and accumulating rich experience to better fulfil the function of educating and beautifying people with beauty. According to the data released by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage on 18 May 2023, the total number of museums in China has reached 6,565, and the number of free openings has reached more than 90%, with the scale of museums growing steadily, and "going to museums" becoming a new trend in Chinese society. Compared with the West, Chinese museums have a relatively low level of "audience participation", "audience following" and "activity stickiness", and art museums in particular are still niche cultural venues. Especially Chinese people's accumulation of art cultural capital is not as good as that in the West, and they have not yet formed an artistic habit of cultural life, so "going to museums to see art" is not a normal part of the cultural life of most Chinese people.

The United States is a country with a high level of museum construction in the world, and also the country with the largest number of museums in the world, with 35,144 museums in 2014, [10] and the number of museums has been growing very fast, reaching an average of one museum for every 9,000 people in 2015, with a very high per capita coverage rate. From the type of museums, the United States museums are education-led museums, social education function is complete, to the art of aesthetic education as the core content and the primary means of aesthetic education function is particularly prominent. K-12 stage is the focus of its museum education, usually accounted for 3/4 of the budget of the museum. [4] Museums not only serve as complementary institutions to school education, but also develop new educational models such as “museum schools” and “museum learning communities”, and endeavour to promote museum education as a public product.

Japanese museums were born as a result of the modernization policy of the Meiji Restoration, and were established by the government as permanent institutions to improve social education. According to the results of a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in 2015, there are currently 5,690 museums in Japan. The characteristics of its museum education are reflected in the following: attention to the needs of the public, emphasis on whole-person participation, focus on multi-dimensional cooperation, combination of evaluation and reflection, and emphasis on the use of museums to carry out creative activities. Japanese museums attach importance to the significance and connection of museum-academic co-operation, and there are many projects implemented in co-operation with schools using museum resources, mainly focusing on lectures, experiments, observations and other projects. The basic learning materials are the materials collected and displayed by the museums, or secondary materials similar to or derived from these materials. [7] In this case, children and students can not only learn differently from everyday spaces, but also have the possibility to learn from multiple perspectives.

On the whole, although the general trend of museums at home and abroad is similar in the planning of museum art exhibitions, the development of aesthetic education activities, the development of aesthetic education curricula, and other aspects of museum aesthetic education practice, China still has a long way to go in terms of the importance attached by museums, the novelty of the form, the breadth of the groups covered, the participation of the public, the expansion of external cooperation, and the strength of the organizational and security aspects.

#### **4. Conclusions**

In the face of the historical mission and the responsibility of the times of Chinese art education in the new era, we should endeavour to reflect the value of our traditional culture, regardless of whether we draw on the shape and form of foreign art or the concept of its art education. Aesthetic ideas and methods of artistic expression rich in national characteristics have nourished our aesthetics, cultivated our aesthetic feelings and interests, and provided us with rich resources for the development of all forms of new art. Therefore, taking the excellent traditional Chinese culture as the basis, absorbing the excellent achievements of foreign arts, and endeavoring to combine the East and the West and to integrate them, is the necessary way for the prosperity of contemporary art education in China.

## Conflicts of Interest

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

## Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

## References

- [1] Qian, C.X. Creative Development in Art Education in the Era of Big Data. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 2016, 7(01), 49-54.
- [2] Zuo, Y.L.; Yang, G.Y. The concept and construction of the contemporary education in France. *Art Magazine*, 2018, 606(06), 142-143.
- [3] Liu, N. Overview of Higher Art Education in the United States. *Art Education*, 2013, 256(12), 23-25.
- [4] Xu, W. The experience and inspiration of American museum aesthetic education in the context of the construction of 'cultural power' and 'museum power'. *Beijing Culture Creativity*, 2022, 05, 32-39.
- [5] Jin, M. A Study on the Reform Model of China Higher Fine Art Education. *Management Review*, 2009, 21(08), 80-84+73.
- [6] Li, Y.C.; Zheng, Q.Y. History of Western Art Education. Chongqing: South-Western College Publishing, 2022.
- [7] Zhu, H.J. Study on Japanese Museum Education. Central China Normal University, 2018.
- [8] Ministry of Education, PRC. National List of Higher Education Institutions. Available online: [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_xxgk/s5743/s5744/A03/202306/t20230619\\_1064976.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xxgk/s5743/s5744/A03/202306/t20230619_1064976.html) (accessed on 30 June 2024).
- [9] Ministry of Culture and Tourism, PRC. Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Reform and Development of Museums. Available online: [http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2021-05/24/content\\_5610893.htm](http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2021-05/24/content_5610893.htm) (accessed on 30 June 2024).
- [10] American Museum Magazine Releases Digital Interpretation of Museums. Available online: [http://art.china.cn/haiwai/2014-09/23/content\\_7255947.htm](http://art.china.cn/haiwai/2014-09/23/content_7255947.htm) (accessed on 30 June 2024).



© 2024 by the author(s); licensee International Technology and Science Publications (ITS), this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)