Practical Exploration of Audio Recitation as a Carrier of Aesthetic Education in Public Art Classes at Higher Vocational Colleges

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Abstract: Public art classes in higher vocational colleges have long faced challenges such as monotonous content, insufficient student participation, and limited teaching scenarios, making it difficult to achieve tangible outcomes in aesthetic education. Using sound as its medium, audio recitation integrates textual comprehension, emotional experience, and artistic expression, providing a low-threshold, participation-oriented, and demonstrable platform for classroom activities. Based on a systematic analysis of the current difficulties faced by public art classes in higher vocational colleges, this paper demonstrates the necessity and distinctive value of audio recitation as a carrier of aesthetic education. Drawing on successful practical experiences, it proposes specific strategies in such areas as curriculum development, teaching implementation, assessment reform, and resource support.

***Keywords*:** audio recitation; public art classes; aesthetic education in higher vocational colleges; problems; practice

1. Introduction

Aesthetic education is an undertaking that cultivates moral character and nurtures the soul. Public art courses are an important component of China's higher education curriculum system and a key vehicle for implementing aesthetic education. The Guidelines for Public Art Courses in Higher Education Institutions (J.T.Y.T. [2022] No. 1) (hereinafter referred to as the Guidelines) explicitly state that public art courses are a primary means of implementing aesthetic education and play an irreplaceable role in guiding students to develop sound aesthetic values, enhance their humanistic qualities, and cultivate well-rounded personalities. The Guidelines also emphasize that vocational colleges should organically integrate art courses with professional courses, strengthen practical activities, and offer extended art courses that reflect the distinctive characteristics of vocational education. The Notice on Comprehensively Implementing the School Aesthetic Education Infiltration Initiative (J.T.Y. [2023] No. 5) (hereinafter referred to as the Notice) establishes "infiltration" as the core principle for implementing aesthetic education, requiring that aesthetic education be integrated into students' everyday experiences in ways that they can perceive, participate in, and express.

In practice, public art courses in higher vocational colleges have long occupied a marginal position, with low levels of student participation and unsatisfactory educational outcomes. The underlying reasons include, on the one hand, insufficient awareness and attention from various stakeholders and, on the other hand, monotonous classroom content and traditional teaching models that fail to attract students. How to bring public art classes to life and deepen their educational impact without increasing students' academic burden is one of the pressing issues that aesthetic education in higher vocational colleges must address. In recent years, classical text recitation and the art of recitation have flourished in colleges and universities across China, while the National Competition on Recitation, Writing, and Lecturing of Chinese Classics has continued to gain momentum. Many higher vocational colleges have introduced "audio recitation" into their public art classes and achieved positive results. On this basis, this paper explores the practical rationale and implementation pathways for integrating audio recitation into public art classes in higher vocational colleges.

2. Analysis of the Current Practical Dilemmas Facing Public Art Classes in Higher Vocational Colleges

2.1 Monotonous Course Content and Weak Links with Vocational Education

Public art courses have long occupied a subordinate position in the talent cultivation system of higher vocational colleges and are generally offered as elective courses with limited class hours. In terms of course content, these courses mainly focus on art theory and the appreciation of famous works, while content involving artistic experience and practice is generally insufficient. They also lack connections with students' professional courses, technical skills, and future occupational contexts, resulting in an evident deficiency in cultivating implicit aspects of aesthetic education, such as aesthetic attitudes

and emotional experiences. The Guidelines explicitly require vocational colleges to strengthen practical activities and offer extended art courses that reflect the distinctive characteristics of vocational education. The Initiative also establishes "practice" as a fundamental pathway for aesthetic education infiltration, emphasizing the need to "strengthen the organic integration of teaching and practice." However, in actual implementation, most colleges find it difficult to effectively fulfill these requirements.

2.2 Insufficient Student Agency and Inadequate Classroom Engagement

Unlike the talent cultivation orientation of undergraduate education, higher vocational education places greater emphasis on developing technical and practical skills. Consequently, students generally demonstrate strong hands-on abilities, curiosity for exploration, and a strong desire for practical engagement. However, in practice, most public art classes in higher vocational colleges still adopt the traditional model of PowerPoint presentations combined with teacher-led instruction, lacking diverse approaches and methods for classroom communication and interaction. As passive recipients, students find it difficult to obtain immersive aesthetic experiences, resulting in generally low levels of classroom participation. For higher vocational students with relatively weak cultural foundations, it is sometimes difficult to understand the artistic conception and emotional expression embodied in certain classic works of art. It can be argued that rigid teaching models are one of the primary reasons for the lack of classroom atmosphere, insufficient immersion, and unsatisfactory outcomes in current public aesthetic education courses in higher vocational colleges.

2.3 Limited Practical Carriers and Insufficient Expansion of Educational Settings

The Guidelines propose that vocational colleges should strengthen practical activities, offer extended art courses reflecting the distinctive characteristics of vocational education, and improve the four-in-one mechanism for promoting universal art education, comprising "course instruction, practical activities, campus culture, and artistic performances and exhibitions." The Initiative further emphasizes "strengthening the organic integration of teaching and practice," requiring the improvement of regular artistic performance and exhibition mechanisms accessible to all students and the creation of a campus culture of aesthetic education. However, in actual practice, public art education in most higher vocational colleges remains confined to the classroom. The development of practical education platforms is relatively lagging, and there is a lack of practical settings closely connected with vocational contexts. Consequently, students have limited opportunities for participation and experience, and even fewer opportunities to express themselves verbally or perform on stage.

2.4 Single Evaluation Methods and Incomplete Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness

The Guidelines explicitly require the implementation of self-evaluation and annual reporting systems for public art education, with comprehensive assessments covering all aspects of course development, practical activities, and educational effectiveness. The Notice emphasizes the implementation of value-added evaluation, process-based evaluation, and performance-based evaluation to comprehensively assess students' abilities to discover, perceive, express, appreciate, and create beauty. However, current public art courses in higher vocational colleges generally continue to follow the conventional assessment practices of academic subjects, with evaluation methods primarily consisting of final written examinations or course papers. Students can obtain high scores simply through memorization, which is incompatible with the experiential, practical, and perceptual nature of art courses. In addition, the problem of a single evaluation□□ is also prominent. In the vast majority of courses, assessments are conducted entirely by the course instructors, with extremely limited participation from external stakeholders such as industry experts and enterprise mentors. This also undermines the credibility and guiding value of the evaluation to some extent.

3. Clarifying the Necessity and Significance of Audio Recitation as a Carrier of Aesthetic Education

3.1 Aligning with Policy Requirements and Enriching the Provision of Artistic Experience Courses

The Guidelines explicitly identify "artistic experience and practice" as one of the three major course categories and require that artistic experiences and practical activities meet students' diverse interests and needs to the greatest extent possible. Audio recitation is a typical form of artistic experience and practice. Using sound as its medium, it inherently possesses practical attributes, enabling students to directly experience aesthetics through the processes of vocal expression, refinement, and presentation. Meanwhile, it requires minimal organizational resources, involves no need for professional equipment, and does not require students to have an artistic background, making it accessible to almost all students. This characteristic makes it particularly suitable for all students, helping expand the reach of public art education and genuinely fulfilling the fundamental requirement of making aesthetic education accessible to everyone.

3.2 Conveying Emotions Through Voice and Integrating Aesthetic Perception with Value Formation

Recitation is a form of learning through "speaking and listening." Students need to repeatedly engage with texts, appreciate their emotional connotations, and regulate their vocal expression. This process itself represents the integration of aesthetic perception and artistic expression. In practice, Hunan Vocational College for Nationalities has incorporated the articulation and vocal techniques of Baling Opera into recitation teaching, enabling students to appreciate the phonological beauty of Chinese characters through precise articulation and appropriate tonal delivery, thereby effectively improving their linguistic aesthetic abilities. Shunde Polytechnic University has organized regular competitions in classical text interpretation and recitation for many years, comprehensively and vividly showcasing the charm of China's fine traditional culture and encouraging extensive student participation. These activities have played an important role in inheriting Chinese culture, inspiring patriotic sentiments, and strengthening ideals and convictions.

3.3 Adapting to the Characteristics of Higher Vocational Students and Enhancing Classroom Appeal and Participation

The Notice emphasizes the need to "create dynamic art classrooms, stimulate students' enthusiasm, and increase their participation," and further requires the improvement of "regular school-based artistic performance and exhibition mechanisms accessible to all, ensuring that every student has opportunities and platforms for self-expression." With its practice-oriented approach, audio recitation aligns with the learning characteristics of higher vocational students, who demonstrate strong enthusiasm for practical participation. It can effectively stimulate students' interest and enhance classroom engagement. By organizing audio recitation activities in public art classes, students can participate extensively through vocal expression, repeated practice, dialogue exercises, and even on-stage discussions. For example, Quzhou College of Technology organized the recitation activity "Voices of Books, Expressions from the Heart," collecting 161 student submissions in just one month and covering multiple majors across the college, demonstrating its appeal. Audio works independently produced by students can also be disseminated through campus radio, official WeChat accounts, platforms such as Ximalaya, and other channels, enabling aesthetic education to extend beyond classroom boundaries and encouraging more students to participate actively.

3.4 Facilitating Integration with Professional Disciplines and Highlighting the Distinctive Characteristics of Aesthetic Education in Vocational Education

The Guidelines specifically emphasize that vocational colleges should "organically integrate art courses with professional courses" and offer extended art courses that reflect the distinctive characteristics of vocational education. Audio recitation demonstrates strong adaptability to different professional fields and can be deeply integrated with various disciplines, directly supporting the development of students' professional competencies and contributing to their job interviews, workplace communication, and career development. For example, its integration with service-oriented majors such as tourism management and hotel management can strengthen the artistry and appeal of service-related language. Its integration with education-related majors such as preschool education and primary education can improve pre-service teachers' storytelling and textbook recitation abilities.

4. Exploring Practical Pathways for Integrating Audio Recitation into Public Art Classes in Higher Vocational Colleges

4.1 Constructing a Curriculum System that Combines Universal Accessibility with Distinctive Professional Characteristics

In accordance with the framework requirements for the three types of courses specified in the Guidelines, audio recitation should be systematically incorporated into the public art curriculum system to establish a curriculum structure that combines universal accessibility with distinctive professional characteristics. On the one hand, universal courses should be continuously strengthened. General compulsory courses should be offered to all first-year students, covering literary theory, appreciation of literary works, basic aesthetics, and recitation techniques, with an emphasis on encouraging every student to participate in vocal expression. Meanwhile, different types of elective courses should be offered to interested students, such as recitation of classical poetry, modern and contemporary prose, revolutionary classics, and expression in professional contexts, with a focus on strengthening practical training. On the other hand, audio recitation should be organically integrated with various professional courses. Closely aligned with the goal of cultivating technically skilled professionals in higher vocational education, distinctive extended courses and teaching modules featuring "professional disciplines + recitation" should be developed. For example, for education-related majors such as preschool education and early childhood education,

modules on children's story recitation and audio interpretation of picture books can be offered, with specialized training in child-oriented language expression, character voice creation, and interactive storytelling, directly corresponding to the responsibilities of positions such as kindergarten educational activities and parent-child reading guidance.

4.2 Creating an Open, Inclusive, Diverse, and Immersive Teaching Model

More open and innovative teaching approaches should be introduced to establish an immersive teaching system centered on students and oriented toward practical application. First, scenario-based teaching should be adopted. Scenarios serve as catalysts for aesthetic education. Recitation instruction should be integrated into specific cultural, everyday, and even simulated professional contexts, guiding students to enhance their aesthetic experiences in authentic settings. For example, Zhengzhou Tourism College has implemented "Walking Recitation Classes," organizing students to visit museums, scenic areas, and historical and cultural districts to recite corresponding literary works in authentic settings. This enables students to identify emotional connections through immersive experiences and enhance the expressive power of their recitations. Second, project-based teaching should be implemented. Students should be assigned comprehensive work presentation tasks, individually or in groups, involving the entire process from material selection, interpretation, and rehearsal to recording and presentation, thereby returning the central role of classroom learning to students. For example, the Broadcasting and Hosting major at Yangtze Vocational College has established comprehensive recitation projects in which students independently form teams, select themes such as revolutionary narratives and literary classics, and complete all performance and presentation tasks. This model can also be introduced into public art classes. Third, intelligent and digital teaching should be promoted. Various online smart teaching platforms, AI simulation software, reading booths, professional recording studios, and other online and offline platforms and facilities should be fully utilized to enhance students' sense of immersion and learning experience while supporting independent and fragmented learning.

4.3 Integrating Courses, Competitions, and Certifications, and Extending the Educational Chain through Collaboration between On-Campus and Off-Campus Resources

Various resources and platforms should be fully utilized to support students' continuous development through practical activities at multiple levels and in diverse settings. First, learning should be promoted through competitions. Authoritative events such as the National Competition on Recitation, Writing, and Lecturing of Chinese Classics, as well as competitions independently established by colleges, should be integrated into routine teaching to encourage and promote students' in-depth participation. For example, Anhui Vocational College of Press and Publishing has participated in classical recitation competitions for five consecutive years and incorporated competition standards into its curriculum. Recitation and public speaking, previously treated as additional pre-competition training, have become compulsory components of teaching, resulting in numerous awards and fully demonstrating the effectiveness of this approach. Second, support from student associations should be strengthened. Student organizations such as recitation associations and audio language art groups should be established, with professional instructors appointed to provide guidance and organize regular training, themed salons, and campus performances, thereby enriching the educational content. Henan Polytechnic Institute, through its "Feiran Recitation Society," encourages students to actively participate in the National Competition on Recitation, Writing, and Lecturing of Chinese Classics and has won multiple awards. It also organizes visits to the hometowns of literary authors, enabling students to gain deeper insights into their inner worlds and experience the profound emotions conveyed in their works through immersive engagement. Third, the practical settings for aesthetic education should be expanded. Relying on various student associations and public welfare organizations both on and off campus, students should be encouraged to step beyond campus boundaries and integrate recitation practice with social services. Chengdu Industrial Vocational Technical College has organized "Three Rural Areas" outreach activities, bringing classical recitation and Sichuan Opera experiences to rural children. These activities have not only promoted the dissemination of China's traditional culture but also enhanced students' own aesthetic experiences and sense of social responsibility.

4.4 Establishing a Process-Oriented and Diversified Assessment and Evaluation System

A diversified evaluation system centered on competencies and emphasizing the learning process should be established. First, evaluation content should be enriched. Evaluation indicators should be designed across three dimensions: knowledge, abilities, and competencies, with particular emphasis on assessing students' practical abilities in pronunciation standards, expressive techniques, and work presentation. Second, evaluation methods should be process-oriented. Greater emphasis and weighting should be placed on formative assessments, including attendance, classroom interaction, and practice performance. Summative assessment methods should also be reformed, with on-site presentations or submission of recorded works adopted as assessment formats, allowing students to independently select texts and complete full recitation works.

Third, evaluation subjects should be diversified. Multiple evaluation participants should be introduced, including student self-assessment, peer assessment, teacher assessment, and external expert assessment. In particular, through listening to and evaluating the works of others during peer assessment, students can also enhance their own aesthetic judgment.

5. Conclusion

As a low-cost, highly participatory, and widely accessible carrier of aesthetic education, audio recitation provides a new entry point and a new avenue for the reform of public art courses in higher vocational colleges. It can effectively address the current challenges of marginalization, superficiality, and formalism in aesthetic education in higher vocational colleges. Promoting the deeper integration of audio recitation into public art classes can not only enrich the aesthetic foundation of technical and skilled personnel cultivation but also strengthen the humanistic foundations for cultivating highly skilled craftspeople who contribute to the comprehensive development of the country, thereby responding to the practical needs of high-quality vocational education development in the new era.

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