

Analysis on The expansion of Red Culture in Art Curriculum of High School

Yating Huang

Loudi No.4 Middle School, Loudi, Hunan, 417000, China

ABSTRACT

As an advanced cultural legacy and spiritual treasure, Red Culture has been systematically developed by the Communist Party of China and its people through revolutionary struggles, national construction, and reform initiatives. This profound historical heritage embodies unparalleled aesthetic value. This paper first analyzes the significance of integrating Red Culture into high school art curricula, including implementing ideological education, enriching aesthetic education content, and bridging historical and contemporary contexts. It then explores strategies for expanding Red Culture in art education through five key approaches: setting curriculum objectives, developing distinctive content, diversifying teaching methods, expanding extracurricular activities, and improving evaluation mechanisms. The ultimate goal is to create a highly engaging and distinctive art curriculum system that lays a solid foundation for students' personalized development.

KEYWORDS

Red culture; High school art; School-based curriculum

1 Introduction

In the educational context where the fundamental mission of "cultivating virtue and nurturing talents" and the development of "curriculum-based ideological education" are increasingly deepening, integrating red culture into high school art school-based curricula not only serves as a proactive response to national education policies but also represents an important approach to enriching aesthetic education and enhancing students' core competencies. Red culture, which embodies national spirit and commemorates significant historical milestones, when incorporated into art education, can significantly enhance the persuasiveness of ideological education. This integration subtly influences students' value systems, aesthetic judgment, and cultural identity. To maximize the educational effectiveness of red culture in high school art curricula, it is essential to conduct in-depth research on strategies for its expansion within art education frameworks.

2 The significance of integrating red culture into high school art curriculum

2.1 Implementing ideological and political courses and accomplishing the task of cultivating virtue and fostering talents

In the high school education system, curriculum-based ideological and political education serves as a crucial educational component. It not only fulfills the fundamental mission of cultivating virtue and nurturing talent but also effectively establishes a comprehensive three-dimensional education framework. Traditional ideological and political courses often follow a monotonous teaching model where teachers dominate the classroom, unidirectionally imparting theoretical knowledge with minimal interaction between teachers and students or among peers. This passive learning approach not only diminishes students' interest but may even lead to academic disengagement. As an essential platform for ideological education, art classes should proactively address these issues by deeply exploring and systematically integrating revolutionary culture into school-based curricula, thereby enhancing their educational value. Revolutionary culture, carrying profound historical memory and noble spiritual heritage, serves as an excellent resource for ideological education, making it more vivid, engaging, and impactful^[1]. When developing art-based school curricula, educators can incorporate classic artworks reflecting revolutionary history, heroic deeds, and ideals—such as Zhan Jianjun's painting "Five Heroes of Langya Mountain," Pan He's sculpture "Hard Times," and the Jinggangshan Struggle series prints—into classroom instruction. By guiding students through multi-dimensional analysis of visual narratives, historical contexts, formal composition, and emotional expression, learners can genuinely appreciate the ideals and spiritual strength conveyed in these artworks. This approach helps solidify correct historical perspectives, national consciousness, and views on the country, ultimately achieving the educational goal of "forging souls through beauty" and "cultivating people through culture."

2.2 Enrich the connotation of aesthetic education and deepen the experience of aesthetic emotion

In China's artistic treasury, works of red cultural themes stand out as a unique category. Bearing profound historical memory and spiritual essence, these creations integrate contemporary imprints, emotional depth, and diverse artistic expressions, making them not only aesthetically valuable but also educationally significant ^[2]. Take the sculpture "Hard Times" as an example. Created in 1957 by artist Pan He, this work employs realistic techniques and masterful sculpting skills to meticulously depict the figures' external forms, expressions, and postures. Whether it's the serene focus of an old Red Army soldier playing a flute or the contemplative posture of a young soldier resting his chin in anticipation, every detail conveys powerful narrative tension. It vividly interprets the harsh conditions of revolutionary times and the resolute optimism of revolutionaries, silently conveying revolutionary spirit through artistic language. In art classes, students studying this sculpture can learn form modeling, spatial structure, and material expression while appreciating the work's proportional harmony and dynamic rhythm. This process significantly enhances their artistic appreciation and aesthetic literacy. Moreover, through this art form, students gain deep understanding of historical context and humanistic spirit embedded in the sculpture, evoking strong emotional resonance. They profoundly comprehend core values like revolutionary passion and national faith, internalizing them as value recognition and experiencing unique aesthetic emotions.

2.3 Connecting history and reality to cultivate critical thinking

When conducting art courses for high school students, deeply integrating red culture helps closely link history with reality. It guides students to analyze visual narratives and formal languages, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the interactive relationship between artistic creation and social progress. This enables students to objectively examine various cultural phenomena from a dialectical perspective, effectively cultivating their critical thinking abilities. Different historical periods give rise to significant differences in the ideologies, aesthetic pursuits, and emotional expressions embedded in artworks. For instance, woodcut prints from the Yan 'an period exhibit a robust and rustic style with bold, incisive lines, embodying the great spirit of hard struggle and unity during the revolutionary war era through unique artistic language. After the establishment of New China, both propaganda posters and oil paintings developed characteristics of full composition, vivid colors, and uplifting imagery. Each line brims with idealistic artistic passion, reflecting the spirited demeanor of the entire nation during the early socialist construction period and their boundless aspirations for a better future. Entering the reform and opening-up era, red-themed creations transcended singular visual languages by integrating symbolic, surrealist, and installation-based visual expressions, while emphasizing emotional projection to demonstrate cultural awareness and critical reflection in the new era. Supported by these red-themed artworks, teachers can design progressively layered questions in class based on students' cognitive levels and interests, such as how these works respond to the demands of their respective eras through distinct visual narratives, and whether red classics still hold relevance in contemporary contexts. Then, students are required to carry out cooperative discussion in groups, and deeply understand the historical context and contemporary value of red art works in the collision of opinions, so as to accurately implement the cultivation of historical dialectical thinking and cultural critical ability.

3 Strategies for expanding red culture in art curriculum of high school

3.1 Determine the course objectives and build value orientation

With high school art education at its core and deeply integrated with revolutionary culture, the primary task is to establish clear curriculum objectives that guide value orientation and provide direction for school-based curriculum development. This approach focuses on three key dimensions: First, knowledge and skills. Students should develop a profound understanding of revolutionary culture's fundamental concepts and its historical evolution. They need to learn to interpret artistic features of revolutionary-themed artworks from multiple perspectives—such as symbolic meanings, emotional color symbolism, and contextual representations of historical events—while mastering essential techniques like composition, line work, and color coordination to build a solid foundation for future artistic creation ^[3]. Second, process and methodology. Centered on revolutionary-themed artworks, regular appreciation and creative activities should be organized. In-class sessions encourage independent exploration or group collaboration, enabling students to analyze works through multiple perspectives. This immersive process enhances their ability to identify, analyze, and solve problems, while significantly improving aesthetic perception and artistic expression. Finally, emotional attitude and values. Through appreciating, creating, and evaluating revolutionary-themed works, students' patriotic sentiments are fully ignited, further strengthening their national identity and cultural confidence.

3.2 Integrate cultural resources and develop characteristic content

China's red cultural heritage is exceptionally rich, encompassing both revolutionary artworks that embody national spirit and commemorate pivotal historical moments, as well as invaluable historical relics bearing the imprint of revolutionary journeys and the footsteps of our predecessors. When developing art curricula for high school students, educators should strategically integrate these cultural resources while tailoring content to students' age characteristics and cognitive levels to create engaging and distinctive teaching materials ^[4]. For instance, in the lesson "War and Peace: Artistic Reflections on War," teachers could utilize multimedia equipment to display classic revolutionary paintings like "Setting Sail—— The First National Congress of the Communist Party" and "Blood-Stained Garment." Students would be guided to analyze characters' facial features, expressions, and postures through these artworks, then collaborate in groups to explore how artistic reinterpretations of figures convey complex emotions like fear, anger, and hope while promoting peace. Additionally, teachers might organize field trips to local revolutionary memorial halls, martyrs' cemeteries, and battle sites during extracurricular sessions. This hands-on approach encourages students to observe visual elements, deeply understand revolutionary symbolism, and draw inspiration from these sites. By combining personal reflections with creative mediums like sketches, watercolors, and photography, students can develop red-themed artworks that foster a deeper connection to revolutionary heritage through practical engagement.

3.3 Enrich teaching methods and stimulate learning interest

Interest is the intrinsic driving force behind learning behaviors. When expanding red culture through high school art school-based curriculum, teachers should not only develop distinctive content but also consciously innovate teaching methods. By employing situational creation, multimedia assistance, project-based learning, interdisciplinary integration, and artistic practice, art classes can be made more engaging and interactive. This approach maximizes students' learning interest and creative passion, allowing red culture to permeate the classroom and truly integrate into their mindset, thereby laying the foundation for behavioral transformation ^[5]. Taking "Labor Ode—— Printmaking Representation" as an example, teachers can integrate situational teaching methods with lecture-based approaches. During the introductory phase, multimedia devices can be used to play highlights from the documentary "Hongqi Canal" to create a vivid red cultural context. The scenes depicting people's fearless efforts in mountain excavation and stone-breaking from the documentary evoke students' emotional resonance, enabling them to intuitively perceive labor intensity, collective strength, and the red spirit of self-reliance, hard struggle, and teamwork. Subsequently, teachers should explain in simple terms the historical connections between China's modern printmaking history and red culture, while guiding students to carefully observe elements such as knife technique organization, material texture, line quality, black-white contrast, and color layering rhythm in classic prints like Gu Yuan's "Human Bridge", Li Qun's "Drinking", and Chao Mei's "Northern September". Students are required to analyze how artists employ printmaking language to express labor's power and beauty, with these works conveying various spiritual values respectively.

3.4 Expand the second classroom, extend the space of aesthetic education

With red culture at its core, expanding high school art curriculum practices cannot rely solely on classroom teaching. Teachers should actively develop extracurricular activities to extend aesthetic education opportunities, providing students with deeper perception and practical experience. This enhances the multidimensionality and appeal of red culture education, ensuring its genuine internalization. For instance, collaborating with local revolutionary history museums through "Red Memories of My Hometown" themed exhibitions encourages students to act as "curators," participating in event planning, material collection, explanatory text writing, exhibition setup, and on-site guidance ^[6]. This process maximizes students' cultural communication initiative, improving their organizational coordination and verbal expression skills while deepening their understanding of red culture's emotional essence and value. Another approach involves establishing red-themed art workshops, regularly inviting local intangible cultural heritage inheritors and red culture researchers to campus. These experts demonstrate traditional crafts like woodblock printing, paper-cutting, weaving, and pottery sculpture, explaining their technical features and cultural significance while teaching practical techniques. Students are encouraged to creatively blend modern aesthetics with traditional craftsmanship, producing artworks rich in red culture symbolism. Through this process, students reflect on the red spirit during creation, internalizing it in their hearts and externalizing it in their actions.

3.5 Improve the evaluation mechanism and observe core literacy

A scientifically sound evaluation mechanism serves as both the core support for effectively expanding red culture in high school art curricula and a crucial basis for observing students' development of subject-specific core competencies.

When establishing this mechanism, teachers should organically combine formative and summative assessments to comprehensively reflect students' learning progress, growth, and final outcomes. This approach helps students identify improvement directions, fully stimulates learning motivation, and enables teachers to adjust teaching plans and strategies accordingly, truly achieving the goals of "evaluation-driven learning" and "evaluation-enhanced teaching" [7]. For formative assessment, teachers should focus on classroom teaching and practical activities, emphasizing student engagement through evaluating proactive sharing of ideas, enthusiastic task participation, and effective communication in group collaboration—such as using appropriate language to clearly express viewpoints and actively listen to others. Regarding summative assessment, the focus shifts to students' learning outcomes through two dimensions: painting techniques and creative expression. The former examines fluidity of line usage, rational color coordination, and layered composition, while the latter assesses whether students can break free from fixed mindsets to interpret red culture themes from diverse perspectives. Additionally, students are encouraged to write project descriptions and learning reflections after completing basic tasks, allowing teachers to gain a comprehensive understanding of their comprehension of red culture and its essence.

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, integrating red culture as the core element into high school art curriculum development constitutes a systematic and complex endeavor with profound contemporary significance and educational value. Educators should fully recognize the vital importance of embedding red culture into art education. In practice, by establishing aesthetic education as the foundation and prioritizing student-centered approaches, teachers can implement diversified strategies including setting clear course objectives, developing distinctive content, diversifying teaching methodologies, expanding extracurricular activities, and refining evaluation systems. These measures will endow art education with rich cultural depth. While effectively imparting artistic skills and cultivating core competencies, this approach guides students to deeply comprehend the spiritual essence of red culture and internalize it as a value system.

Funding

This paper is the result of the first basic education teaching reform research project in 2023 of Hunan Provincial Department of Education, "Application Research on the Integration of Red Culture into High School Art Curriculum in Loudi" (NO: Y20230533)

References

- [1] Zhou Zhenzi. Development and Exploration of Guyuan's Red Cultural Resources in Art Curriculum [J]. *Xinmeiyu*, 2024(10):164-166.
- [2] Huang Yating. Research on Strategies for Integrating Red Culture into the Development of High School Art Curriculum [J]. *China Primary and Secondary School Art*, 2024, (Z2):72-78.
- [3] Li Yuan, Zhang Tao. Research on Integrating Red Classics Art into High School Art Curriculum [J]. *Today's Education*, 2024(9):58-61.
- [4] Dong Wei. Application of Red Culture in High School Art Curriculum Resource Development under the Theory of School-Based Curriculum [J]. *Gaokao*, 2022, (17):170-172.
- [5] Ye Liangyu. Reflections on Integrating Local Red Culture into Art Education [J]. *Chengcai Zhi Lu*, 2022, (16):133-135.
- [6] Zhang Xiao. Research on Integrating Red Cultural Resources in Northern Guangdong into Secondary School Art Curriculum [J]. *Tian Nan*, 2024 (04):189-191.
- [7] Miao Jia. How to Develop Local Red Resources: An Art Appreciation Course for Sculpture Works—— Taking the Liu Bojian Memorial Hall as an Example [J]. *Asia-Pacific Education*, 2016, (23):91.