

Exploration and Practice of Incorporating Local Intangible Cultural Heritage into the Aesthetic Education Curriculum

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Abstract

As an important asset of local culture, intangible cultural heritage with distinct regional characteristics not only enriches the aesthetic education resources of local colleges and universities but also provides a multi-dimensional research direction for the innovative development of aesthetic education. Taking Xi'an Municipal Intangible Cultural Heritage *Gaoling Zhahua* as an example, this paper explores how to integrate local intangible cultural heritage into college art education to facilitate its inheritance. It delves into the strategies and practical approaches for incorporating local intangible cultural heritage into aesthetic education in colleges and universities. The innovative practices of the Xi'an Institute of Technology and Business in its University Aesthetic Education course, through the teaching method of "living inheritance," cultivate students' sense of cultural identity and artistic creativity. Additionally, the paper discusses the application of modern science and technology in the inheritance and promotion of intangible cultural heritage.

Keywords intangible cultural heritage; Gaoling Zhahua; College aesthetic education; Living inheritance; Local characteristics

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1 Introduction: Integrating Intangible Cultural Heritage into University Aesthetic Education

In 2019, the document “*Opinions on Effectively Strengthening Aesthetic Education in Colleges and Universities in the New Era*” issued by the Ministry of Education clearly pointed out that aesthetic education in colleges and universities must “Promote the creative transformation and innovative

development of Chinese excellent traditional culture. Taking Chinese excellent traditional culture education as the foundation of school aesthetic education and carrying forward the spirit of Chinese aesthetic education, efforts should be made to refine, transform, and integrate traditional culture and art, so that the cultural relics collected in the museum and the cultural and artistic heritage displayed on Earth can become rich resources of school aesthetic education, so that young students can understand the changes in Chinese culture, touch the context of Chinese culture, and absorb the essence of Chinese culture and art in the process of art learning.”

Intangible cultural heritage is an excellent traditional Chinese culture in China. As a living cultural form with people at the core, it is precious and worthy of protecting cultural resources in China. In the process of implementing aesthetic education in colleges and universities, we should actively integrate local characteristic culture and take local characteristic intangible cultural heritage as the key link of aesthetic education teaching in colleges and universities to promote the infiltration of aesthetic education and integrate it into aesthetic education classrooms. In recent years, the Xi'an Institute of Technology and Business has been constantly practicing and innovating Aesthetic Education in Universities. At present, it combines local characteristics with general education courses in universities and has achieved good results.

2 The Significance of Integrating Local “Intangible Cultural Heritage” into Aesthetic Education in Colleges and Universities

First, the significance of integrating local characteristics “intangible cultural heritage” into aesthetic education in colleges and universities: As an important part of traditional Chinese culture, the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage has become an important part of national cultural policy. In recent years, the state and relevant departments have issued a series of policy documents to actively promote intangible cultural heritage in campuses, with the aim of cultivating students' cognition and love for traditional culture through the education system and promoting the inheritance and innovation of intangible cultural heritage.

In March 2014, the Ministry of Education issued the “*Notice on the Guiding Outline of Perfecting Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture Education*”, which pointed out that “all local schools are encouraged to fully tap and utilize local Chinese excellent traditional culture education resources and offer school-based courses.” In August 2021, the “*Opinions on Further Strengthening the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage*” issued by the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council clearly stated: “The content of intangible cultural heritage should be integrated throughout national education.” In August 2022, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council issued the “*14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural Development*”, which clearly stated: “Strengthen the cultivation of non-genetic inheritance groups.”

A number of documents have defined the objectives and tasks of non-legacy entering campus, guided schools at all levels to carry out various forms of non-legacy education activities, and enhanced students' cultural consciousness and self-confidence. Schools should play a role in the

inheritance and protection of regional “non-legacy,” tap the non-legacy resources in the region, and combine them with aesthetic education in colleges and universities to create school characteristic courses. To effectively protect and inherit intangible cultural heritage, it is important to introduce it into campuses for education. By integrating intangible cultural heritage into the college curriculum, students’ cultural knowledge can be enriched, their sense of identity with local culture can be enhanced, and students’ artistic creation ability and innovative thinking can be cultivated. As an important position in cultural communication, colleges and universities should the dual tasks of inheritance and innovation. By carrying out diversified intangible cultural heritage education activities in schools, it not only enhances students’ cognition and love for traditional culture but also opens up a new way for the protection and innovative development of local intangible cultural heritage.

3 The Inheritance Status of Local Characteristics and Intangible Cultural Heritage: “Gaoling Zhahua”

Second, the inheritance status of local characteristics and intangible cultural heritage “Gaoling Zhahua” : (1) Artistic Features and Inheritance Dilemma of “Tying Flowers in Gaoling” Gaoling Zhahua is a traditional handicraft in Gaoling, Shaanxi Province, and now it is an intangible cultural heritage of Xi’an. It is a handicraft that combines embroidery and fabric and coexists with rough and delicate. It is famous for its complicated production technology and complex shape. It has typical composition characteristics of the Guanzhong region, is the product of local farming culture, and carries heavy traditional culture and national spirit. As an intangible cultural heritage with local characteristics, Gaoling Zhahua is a unique symbol of the “collective consciousness” of residents in the Gaoling area. This skill is deeply integrated into the local people’s life and culture, full of local flavor, and contains auspicious meanings, such as praying for children, prolonging life, receiving blessings and attracting wealth, exorcising evil spirits, and disasters. According to the inheritance pedigree, it is divided into two factions: folk schools and court schools. The skill of tying flowers in Gaoling not only requires extremely high manual skills, but also contains profound cultural symbolic significance. Its patterns are rich and diverse, and its colors are bright and diverse. Each piece conveys a unique folk culture.

However, with societal development and the impact of modern culture, the inheritance of flowers in Gaoling faces severe challenges. First, the inheritance population is gradually aging, and the younger generation is not sufficiently interested in this traditional skill, resulting in a lack of successors. Second, under the influence of contemporary aesthetics and market demand, the design innovation of Gaoling Zhahua is insufficient, and it is difficult to integrate closely with modern life. In addition, the complexity and time cost of traditional handicraft skills make it difficult for this skill to spread in modern fast-paced life. To solve these problems, it is urgent to protect and carry them forward through various educational means. On one hand, courses and workshops of Gaoling Zhahua can be set up in schools and communities to stimulate young people’s interest in this skill. On the other hand, modern scientific and technological means such

as digital displays and online teaching can be used to allow more people to learn about Gaoling Zhahua. In addition, inheritors should be encouraged to cooperate with modern designers to innovate traditional patterns and forms to align them with modern aesthetics and market needs. Through these measures, Gaoling's flower-tying skill can not only be protected and passed down but also glow with new vitality and continue to shine in contemporary society.

(2) The Application of Intangible Cultural Heritage Living Inheritance in Aesthetic Education in Colleges and Universities Living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage means that relevant personnel engaged in intangible cultural heritage protect and inherit intangible cultural heritage in dynamic, interactive, and creative ways, and that traditional culture can be effectively inherited and developed in modern society through modern education and communication. The principles of non-legacy inheritance include community participation, education and training activities, innovation and re-creation, diversified communication, policy support, and marketization. This approach emphasizes the dynamic continuation of culture and keeping pace with the times, and advocates that through actual participation and experience, new vitality and connotations can be constantly injected into culture in the process of inheritance.

In aesthetic education at colleges and universities, the introduction of regional intangible cultural heritage helps young people protect and inherit intangible cultural heritage, enrich students' cultural literacy, and enhance their sense of identity with traditional culture. In colleges and universities, more young students are exposed to intangible cultural heritage through live inheritance. Live inheritance can be realized in many ways, such as directly introducing intangible cultural heritage into classroom teaching, conducting practical workshops, inviting intangible cultural heritage inheritors to conduct on-site demonstrations and explanations, and using modern scientific and technological means to conduct virtual displays and interactive experiences. Xi'an Institute of Technology and Business has introduced a variety of regional intangible cultural heritage such as Gaoling flower tying, shadow play, Gaoling cave flute, paper tying, and paper cutting into the aesthetic education curriculum. Through curriculum setting, practical activities, project research, cultural exchange, and creative innovation, students can not only understand the historical and cultural value of intangible cultural heritage but also personally participate in the study and creation of intangible cultural heritage skills.

4 The Path of Integrating Local Characteristics into the Course of "University Aesthetic Education"

4.1 (1) Cooperation Between Libraries and Schools to Promote the Construction of Intangible Cultural Heritage Aesthetic Education Courses

The Xi'an Institute of Technology and Business is located in the Gaoling District, which is renowned for its rich intangible cultural heritage resources. These include one national-level, eight provincial-level, seven municipal-level, and 15 district-level intangible cultural heritage items, totaling 31 entries. Recognizing the cultural and educational potential of these resources,

the school has forged an active partnership with the Gaoling District Cultural Center, a national first-class museum, to promote the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage.

Currently, six aesthetic education teachers at the school are also researchers at the Gaoling District Cultural Center. These dual roles allow for a seamless integration of academic and cultural expertise, enriching the educational experience for students. By leveraging the expertise of these researchers, the school has constructed an innovative ecosystem that promotes the coordinated development of districts and schools.

Future plans include the establishment of research institutions focusing on diverse aspects such as research and analysis, education popularization, protection and inheritance, innovation and development, and cultural communication. Specific initiatives encompass applying for an undergraduate major in intangible cultural heritage protection, forming a volunteer team of college students dedicated to preserving intangible cultural heritage, and creating specialized classes for both teachers and students to engage in project-based learning. These efforts aim to ensure the sustainability of cultural preservation while fostering an academically enriching environment for students.

4.2 (2) Curriculum Design and Content Development of "University Aesthetic Education"

The course "University Aesthetic Education" has successfully integrated elements of local intangible cultural heritage, such as shadow plays and Gaoling Zhahua, to create an immersive and comprehensive learning experience. This course covers the historical background, skill demonstrations, practical applications, and cultural significance of intangible cultural heritage.

The teaching methodology is strategically designed to foster student engagement. Initially, students are introduced to the fundamental concepts and historical importance of intangible cultural heritage through multimedia presentations and interactive lectures. Following this, cultural inheritors are invited to the classroom to share their expertise, offering students a firsthand understanding of traditional practices. Full-time teachers complement this by providing theoretical instruction, ensuring that students develop a well-rounded understanding.

Practical sessions are integral to the curriculum. Students participate in hands-on workshops and club activities, where they apply theoretical knowledge under the guidance of experts. The "1+1+1" model, involving non-genetic inheritors, full-time teachers, and non-legacy workshops, ensures a holistic approach to learning. These sessions culminate in exhibitions, seminars, or forums, allowing students to showcase their skills and reflect on their learning experiences.

Moreover, the curriculum design capitalizes on the advantages of regional intangible cultural heritage by integrating resources from cultural centers, museums, and teaching bases. This approach not only enhances the students' artistic and cultural understanding but also instills a sense of responsibility toward preserving these traditions. The program exemplifies how aesthetic education can serve as a conduit for the live inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

4.3 Non-Genetic Inheritors Participate in Teaching Interaction

To enrich the learning experience, the school actively involves Gaoling Zhahua inheritors in teaching activities. This collaborative approach begins with extensive field investigations and consultations with cultural inheritors, such as Wang Shuxia, a respected figure in Zhahua City. These interactions ensure that the curriculum is deeply rooted in authentic cultural practices.

The involvement of inheritors provides students with an unparalleled opportunity to engage with intangible cultural heritage. Through live demonstrations, storytelling, and practical guidance, students gain a nuanced understanding of traditional techniques. For instance, inheritors demonstrate the intricate process of Gaoling flower-tying, from material selection and pattern design to stitching and finishing. They also share the symbolic meanings and cultural narratives associated with these techniques, making the learning process both informative and inspiring.

Students are encouraged to experiment and innovate during practical sessions. By combining traditional methods with modern materials and applications, they explore new possibilities for the preservation and evolution of intangible cultural heritage. This interactive approach not only enhances students' skills but also deepens their appreciation for cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride and connection to their roots.

4.4 Multiple Activities to Promote the Living Inheritance of Intangible Cultural Heritage

The school supplements its curriculum with a variety of activities aimed at promoting intangible cultural heritage. These include forums, shadow play performances, and flower-making competitions, as well as collaborations with local cultural institutions and communities for exhibitions and promotional events. These initiatives provide students with additional platforms to engage with cultural heritage beyond the classroom.

In 2023, the school established the "Intangible Cultural Heritage Research Institute," which has since become a hub for cultural preservation and education. The institute hosted its inaugural forum in November 2023, showcasing its achievements at the National Art Fund's "New Era Art Museum Public Aesthetic Education Talent Training Project." The event featured exhibitions and academic seminars, receiving widespread acclaim for its innovative approach to cultural preservation.

The second "Living Intangible Cultural Heritage: New Voice of Campus" forum, held in June 2024, further expanded these efforts. Featuring lectures, roundtable discussions, workshops, and exhibitions, the forum emphasized the integration of intangible cultural heritage into academic and community settings. These events aim to explore the innovative application of traditional culture in modern contexts, ensuring its relevance and sustainability.

Through these activities, the institute has successfully enhanced students' understanding and appreciation of intangible cultural heritage. By bridging the gap between traditional practices and contemporary education, these initiatives create a dynamic environment for cultural preservation and innovation.

4.5 Student Feedback and Future Improvements

Feedback from students indicates a strong appreciation for the program's emphasis on intangible cultural heritage. Many students have expressed a deeper understanding and newfound interest in traditional skills, particularly through hands-on practice. However, some have suggested improvements in practice schedules and course content to better align with their learning needs.

In response to this feedback, the school plans to refine its teaching methods and incorporate advanced technology into practical sessions. These enhancements aim to provide a richer and more engaging learning experience while ensuring the continued relevance of intangible cultural heritage in modern education.

Looking ahead, the integration of local characteristics and intangible cultural heritage into university aesthetic education remains a key focus. By fostering partnerships with cultural institutions and enhancing the curriculum, the school aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become active custodians of cultural heritage. This comprehensive approach not only enriches the students' educational journey but also contributes to the broader goal of cultural preservation and innovation.

5 Promoting the Integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage into University Aesthetic Education

The integration of local characteristics and intangible cultural heritage into university aesthetic education courses is an essential strategy for preserving and innovating traditional culture. This effort ensures that cultural heritage elements become a vibrant part of campus life, enriching students' educational experience and deepening their understanding of traditional values. Institutions need to actively explore methods to fully activate and utilize intangible cultural heritage resources, creating pathways for their effective application in academic and extracurricular contexts. Moving forward, the team will expand its participation in the preservation and promotion of intangible cultural heritage, embedding these elements into campus culture through diverse activities and structured courses. At the same time, the Institute of Intangible Cultural Heritage will enhance its collaboration with district cultural tourism departments, cultural centers, and non-genetic inheritors. These partnerships aim to jointly foster the inheritance, innovation, and broader application of intangible cultural heritage, contributing significantly to the revitalization of Chinese traditional culture and its integration into contemporary education.

5.1 Deepening Non-Legacy Development and Institutional Cooperation

The integration of local characteristics into aesthetic education curricula has successfully strengthened exchange and collaboration among universities and colleges in the realm of intangible cultural heritage. This collaborative approach not only enhances the overall quality of aesthetic education but also elevates the artistic and cultural competencies of both faculty and students. By fostering an environment of shared learning and mutual support, institutions have been able to

combine their expertise and resources, creating a dynamic ecosystem for intangible cultural heritage education. These initiatives breathe new life into traditional cultural practices, ensuring their relevance and sustainability in modern academic settings. Moreover, this cooperative framework serves as a foundation for developing innovative teaching methods and materials, which further enrich the curriculum and provide a comprehensive cultural experience for students.

5.2 Advancing Theoretical Research on Intangible Cultural Heritage

Colleges and universities play a crucial role in the theoretical exploration and practical safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. By integrating local cultural elements into campus life, these institutions not only preserve traditional practices but also uncover their profound cultural and historical significance. Through interdisciplinary discussions, case studies, and academic forums, educators and researchers explore new ways to achieve the creative transformation and innovative development of intangible cultural heritage. These efforts provide fresh insights and perspectives, advancing the theoretical understanding of cultural heritage and inspiring new avenues for its application in both academic and community contexts. Furthermore, such research lays the groundwork for creating policies and programs that align cultural heritage preservation with modern societal needs, bridging the gap between tradition and innovation.

5.3 Strengthening the Integration of Research and Teaching Practices

The integration of intangible cultural heritage into educational practices offers a unique platform for fostering meaningful interaction and communication between teachers and students. This approach encourages experiential learning, where students actively engage with cultural heritage through hands-on activities, workshops, and collaborative projects. Institutions can share best practices, teaching cases, and innovative methodologies related to intangible cultural heritage education, creating a repository of knowledge and experiences. Teaching and research teams work closely to align cutting-edge research findings with curriculum design, ensuring that the educational content is both engaging and impactful. This process not only enhances the curriculum's relevance and appeal but also allows teachers to bring their research expertise into the classroom. By doing so, students gain a deeper understanding of the cultural, historical, and artistic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage, fostering their creativity, critical thinking, and appreciation for traditional values. Additionally, this integration reinforces the practical application of academic research, bridging the gap between theory and practice, and providing students with valuable skills and perspectives for their future endeavors.

6 Conclusion

Through the live inheritance practice of intangible cultural heritage in the course of University Aesthetic Education, Xi'an Institute of Technology and Business has successfully integrated local intangible cultural heritage into university aesthetic education, stimulating students' cultural interest and enhancing their artistic creativity and cultural identity. The successful implementation

of the curriculum proves that the integration of intangible cultural heritage with modern education has great potential and value. Non-legacy living inheritance can be applied to a wider range of fields. Colleges and universities should continue to explore the integration path of intangible cultural heritage with other disciplines, strengthen cooperation with local cultural institutions and enterprises, promote sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage, and contribute to the inheritance and innovation of Chinese culture.

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Author Biography

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