

Cultivation of Innovative Ability for Chinese Painting Students in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract:

The training of innovative consciousness and innovative ability is vital to the cultivation of fine art talents in colleges and universities in the new era. It is also an inevitable requirement of building an innovative country to attach importance to the training of innovative ability of students in colleges and universities. The colleges and universities fail to attach enough importance to the training of students' innovative ability while teaching the students to inherit and learn the excellent traditional Chinese culture. Therefore, for the present situation, we should strengthen students' understanding and refining of the new things and strengthen the training of their innovative consciousness and innovative ability so as to strive to create a new look of art with all flowers in bloom.

Keywords:

Colleges and Universities, Innovative Ability, Chinese Painting, Tradition

1. Importance of Cultivating the Innovative Ability of Traditional Chinese Painting Students

Innovation is the soul of a nation's progress and the inexhaustible motive force for the prosperity of a country. Science & technology and culture need to be innovated, and so are art and education. It should be pointed out that the "Innovation" here is not an Innovation of superficial formalism, but the depth of its cultural essence. It needs to take into account the following elements: a. innovation in its own practice; b. innovation in the related theories; and c. innovation in its education. The innovation requires us to have full enthusiasm and firm conviction and keep a rational mind and meanwhile it enables us to extract the essence from national culture gains, absorb the foreign cultures, make innovation in our traditional culture, and keep pace with the times so that Chinese art can stand rock-firm in the family of world arts with self-esteem, self-confidence and self-reliance.

Taking China's modern education of Traditional Chinese Painting (TCP) for example, there was no standardized and systematic fine art education institution in China prior to the establishment of Peking Art School and Wuchang Art School, and

the fine art had always been inherited in a family style or in a form of apprenticeship. This traditional inheritance mode has passed down the excellent Chinese cultural tradition, but it has obviously fallen behind completely for the internationalization of modern fine art cause and the popularization of national aesthetic education. The establishment of Peking Art School and Wuchang Art School symbolizes a major innovation in TCP education and it has also laid a solid foundation for the prosperity of modern Chinese painting.

2. Innovation in TCP in the New Situation

2.1. Opportunities and Challenges in the New Period

The development of Chinese Painting faces many new opportunities and challenges in the 21st century. As an important place for the export of TCP talents, colleges and universities should also have its own teaching system of TCP in the new era. The current TCP teaching system in China is formed through the combination of traditional Chinese teaching methods with the Western teaching methods. The teaching system of Chinese painting in colleges and universities is basically carried out around the cross-learning of sketching and copying/reproduction. This model has been unable to meet the needs of the development of Chinese painting and it has imposed certain restrictions on the development of students' innovative ability.

Chinese painting should adapt to the cultural background and aesthetic needs in the new era. Hence, we should not only make innovation in the techniques and forms, but also make certain breakthrough and innovation in contents and connotation. In this situation, importance must be attached to the training of the innovative ability of TCP students in the higher education, and it must be implemented as soon as possible.

2.2. Ways to Cultivate the Innovative Ability

2.2.1. Innovation in Techniques

As one of the innovation directions, technique is of great significance to the Chinese painting. The traditional techniques have been unable to keep pace with the development of the times and the aesthetic way of view is also different from the traditional level, and the diversity of materials also promotes the urgency of the advancement of techniques.

2.2.2. Innovation in Consciousness

In the ever-changing social environment, the content of TCP depends on the inner world of the painter in many aspects. Even if it is inherited in terms of brush and ink in the long history of TCP, we still cannot ignore the distinct era factors of TCP in different dynasties, such as, plump/luxuriance in Tang Dynasty, prudence in Song Dynasty, and indifference in Yuan Dynasty, etc. However, in the globalization of the world today, the influence of various foreign things is much greater than that of ancient times, and the open pattern promotes the surge of social ideology. We should not stubbornly adhere to the old ideology in the new era, and we should firstly make innovation in the consciousness to surge the waves in the choice of painting themes and forms.

2.2.3. Innovation in Materials

The materials for TCP have fixed the painting tools in a narrow scope. The use of pen, ink, paper and inkstone is actually neglected in contemporary paintings because of their departure from the way of life of the ancients. In the future teaching, we should not only train and strengthen students' control over the four treasures of the study, but also draw lessons from any western painting materials, such as, acrylic paint, brushes, and the like. The innovation in materials focuses on broadening the creative space of the students so that they are not restricted by the limited materials.

2.2.4. Innovation in Expressive Contents

What is expressed mainly depends on the ideology of students, which has already been mentioned in the previous article. In contemporary society, flowers and birds have not to be the traditional ones that represent the integrity of literati. They can be strange or exotic and there even can be a lot of imaginary space, and so is the landscape character. However, the blindness should also be avoided for innovation in expressive contents. The thoughts and depths are required in the works of modern Chinese paintings, and the works that can reflect the contemporary society or express their own interests are more advocated.

2.2.5. Reform of Curriculum Structure

Some changes may be made in the curriculum structure based on the current teaching situation. For example, the students for the curriculum of fine-brush painting should be encouraged to make bold attempts and innovations. In addition to the essential copying/reproduction and sketching, they should also be trained in terms of western painting techniques to expand the students' thinking. The freehand brushwork curriculum should pay more attention to the tradition and be returned to the tradition, and then the feature of the times shall be integrated into the curriculum. The teaching on landscape painting and flower-bird painting should attach importance to the sketching based on the tradition, instead of being bound by the tradition with monotonous color. The innovation should be made with reference to the western painting.

3. Training and Construction of Innovative Ability for Various Disciplines of Chinese Painting

3.1. Innovation in Fine-Brush Painting

Fine brush painting is a subject that has been independently named in modern times. It is also an important part of the contemporary Chinese painting. The contemporary fine brush painting has contributed the most elements of the times to the Chinese paintings and it is also the easiest to break through the traditional concepts. In ancient times, there was no very clear division of concepts between the freehand brushwork and the fine brushwork. However, the expression form of Chinese painting was mainly based on the technique of fine brushwork prior to Yuan Dynasty, but its essence was also the spirit of "Freehand" style in Chinese paintings. In modern times, the globalization of arts has caused Chinese painting to be strongly impacted by Western painting, and the fine brush painting has made some breakthroughs in techniques, materials and forms of expression. Colleges and universities should reform the teaching of fine brush paintings according to the actual situation, and take the cultivation of students' innovation consciousness as an important part for the teaching of fine brush paintings.

The traditional teaching for fine brush paintings is generally based on the line exercises, dyeing exercises and drafting exercises, etc. These basic trainings enable students to well master the traditional techniques. But a large part of the works appears to be somewhat dull and lifeless due to the lack of some skills in calligraphy and freehand brushwork. The students are required to study the excellent modern and contemporary fine art works on not only the shelf painting, but also the installation arts and sculpture while they are trained in traditional fine brush paintings. After knowing more about the creative forms, students can create more boldly and have a certain breakthrough in thinking. We should find an organic connection between traditional teaching of fine brushwork and contemporary arts to further develop the training of innovative ability of TCP students in colleges and universities in China.

Students should continuously make new attempts in thinking, materials and techniques, which will significantly improve their innovative consciousness. This will be beneficial to the cultivation of innovative ability of TCP students in colleges and universities in China and the sustainable development of fine brush paintings and be of far-reaching significance to the development of Chinese painting.

3.2. Innovation in Freehand Figure Painting

At present, the development trend of freehand figure painting in Chinese painting is diversified. A large number of western painting's figure-building methods have been integrated into the traditional Chinese painting, which makes it have more abundant forms of expression and extension space than the traditional freehand figure painting. It is an important embodiment of modern Chinese painting to absorb the nutrients of Western painting. The masters of modern and contemporary freehand figure paintings create their paintings by using the styling techniques of western paintings in combination with the traditional ink method of Chinese paintings. This form has brought China's freehand figure painting into a new peak.

Innovation and tradition enjoy a relationship of the unity of opposites. Tradition is a cornerstone of innovation while innovation is an extension of tradition. The integration of Chinese elements and western elements in China's freehand figure paintings is an innovation compared with the previous traditional Chinese freehand figure paintings. Now, we emphasize the essence of the traditional culture and weaken the styling technique of western paintings, which is also an innovation compared with modern freehand figure paintings. In terms of freehand figure painting, Chinese painting should have more local elements in order to make it go abroad, adapt to the development of globalization and keep up with the pace of the times. With regard to the training of innovative ability of freehand figure painting students in colleges and universities, we should guide students to find innovative breakthroughs in the cultural characteristics of the Chinese nation and make due efforts for the innovative development of Chinese freehand figure paintings.

It is an important means for cultivating the innovative ability of students to walk into life and constantly search for vivid figures or characters in life. The characters in real life are ever-changing and they have very strong characteristics of the times and humanistic background. Based the painting materials sought in life, students are able to create high artistic value, conscientiously feel the emotions, joys and sorrows of human beings so as to extract the characters or images that are closely linked to the theme of the times. To pay attention to the connotation of pictures in teaching is a way to train or cultivate the students' innovative ability in freehand figure painting in

China. Its historical value and character feelings can thus be highlighted, which is also the significance of contemporary freehand figure painting in China.

3.3. Innovation in Landscape Painting

In the current teaching of Chinese painting in colleges and universities, landscape painting is the weakest link. Students are unable to get out of the traditional embarrassment in the process of creating the landscape paintings. Therefore, the new forms must be injected into the teaching methods to solve the problems. The most effective means of solving the current practical problems is to cultivate or train the students' innovative ability in Chinese landscape paintings. The education idea of modernity should be integrated into the teaching of Chinese landscape painting to achieve the goal of training the talents of Chinese landscape paintings in the new era.

To cultivate the students' innovative ability in landscape paintings, we can stimulate them from conception, color, form and perspective of Chinese landscape painting and other aspects. Chinese landscape painting pays attention to artistic conception and emphasizes the intention of having an idea in mind before starting to paint. In addition to improving students' cultural accomplishment by reading some classics and masterpieces of Chinese and foreign ancient books, we can appropriately refer to artistic expressions of some literature in the artistic conception. Modern material life is very colorful and modern people's perception of color is also abundant. The traditional color of landscape paintings cannot meet the aesthetic needs of modern color for the present age. Students can also be guided to make certain breakthroughs and innovations in terms of color. Here, we can draw lessons from modern fine brush painting to use the watercolor and acrylic pigments to enrich the color varieties of traditional Chinese landscape paintings.

Formally, students can be guided to combine the planarity of traditional Chinese landscape painting with the modern principles of composition so as to understand the composition through this contrast.

In terms of perspective, the form of "scattered perspective" was used in the traditional landscape paintings. We should also guide students to understand the perspective principle of traditional landscape paintings and flexibly choose the perspective methods suitable for works.

The cultivation of innovative ability of the landscape painting students is an effective way for colleges and universities to get out of the current teaching dilemma. It is of great significance to ensure the realization of the goal of talent training via teaching of landscape painting, and maintain the sustainable development of the teaching.

3.4. Innovation in Flower & Bird Painting

Chinese painting of flowers and birds in the new era has certain characteristics of the times, but it is still difficult to break through the pattern of traditional flower-bird paintings. This puts forward new requirements for the creative teaching of Chinese flower-bird paintings. Hence, we should pay more attention to the cultivation of students' innovative ability in this respect in the process of teaching so that students can create the painting works of flowers and birds that conform to the aesthetic concept of current context.

First of all, students are guided to find innovation in the selection of materials for Chinese painting of flowers and birds. All kinds of flowers, grasses, fishes and insects in the nature can be the objects in their selection. For example, tropical plants, marine plants, sea fishes, lizards, etc., can be the objects currently chosen for paintings of flowers and birds. The innovation in the themes enables the students' creative thinking to be liberated unprecedentedly.

Secondly, students are guided to seek innovation in the styling of Chinese painting of flowers and birds. In terms of styling, to guide students is not only the reproduction of objective flowers and birds, but also the export of their own feelings and thinking while expressing the objective objects. In the teaching of Chinese painting of flowers and birds, we can increase some curricula of modern composition and structure so that students can master the styling techniques of using points, lines and surfaces to complete the geometric shapes.

Finally, students are guided to find innovation in the composition of Chinese painting of flowers and birds. The panoramic composition method was usually used in the composition of the traditional Chinese painting of flowers and birds. We should let students learn the form of Chinese painting of flowers and birds mainly based on the modern panoramic composition. The modern panoramic composition and the white space treatment in traditional Chinese painting of flowers and birds are two different processing ways. This kind of composition form different from the traditional one can further expand students' innovative consciousness. Students should be guided to refer to a large number of different painting composition methods so as to find a new way of thinking and direction for students in the creation of Chinese paintings of flowers and birds.

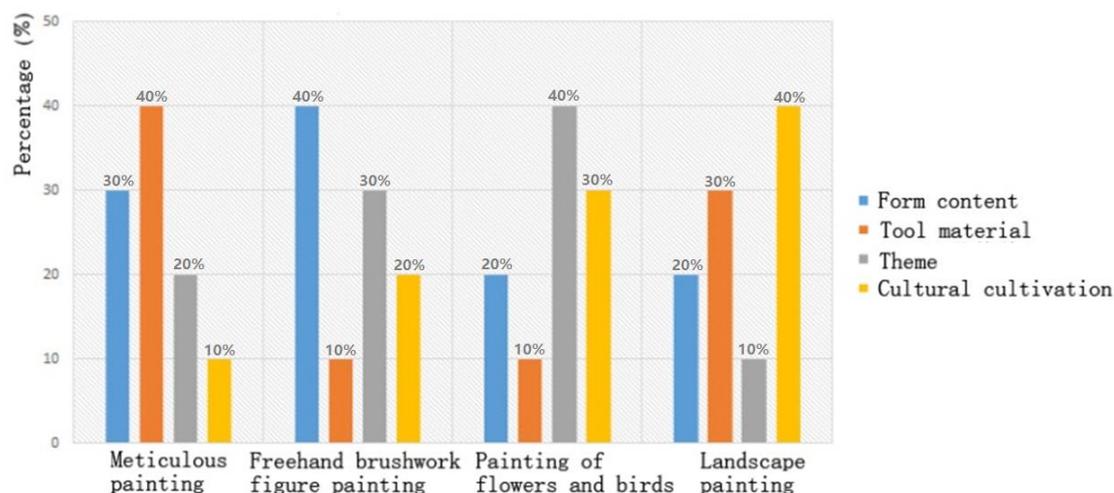


Figure 1. The percentage of different ways in innovation of Chinese painting.

4. Conclusions

Chinese painting is a traditional painting with a long history of thousands of years. No matter whether it is painting concept, content, form, artistic conception and technique, subject choice, coloring application and completion of works, it must be continuously developed and innovated on the basis of inheriting the tradition and the vitality of its art lies in creativity. The innovation of Chinese painting does not mean merely the pursuit for the change of form and the novelty of expression language, nor the abandonment of the tradition, but requires that the works should have the sense

and the atmosphere of the times. The training or cultivation of innovative ability of Chinese painting students in colleges and universities is not an overnight matter, but a rather difficult process. We should also make certain efforts in the objective conditions such as teaching program, teachers' quality and teaching environment. To train the innovative ability of Chinese painting students in colleges and universities, we should, on the premise of inheriting the tradition, face the changes of the new century with a dialectical attitude to cultivate Chinese painters who can conform to the atmosphere of the new era.

Conflicts of Interest

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

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