

# Integrating intangible cultural heritage with instructional methodologies at vocational educational institutions - an exploration of instructions on the case of Kaifeng city and nearby

**Qian Zhou**

*Arts Department, Yellow River Conservancy Technical Institute, new campus, Dongjing Road (west), Jinming District*

*Corresponding author's e-mail: zhouqianqq@yeah.net*

*Received 01 October 2013, www.cmmt.lv*

---

## Abstract

This paper studies intangible cultural heritage of Kaifeng City and its surrounding area by reviewing current development status of Art Design major offered by local vocational educational institutions. This paper proposes that introducing intangible cultural heritage resources into the educational system of Art Design in local institutions of vocational education in order to achieve complementary advantages and win-win results. The main contribution of this paper is systemically reviewing theoretical framework of educational practices by integrating intangible cultural heritage with Art Design teaching.

*Keywords:* intangible cultural heritage, art design major in institutions of vocational education, teaching method

---

## Introduction

Currently, Intangible cultural heritage has a challenge of development and face being extinctions with the rapid development of society and it is undergoing the important transition period as the traditional treasure heritage has been inherited via oral instructions since thousands years ago. As an important city in the central plains of China, Kaifeng City provides dependable material guarantee and broad development space for the development of intra-region vocational education under the impulsion of "Central China Economic District" strategic plan of Henan province. It is necessary and possible for institutions of vocational education to combine traditional handicraft of inheriting folk art with carrying forward traditional culture [1]. The methods of introducing intangible cultural heritage into the educational system and the approaches of excavating, studying and integrating folk cultural resources are significant for inheriting and protecting intangible cultural heritage, which is also an arduous conundrum for vocational education.

### 1 Current status of intra-region intangible cultural heritage resources

Kaifeng City, known as "ten dynasties ancient capital", is one of the first historical cultural cities honor by China. It reserves plentiful historical legacy and intangible cultural heritage, such as Wood Engraving Picture Party in Zhuxian Town, Kaifeng Embroidery, Bianjing Lanterns, Northern

Song Dynasty Guan Porcelain, and Kaifeng Stylus Pyrography (shown in Figure 1.). These intangible cultural heritage have diversity species, distinctive styles of art and are unique and precious heritage. However, with the development of the society and the transform of people's lifestyle, the inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage facing a great impact and keeping disappearing.

### 2 Current status of introducing intangible cultural heritage into teaching working of art design major in institutions of vocational education

I survey some documents and find that introducing intangible cultural heritage into education system has been noticed by Art Design departments in institutions of vocational education in Kaifeng City and nearby. Courses and lectures about the inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage are rapidly increase. The lectures contain geographical environment and humane and economic background of Kaifeng City and nearby. They also contain the types, heir, production, material, tools, process, characteristics and cultural connotation of intangible cultural heritage in Kaifeng City and nearby. Furthermore, some colleges establish some student associations about intangible cultural heritage by which students can be encouraged to know, concern, and protect intangible cultural heritage.



FIGURE 1 Featured intangible cultural heritages at Kaifeng city and surroundings: Bianliang Zhang Lanterns and Zhuxianzhen woodcut New Year Pictures

However, in Kaifeng City and nearby, there are few departments and majors aiming at instruct intangible cultural heritage and training inheritors for intangible cultural heritage in institutions of vocational education. Colleges can provide only few majors for training inheritors for intangible cultural heritage. Moreover, some related majors exit problems about setting course too general and practice too simple.

### 3 Interaction between art design major in institutions of vocational education and intangible cultural heritage

Art design major in institutions of vocational education and intangible cultural heritage are reciprocal and cooperative with each other. The interestedness of decorative patterns, diversity of design methods, flexibility of setting graphics and others of intangible cultural heritage are valuable treasures. Combine with these characteristics of intangible cultural heritage, curricular system of Art Design major in institutions of vocational education can obtain characteristics of the times and become a school-running characteristics of Art Design major in institutions of vocational education. Furthermore, this combination can make Art Design major in institutions of vocational education more easily to adapt to market economy, industrial structure of enterprises and the requirement of qualified persons [2]. Meanwhile, the new curricular system inoculated with intra-region intangible cultural heritage may present a whole new artistic language, which can guide practice, achieve complementary advantages and propel the inheritance and development of intra-region intangible cultural heritage.

#### 3.1 CONTRIBUTE TO FORMING SCHOOL-RUNNING CHARACTERISTICS

The inheritance and innovation of intangible cultural

heritage in China is based on the research of folk arts, while art education in colleges and universities plays important role in the research of folk arts [3]. Similarly, vocational education should take nationality and localness as the support. Furthermore, it must realize the significance of being established in regional traditional culture, especially on the wave of national reform and development on education. The connotation of regional intangible cultural heritage is more universal, adaptive, gentilitial and vigorous than the traditional educational forms of Art Design major in institutions of vocational education. Only by introducing the recognition of intra-region intangible cultural heritage into ruling teaching, we can cultivate unique skilled talent who hold ethnic cultural concept and spiritual quality.

Combining intra-region intangible cultural heritage with theory of modern Art Design is not only the trend of current education, but also is the win-win mechanism between school and folk arts. It can show the regional characteristics and unique competitive strength of department.

#### 3.2 CONTRIBUTE TO THE INHERITANCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF FOLK INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

At present, the inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage in Kaifeng City and nearby has gained some extent of attention. However, it still faces a lot of problems such as lack of heirs, excavation, rescue, arrangement, resume and other jobs, lack of money. In my opinion, people is the reason leading to this status and restricting the protection and development of intangible cultural heritage.

Institutions of vocational education has great influence on education objects. Introducing intangible cultural heritage into the teaching practice in institutions of vocational education can improve the recognition and identification of local folk arts and awake their consciousness of national culture. Furthermore, the students

in institutions of vocational education have flourish thought, strong manipulative ability and are good candidate for inheriting, protecting and developing of intangible cultural heritage. Meanwhile, institutions of vocational education have benign atmosphere of researching and cultural diffusion, which makes them the important place to analyze, arrange, excavate, disseminate and protect intangible cultural heritage. As a result, institutions of vocational education must take the responsibility of inheriting and innovating intangible cultural heritage.

#### **4 Explorations of instructional methodologies and principles for art design major in vocational education by leveraging knowledge of intangible cultural heritage**

It is an urgent demand for vocational educational institutions to develop and determine new teaching methodologies for Art Design major by combining Intangible Culture Heritage instructional theory with teaching systems of vocational education as well as traditional hand-by-hand instructional method in new era. Vocational educational institutions need optimize course design systems and explore regional-based teaching models aligning with the corresponding art fields. Innovative instructional theories should focus on passing intangible cultural heritage on to new generations and attempt to meet the requirements of industrial and social development. Moreover, it is also important to improve innovative capabilities in teaching regional traditional culture as well as assist students to build up solid knowledge structures and develop a balanced ability. With adopting this teaching method, the outcomes of instructions will bridge the gap educational organizations and society, connect theoretical knowledge with practices, and integrate traditional culture with current social needs.

##### **4.1 ADOPTING REGIONAL ADVANTAGES AND OPTIMIZING INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENTS**

Every intangible cultural heritage attached to one region has a unique art type and representation, which can exhibit multiple local arts, such as regional history, culture, religion, and customs. It is significant to use advantages of intangible cultural heritage and improve course designs based on the demands of local development.

Kaifeng City and nearby have multiple types of intangible cultural heritage. Among various intangible cultural heritages, there are a few arts related to folk art, including Zhuxianzhen Woodcut, Bianliang Kite, Zhang Lantern, and Bian Embroidery. All these arts can be used to improve teaching quality in vocational education. The benefits can be represented in the following aspects. First, these folk arts can play an inspiring role in course design of Art Design because of varied design patterns. Second, colorful designs in folk arts have a strong impact on designing some fundamental courses, such as Course Color Design. Finally, the pattern of folk arts can influence some specific course designs. In summary, combining intangible cultural heritages with instructional practices and optimizing instructional contents can assist students to strengthen their knowledge structure and innovative capabilities. This approach can represent regional

characteristics through the process of instructions.

##### **4.2 WORK-STUDY COMBINATION-BASED NEW TEACHING MODEL**

The first challenge is to train qualified instructors when vocational educational institutions intend to introduce intangible cultural heritage into educational practice. Lack of successors results in intangible cultural heritage a gradual decrease currently. It is a great solution if educational institutions can coach learners majored in Art who have solid background of artwork by providing great learning environments [4]. The cultural inheritance is a transferring process of spiritual culture. Objects are separated from carriers. The transferring processes are based on spiritual communications between individuals via conversations, hand-by-hand teaching, value assessments, and psychological impacts. The characteristics of these processes are unformed and abstractive. The knowledge is usually learnt from older generation of artists by oral instructions [5], which cannot meet current instructional requirements. Therefore, it is a critical for modern educational organizations to educate qualified professionals by integrating traditional cultures with instructional characteristics. The crucial mission for educators is to explore a new educating model that can not only teach students traditional art but also innovate traditional techniques.

It is necessary to represent a few characteristics of traditional art, such as operational and cultural features, when the educational model is developed in order to overcome the disadvantages of prior teaching models. Educational institutions can collaborate with enterprises and develop educational platforms for teaching purposes. Moreover, inviting experts who are specialized in intangible cultural heritage to give lectures is one of the solutions to popularize traditional culture. During the process of collaborations with enterprises, the educational organizations can drill down teaching task into sub-tasks and assign them to each educational studio or department. Using project-based teaching model is a feasible approach for educating learners to gain knowledge in a practical context. This method should have a bright future if the training model can be examined and evaluated [6].

##### **4.3 TRAINING QUALIFIED LECTURERS**

One of the crucial parts of education is to have a qualified teaching team that can guarantee teaching quality. In the perspective of teaching team development, vocational educational institutions should employ some experts who are specialized in the field of intangible cultural heritage and can supervise students. The employed artists should participate in designing and teaching courses as well. One approach of increasing cognitions of intangible cultural heritage is to organize a number of research seminars or workshops. Another approach is to encourage lecturers to learn skills and techniques from enterprises through specialty assessment, functional training, and empirical practice. Next, educational institutions can also engage a few professionals from enterprises who can take part in teaching practices. Based on this system, vocational

educational institutions can build up a qualified teaching team that can ensure instructional quality in practice.

#### 4.4 DEVELOPING PRODUCTION-TYPE AND PRACTICAL-PURPOSE TRAINING BASE

The traditional craftsmanship has strong features in operations and practices. Focusing on the features of regional intangible cultural heritage education, instructional organizations can leverage the unique characteristics of traditional techniques and cultures to improve the collaborations between enterprises and vocational education. A long-term cooperation is helpful for integrating resources. Furthermore, building up a simulated training platform on campus is also an alternative for achieving quality teaching. This solution can aid students to learn operating processes and company culture by a seamless connection between corporations and schools.

#### 4.5 INNOVATIONS, DEVELOPMENT AND POPULARIZATIONS

Vocational education concerning traditional cultural inheritance should not only focus on educating learners but

also explore research and development of products in the field of intangible cultural heritage for the purpose of popularizing traditional techniques. Educational institutions should develop incentive mechanisms for the innovations. Moreover, teaching teams should be encouraged to organize research seminars and explore new products development. A routine exhibition contest should be held by educational organizations in order to represent the updated academic achievements. This approach is beneficial for increasing reputation of intangible cultural heritage.

### 5 Conclusions

Vocational education relies on local economic supports. At the same time, vocational educational institutions provide economic development with intelligent supports. Based on the regional art training modes, Art Design major offered by vocational education should make good use of regional intangible cultural heritage resources, adjust curriculum structure, and improve collaborations between enterprises and vocational education. Utilizing positive features of regional vocational education can generate a long-term strategic plan for developing intangible cultural heritage.

### References

- [1] Yu Liao 2013 instructional methodology exploration of traditional handicraft art at vocational educational institutions - a case study on Hunan embroidery field at Hunan Vocational Educational Institution of Crafts and Arts *Science & Technology Industry of China* **4**, 76-7
- [2] Yuya Lin 2010 an analysis of current interconnections between art design instructions and traditional crafts and arts industry *Great Stage* **12** 256
- [3] Rong Luo 2012 an exploration of understanding the impact of art education at higher education on the innovations and instructions of intangible cultural heritages *Art Education Research* **12** 130-1
- [4] Yimo Zheng 2011 an exploration of understanding the impact of art education at higher education on the innovations and instructions of intangible cultural heritages *The 6th annual conference on social science in Hebei* 75-8
- [5] Gui-lan Liu 2010 the characteristics of the folk art intangible cultural heritage in Henan Province and its tourism value evaluation *Journal of Henan Normal University (Philosophy and Social Science)* **36(6)** 111-4
- [6] Yimo Zheng WANG Yang 2011 art teaching in universities and protection of non-material cultural heritage *Journal of Hebei Normal University (Educational Science Edition)* **8** 75-8
- [7] Lin Yang 2009 instructional innovations: a summary of research seminar on "crafts and arts education under the protection of intangible cultural heritages" *Art Observation* **10** 36-37
- [8] Haiping Tan 2013 understanding education of traditional crafts and art from a perspective of employment on a level of higher education *Huazhang* **4**

### Author



**Qian Zhou, Jul.15.1982, Kaifeng, China.**

**Current position, grades:** Lecturer of vocational faculty in Arts Department, Yellow River Conservancy Technical Institute.

**University studies:** BSc degree from Henan University in 2005, MSc degree from Henan University in 2009.

**Scientific interest:** art design, instructional methodology, Chinese painting.

**Publications:** 5 papers, co-author of 9 books in fields of Art and Pedagogy.