



Kite into Middle School Art Teaching from the Perspective of Core Literacy

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Abstract

This study is guided by core literacy and adopts a method combining field investigation and literature research to investigate the inheritors of many board kite kites in Nantong, and summarize the current problems and opportunities of board kite inheritance. At the same time, based on the “Compulsory Education Art Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)”, this study develops an art unit course, combines cultural and creative design with modern forms such as live streaming, and constructs a teaching framework for the living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. The study found that using courses as a carrier to promote intangible cultural heritage into campus can effectively realize the role transformation of students from cultural listeners to guardians, and provide practical references for the development of intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education in the era.

Subject Areas

Art, Culture

Keywords

Banyao Kite, Intangible Cultural Heritage Aesthetic Education, Core Literacy

1. Introduction

China has a long history of kites, with a variety of shapes and styles and many schools. As one of the important representatives of “Nan Yao” kites, Nantong kite kites integrates kite art, kite carving, kite music, kite technology, kite sports and other aspects, and has profound artistic aesthetic value [1]. In the poem “Chongchuan Bamboo Branch Poems” by Jiang Changqing, a native of Tongzhou, it is said: “There are kites as big as sails, and they are made of double butterflies and single butterflies. Their sounds are like an eggplant, but they are most com-

mon near the embankment.” “As big as sails, equipped with whistles.” This is the scene of Nantong people flying kites on the beach. The whistle blows in the wind to monitor the upper air flow, predict weather changes, warn of storms, protect the safety of the area, and carry people’s good wishes for peace, health, and plenty of food and clothing. On May 20, 2006, the Nantong kite was approved by the State Council to be included in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage lists.

2. Intangible Cultural Heritage and Art Education

The policy support system for intangible cultural heritage (hereinafter referred to as “ICH”) has been gradually improved. The 2019 “Measures for the Identification and Management of Representative Inheritors of National Intangible Cultural Heritage” [2] clearly requires that inheritors must participate in school education activities to promote the dynamic inheritance of ICH skills. The Ministry of Education’s “Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving School Aesthetic Education” [3] further proposed “integrating China’s excellent traditional culture into aesthetic education courses” and encouraged local governments to develop ICH school-based teaching materials.

Intangible cultural heritage art education highlights multiple values in practice. Taking Nantong kite kites as an example, through practical links such as kite making and whistle carving, students can improve their spatial thinking by using their hands and brains. The ecological concept carried by intangible cultural heritage projects deepens students’ understanding of regional culture and strengthens cultural identity. International exchange activities use intangible cultural heritage as a medium to promote cross-cultural dialogue and help Chinese youth establish cultural confidence. Intangible cultural heritage aesthetic education is a carrier for Chinese culture to “go global”. It breaks through language barriers with aesthetic commonality and conveys Chinese wisdom and aesthetic spirit to the world through international exhibitions, cultural exchanges and other activities. This kind of cross-cultural dialogue “with beauty as the medium” has enhanced the country’s cultural soft power and helped build a community with a shared future for mankind.

3. Intangible Cultural Heritage Enters Campus

With the support of the China Kite Association, the inheritor of the kite, Master Yang, has the opportunity to go abroad and participate in international kite cultural exchange activities, bringing the kite to the world stage. At the International Kite Festival held in western Denmark this year, the inheritor, Master Yang, brought his own traditional kite to the local area for exchanges, hoping to let the people of the world know about Nantong kite and establish cultural confidence. Every June 17, kite enthusiasts from Germany and Denmark will spontaneously organize kite exchange activities, fly their own characteristic kites in China, and go to primary and secondary schools to teach students the process of kite making.

This is a grand event of world kite culture.

At the same time, Master Yang has also made a lot of efforts to “bring intangible cultural heritage into campus”. In the early years, Yongping Primary School in Changjiang Town, Rugao City, opened a kite interest class, and Master Yang taught in the interest class as a folk artist. With the development of “bringing intangible cultural heritage into campus”, the school’s kite courses have gradually become formalized, and Master Yang’s teaching on kite selection, production, and flying has become more rigorous. Through these interesting courses, kite kites have quietly entered children’s lives from textbooks. (see **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**)



Figure 1. Yang Zhibing takes his kite to participate in cultural festivals and expositions.



Figure 2. Yang Zhibing is conducting a kite club class at Yongping Primary School in Changjiang Town, Rugao City.

Regarding the introduction of intangible cultural heritage into schools, the inheritors admitted that the current publicity activities were not professional due to the limited teaching skills of craftsmen. The inheritor, Master Liu, suggested that the inheritors could cooperate with school teachers to jointly carry out publicity activities for the introduction of intangible cultural heritage into schools, develop school-based courses, and supplement intangible cultural knowledge while showing the process of making kites. This would also be of great benefit to students in understanding and getting closer to intangible cultural heritage (see **Figure 3**).



Figure 3. Liu Jianfeng promoted the Banyao intangible cultural heritage activities (photographed by Master Liu Jianfeng).

4. Nantong Banyao Kite Art Course Development

4.1. Current Status of Domestic Art Curriculum Development

Among the existing literature on kite flying, literature on the development of art courses for kite flying in Nantong includes Qin Le’s “The Penetration of Kite Flying Skills into Primary School Art Teaching” [4], Nantong University School of Art’s “Research on the Handicraft Inheritance Teaching of Kite Flying Skills in Nantong” [5], and Yang Yan’s “School-based Teaching Materials to Inherit Folk Culture—Some Thoughts on the Inheritance Teaching of Kite Flying in Nantong” [6], a total of six articles. Through the study and exploration of relevant literature on kite flying course development, and problem thinking, the content of the Nantong kite flying course development generally includes the appreciation of kite flying art, understanding kite flying craftsmanship, experiencing kite making, visiting kite museums, interviewing craftsmen, creative expression of kite mask and whistle pattern, kite flying activities, and campus kite festival activities and exhibitions.

Qin Le approached the geometric structure of the Ban Yao kite as a pedagogical entry point, guiding students to perceive traditional aesthetic forms through collage activities. However, her study lacks in-depth engagement with the challenges of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) transmission [7]. Yang Yan, building on local art textbooks from Nantong City, strengthened experiential learning via kite-painting and hands-on workshops during the annual Kite Art Festival, though her framework primarily emphasizes practical skills over theoretical integration [6]. The Nantong Tongzhou Experimental Primary School in Jiangsu Province established a heritage research center, invited ICH inheritors, and encouraged students to co-author 校本教材 (school-based teaching materials) and curate Ban Yao exhibitions. The school further explored interdisciplinary integration by linking kite-making with multimedia projects, demonstrating the feasibility of cross-institutional collaboration [8]. Additionally, Ouyang Fenli proposed a cross-disciplinary curriculum under the core competencies framework, spanning from “aerodynamic principles of whistles” to “agricultural cultural narratives,” advocating for a dual evaluation system through static and dynamic exhibitions. Yet, her research

did not address critical gaps in teacher training and resource accessibility [9].

4.2. Incorporating Kite Flying into the Curriculum Standards

The “Compulsory Art Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)” (hereinafter referred to as the “New Curriculum Standards”) [10] emphasizes that the fundamental goal of art courses is to cultivate morality and educate people, adhere to the principle of educating people with beauty, attach importance to the formation and development of students’ core literacy in image recognition, art expression, aesthetic judgment, practical creativity, and cultural understanding, establish correct aesthetic concepts, and be able to master and apply the ability to discover beauty, appreciate beauty, and create beauty. Form socialist ideological and moral qualities and aesthetic interests. Strengthen cultural confidence and consciousness, encourage students to learn the excellent traditional Chinese culture, and enhance the self-confidence and self-esteem of the Chinese nation. Promote the all-around development of students. Hu Bo *et al.* mentioned the need to develop art integration courses [11]. Building upon this groundwork, the research team developed “Journey of the Kite”—a specialized art curriculum unit dedicated to the cultural and aesthetic exploration of Nantong’s Ban Yao kite.

In the process of exploring the development of the school-based curriculum “Zheng Path”, the author focused on the integration of curriculum resources in multiple forms and angles, such as Nantong kite flying, traditional arts such as Nantong blue printed cloth, modern media arts (board painting posters, exhibition design, etc.), and regional landscape architecture, to promote the development and utilization of kite flying curriculum resources. In addition to developing artistic integration, the new curriculum standard also puts forward the requirement of paying attention to the characteristics of art courses, continuing the four types of theme activities of appreciation and commentary, modeling and expression, design and application, and comprehensive exploration, as well as strengthening the connection with the excellent traditional Chinese culture [9]. The development of the school-based curriculum “Zheng Path” takes the intangible cultural heritage of Nantong kite flying as the main content, creates unit courses for the four types of theme activities, cultivates students’ core art literacy, and promotes the inheritance and development of the intangible cultural heritage of kite flying.

In the study on integrating Nantong Banyao kite skills into primary school art teaching, scholars explored its practical paths and challenges from different perspectives. Overall, the existing research has made some progress in curriculum innovation and practice models, but it still needs to be further explored in terms of task-oriented design, teacher professionalization and low-cost teaching resource development.

5. Art Unit Course of “Zheng”

5.1. Overview of the Unit “Zheng Journey”

In the first lesson of this unit (appreciation and commentary), the focus is on the

historical origins, production technology, and kite aesthetics of Nantong kite kites. In the second lesson, the inheritors enter the art classroom, make Nantong kite kites for students on site, visit the kite museum and collect audio and pictures and other materials, intuitively feel the development status and regional differences of Nantong kite kites, and guide students to collect problems in inheritance and development, and complete the conception of simple kite kites. In the third lesson (modeling expression, design application), in response to the inheritance and development problems of kite kites found, try to innovate the drawing of kite kites and design cultural and creative products. In the fourth lesson (comprehensive exploration), in response to the lack of characteristics and professionalism of kite-related exhibitions, students can try to arrange a kite cultural and creative pop-up store as “kite keepers”, and revitalize the inheritance of kites through live broadcasts.

This unit course is guided by the concept of “introducing intangible cultural heritage into campus”, focusing on the development of students’ core art literacy, establishing cultural confidence, and attaching importance to the creation of problem situations. Students can collaborate in exploration as “Zheng keepers”, and students are encouraged to participate in course design. Course content is designed based on students’ exploration and discoveries, and learning activities are carried out around the innovation of guarding “Zheng”.

The curriculum deepens students’ spiritual identification with the value of local culture through systematic cultural cognition and practical innovation. By unraveling the historical context, artisanal wisdom, and aesthetic symbolism of Nantong’s Ban Yao kites, students grasp the spiritual essence of traditional culture, while field studies and interactions with inheritors forge emotional connections. Subsequently, through innovative design practices and curatorial initiatives, learners transition from cultural recipients to creators and disseminators. This process cultivates cultural consciousness by safeguarding and revitalizing intangible cultural heritage (ICH), allowing students to explore the symbiosis of tradition and modernity, ultimately fostering a profound commitment to inheriting and perpetuating China’s outstanding cultural legacy.

5.2. Task-Driven “Zheng Journey” Unit

Table 1. Brief list of course elements for the unit “Zheng Journey”.

class	Knowledge Points	Teaching Objectives	Small Problem	According to
Lesson 1 Guarding the Origin of “Zheng”	① The history, shapes and types of kites. ② Kite masks include historical stories, myths and legends, and Chinese mountains and rivers.	1. Have a basic understanding of Nantong Banyao Kite and have a basic understanding and feeling of the aesthetic characteristics of folk art. 2. Master the characteristics of the kite face.	1. What of kites are there? 2. What is the main shape of the kite? 3. kite mask painting?	“Chinese Art Appreciation” under the Curriculum Standards for Learning Content

Continued

Lesson 2 Exploring the Path of “Zheng”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Kite faces include fine brushwork and collage. ② How to make a kite. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch the inheritors making kites on the spot and learn about the making method of kite. 2. Complete the design of a simple kite surface. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do inheritors usually draw kite masks? 2. What are the steps to make a kite ? 3. How would you create an innovative painting of the kite surface? 	“Inheritance of Traditional Crafts” within the Curriculum Standards for Learning Task Clusters
Lesson 3 Keeping the “Zheng” Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① The subject matter, meaning, and pigment and tool requirements of kite mask painting. ② The artistic language of collage, graffiti, color combination, composition, and symmetry. ③ How to make cultural and creative products. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Master the basic methods of kite mask drawing. 2. Design kite-shaped cultural and creative products. 3. Have confidence in local art and culture and a sense of responsibility and awareness in protecting its inheritance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are some simple ways we can draw a kite face? 2. Do you think can incorporate kite elements? 	“Collaborative Design Practices” stipulated in the Curriculum Standards for Learning Task Clusters.
Lesson 4 Outlook for the Zheng Journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① The basic elements of booth layout: cultural and creative products, booths, and live broadcast equipment. ② The basic elements of live streaming sales. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set up a kite cultural and creative pop-up stall. 2. Kite cultural and creative product through live streaming. 3. Use your own words to describe how to inherit and innovate kite flying. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to arrange a cultural and creative pop-up stall? 2. If you were a live streamer selling products, how would you promote them? 	The curriculum aims to guide students in comprehending the imperative of creatively transforming and innovatively developing China’s outstanding traditional culture, thereby strengthening cultural confidence and cultivating a profound sense of national identity and civic responsibility.

On the basis of learning the kite mask painting, basic modeling and production technology of Nantong kite, inheritors come into the classroom to learn the kite making methods and kite mask painting, and then innovatively design kite cultural and creative products, and revitalize and pass on the kite through live broadcast (see **Table 1**).

5.3. Evaluation of the “Zheng” Journey Unit Course (Taking the First Lesson as an Example) (See Table 2)

Table 2. Course evaluation table for the first lesson “The Origin of ‘Zheng’ Guarding”.

	Unqualified (below 60)	Good (60 - 89)	Excellent (above 90)
Student I will know	I have no knowledge of the history, shapes, and types of board kites, as well as the art of kite surfaces.	I know that the “Yao Mian” (a type of traditional Chinese painting) features themes such as historical stories, myths and legends, as well as paintings of China’s mountains and rivers.	On a solid foundation, one can express oneself in one’s own words and extend and expand upon the knowledge.

Continued

Student will do it	I have not mastered the painting skills of the art of “Yao Mian” (a traditional Chinese art form involving the use of paper cutting and folding to create intricate designs).	Master the art of painting skills for the “Yao Mian”, and be able to draw simple patterns of “Yao Mian” with high accuracy in work modeling.	On a solid foundation, the work’s modeling is more accurate, the pattern drawing is more exquisite, and it incorporates the correct understanding of the artist.
Student understand	I have no understanding of Nantong board kites and lack basic knowledge and appreciation for the aesthetic characteristics of folk art.	Have a basic understanding of Nantong board kite and possess a fundamental knowledge and appreciation for the aesthetic characteristics of folk art.	Based on a solid foundation, accurately articulate your understanding of folk art in your own words, demonstrating strong team spirit and a sense of responsibility.

5.4. Partial Presentation of the Course Material Design for the Unit “Zheng Journey” (See Figure 4)



Figure 4. Partial display of the course materials of “Zheng Path”.

6. Summary

One of the important purposes of intangible cultural heritage research is to promote the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage. We should make use of the powerful force of school education, based on the requirements of aesthetic education in the new era, and think about the adaptability and feasibility

of integrating intangible cultural heritage into school curriculum. In this process, students can change their role cognition from listeners of kite culture to communicators and guardians. We should think about the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage with a sense of ownership, offer suggestions with a contemporary perspective, assist intangible cultural heritage inheritors to solve practical problems, consciously establish self-confidence and pride in Chinese traditional culture and art, stimulate students' interest in China's traditional art and cultural heritage, enhance their aesthetic taste, and thus realize the need to cultivate and develop the core literacy of aesthetic education.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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