

# Teaching Attempt of Layout Design in Practice

Shujuan Su

School of Art & Design  
Huanghe Science and Technology College  
Zhengzhou, China  
E-mail: sushujuan2005@sina.com

**Abstract**—Layout design is being a more important segment of graphic design, sorting teaching contents starting from cultivation of students' actual operation ability, trying to combine various teaching methods based on the starting point of helping students to grasp the principle and methods of layout design faster. And ultimate to train students' ability of solving problems independently, enabling students to adapt to market demand faster, thus to cultivate qualified talents for society.

**Keywords**—layout design; teaching reform

## I. INTRODUCTION

Layout design is an important integral part of modern design art, a significant segment of visual communication and one of the vital professional basic courses of graphic design specialty, obtaining more and more attention of various colleges having art specialty. Teaching reform of layout design course has been placed on agenda, and schools that have conducted curriculum reform earlier have gained certain achievements. Following the overall direction of teaching reform in our school, we have applied for project approval of teaching reform of layout design. Now, it has been finished, and some experience and lessons are accumulated in the course of project operation. Here to offer them for common exchanges.

## II. DETERMINATION OF TEACHING CONTENTS

First of all, teaching objectives, nature and status of course shall be cleared. Layout design is a comprehensive professional basic course with wide coverage based on such professional basic courses as plane composition, color composition, type design and graphic design. Teaching objectives are to enable students to conduct necessary arrangement and combination of the design elements required by the pages, to form a beautiful composition that is intuitive, moving and simple with clear priorities and concept, making it convey the designer's artistic pursuit and cultural concept while delivering message, thus provide a graceful reading "space" for readers. [1] Students will start to learn professional courses upon accomplishing this course. Thus it is closely related to the professional courses that will be learned latter, and also has a relationship with the courses that have been learned. A success design work is determined by the success of layout. An ordinary creative idea with a relatively good layout can be considered as a work, for it

conveys message clearly and orderly. If you have a good creative idea yet with a bad layout and without priorities, then your work will certainly be a failure. Of course, I am not denying the importance of creativity. Making student to know the significance of courses will arouse their enthusiasm of learning.

Secondly, teachers shall seize the newest domestic and foreign research trends of this course to select appropriate teaching material for students. The previous foreign teaching materials of layout design just have some actual operation cases and fragmental knowledge without systemic theory explanation, which are not suitable for domestic teaching; however, most of domestic teaching materials contain a lot of principles, rules and regulations which seem to be reasonable. But when we apply them to specific design, we still cannot understand how to conduct the layout. Until we have read the textbook of Layout Design edited by Xin Yihua, we are suddenly enlightened. The contents of this textbook are arranged according to actual operation order of typesetting, and corresponding exercises are arranged following each chapter. Students will grasp this chapter's theoretical knowledge through practicing those exercises step by step. The last assignment will help to consolidate the foregoing knowledge. It is indeed a good textbook.

Of course, we cannot just refer to one book for curriculum reform, so members of the curriculum reform team bought a lot of domestic and foreign books related to layout design, such as Principle of Layout Design by Japanese Sasaki Takeshi, Britain Layout Design (Senior Edition), Grid Systems and Layout Design and Textbook of American Institute of Design: Design Element—Graphic Design Style to enrich and perfect course contents. And we subdivide the assignments through group discussion, and list the quantity, requirements and corresponding chapters of the assignments into a table, then distribute them to students on the first class of this course, making students to have a more clearly understanding of their learning tasks and objectives within these five weeks, with the details shown in "Fig. 1".

版式设计课程教学计划

序号	教学内容	课时	作业安排	备注
1	1 版式设计概述 1.1 版式设计概念的导入 1.2 中外版式设计沿革 1.3 版式设计分类	4 学时		
2	2 版式设计原则 2.1 整体性原则 2.2 均衡性原则	4 学时 (理论) 1、实践 3)	1、版式设计分析 4 幅 由教师提供版式设计范例，学生自由两两，进行作业并打印在 A3 纸上。	要求用两两关系、抽象的几何形进行分析
3	3 版式设计流程 3.1 分析 3.2 构思 3.3 分版	16 学时 (理论) 4、实践 12)	1、对文字进行归类合并编排练习 由教师提供一题多解，学生可以在设计中加入几何图形和图案，打印在 A4 纸上。 2、目录编排练习 由教师提供一题多解的目录，学生可以在设计中加入几何图形和图案，打印在 A4 纸上。 3、版式设计练习 由教师提供图片和文字，学生进行编排设计，用 A3 尺寸表现版式的内容。(两幅)	1、要求：版式设计，不添加任何装饰性元素 3、要求用两两进行分析
4	4 文字编排设计 4.1 文字编排的内容 4.2 段落文字编排的基本形式	6 学时 (理论) 2、实践 4)	1、标题字练习 由教师提供一题多解，(中英文)学生设计两两编排，一题多解式组合，一题多式，并可在版面中自由补充，打印在 A4 纸上。 2、标题字练习 由教师提供图片和文字，在版面中，利用“两两式”进行编排组合，进行两两不同风格的版式设计，打印在 A4 纸上。	1、要求：把文字和图形元素考虑在内。
5	5 图形编排设计 5.1 图形编排的对比关系 5.2 图形编排的装饰形式 5.3 图形编排的版式设计		1、名片设计练习 根据设计目的，提供多种设计方案，按照设计尺寸打印。 2、海报练习 根据主题，利用所学知识，设计海报，不得少于 16 开，并做说明。	

Fig. 1. Breakdown of Teaching Plan

### III. REFORM OF TEACHING METHODS

Upon the contents are determined, the next step is how to convey knowledge to students. The traditional cramming education has already out of date, and teachers are using project teaching method, heuristic teaching and other methods. Stress one method deliberately will be somewhat extreme. In my opinion, different teaching methods shall be adopted for different phases with conclusion as below:

#### A. One Same Course Is Taught by More than One Teacher, and Each Teacher Has His Own Teaching Style

In the process of curriculum reform, we attempt to make one course be taught by teachers within the curriculum reform team with one teacher to teach one or two chapters, thus students will keep a feeling of freshness while they are listening with better effect. The whole teaching process is conducted using multimedia equipments. With perfect courseware being formulated, the teaching thought is clearer, and teaching procedure, course organization, teaching plan presentation and other aspects are improved significantly.

#### B. Adopt the Method of Teaching-Practicing-Commenting, Enable Students to Apply the Theory They Have Leaned into Actual Layout

After each chapter has been taught, there are corresponding exercises, and each exercise is designed around the contents of this chapter. On next class, the assignment of previous day is printed for common evaluation and discussion, which is led by teacher with all the students making up a circle, of the problems and advantages exist in

the assignments and how to make modification next step. Students have remembered the problems exist in various designs during discussion, so they won't make similar mistakes while designing their own works. Furthermore, collective comments also broaden students' horizons, as everyone's layout for one same theme has subtle changes, which is beneficial to encourage students to try from different perspectives, enabling each participant to feel directly the subtle changes in layout design and to expand design ideas.

#### C. Stress Drawing of A Large Number of Sketches, Practicing of Quick Schemes and Systematic Integrated Design Concept during the Process of Basic Theoretical Learning, and Carry out the Interactive Discussion between Teachers and Students

Involve students in the analysis of outstanding layout works to train students' language expression skills, which also plays a role in the consolidation of theoretical knowledge. Let students make a freehand sketch first while they are doing their assignments to show designing scheme, and make the best one into final draft as shown in "Fig. 2" through group discussion. The left four are sketches, among which the largest one is the better one which shall be made into final draft.

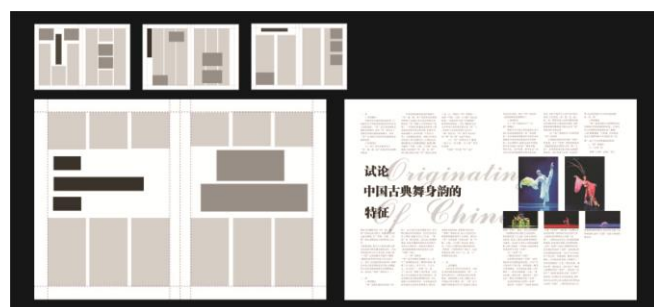


Fig. 2. Sketches

Cultivate students' ability of independent collection - research - analysis - thoughts - design - solution - reflection. The last big assignment is to make students select theme and collect materials including texts and pictures on their own. Make a catalog work no less than 16P with unlimited size and expressive forms. Steps of the assignments are as below: students select themes that they are interested in, then collect relevant texts and pictures based on the themes and list the contents which shall be classified clearly and orderly, and then draw a sketch which shall be discussed, and then made it into electronic draft. After seeing two or three times of the sketches, most of the students' sketches will be almost done well. Then print a black and white draft to correct wrongly written characters and other inappropriate places, then digital sample printing can be made. Finally, students will do a beautifully printed catalog.

#### D. Timely Feedback

In the teaching process, feedback is a necessary condition to make a ordered-teaching process. Evaluate students' performance in the layout design teaching in a timely manner

to guide them to think and develop towards the direction that we need: as for students' good performance, offer praise timely, so that students gain the joy of success, and set an example for other students; as for whose performance needs to be improved, a gentle reminder and patient guide shall be offered, and capture students' needs with the arts of education in a timely manner, determine teaching according to learning and their own conditions, to promote overall development of students; as for whose performance is poor, make artistic criticism with guidance of effort direction, not to let even one student fall behind..... So, timely feedback in class is very important. In addition to timely feedback in interacting with students, teaching contents and progress also need to be adjusted continuously in accordance with particular cases of students, breaking the previous teaching form in terms of teaching plan and template. Because in the process of teaching preparation, there are too many factors that will lead to the incapability to form resonance between students and teachers, therefore timely change is particularly important. Students are more willing to hear more new cases, which is easy to make communication with direct effect. Meanwhile, communicate with students continuously in the process of teaching, listen to their feedback, and involve them directly in the discussions of teaching methods and topic setting.

#### E. Exercise Way of Examination: Ask Students to Accomplish A Layout within A Limited Time

Make students complete a business card design of layout within half an hour as "Fig. 3". Conduct the teaching in machine room with one computer per student, and evaluate on the spot after completion, which will exercise students' ability to response in a timely manner and their concept of time. The previous assignments are to leave students a lot of time, yet students will play until at the last moment to finish assignment in a rush. Such training methods will not only avoid a lot of time wasting by students, but also can improve efficiency, so that they will adapt to the working pace after graduation.



Fig. 3. Business Card Design

## IV. INNOVATION IN CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT METHODS

Previous professional courses of art and design specialty are evaluated by the score of students' assignments after completion of this course. In our opinion, such way is not conducive for students to consolidate and expand what they have learned. If a student's assignment is poor, he does not know where he shall make improvement, and if his assignment is excellent, other students can not see. So we adopt the method of graduation design. All teachers who teach this course are involved in the evaluation of students' works, even the students are involved, with the form of defense. Students make presentation and explanation by PPT of the process of doing the assignment and the modification process, and answer some questions related to the subject raised by teachers. The final results are the products of evaluation by all the teachers. Furthermore, in the process of defense, students will feel their own merits and shortcomings, and know how to do in the future.

## V. MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS AND INNOVATION IN TEACHING REFORM AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The main effect is that students' assignments have been improved significantly over that of the previous students. For instance, previous students' final assignments are mostly done by collage without doing completely on the computer, so the effect of fine degree is certainly not as good as that are done on computer. Students say in their after-class summary that this course is very useful.

The first point of innovation is that in the process of doing assignments, evaluation is conducted timely, so that students will know their mistakes and make correction immediately. Retention of the modification process drafts will enable students to see their progress and enhance confidence in learning. The second is to teach students the ways of learning. The purpose of this course is not to do a few complete assignments, but to know how to solve problems in the future study and work. First improve students' horizons through analysis of a lot of good layout design works, making them know what kind of work is good, and what kind of work is poor, then they can slowly increase themselves, otherwise, they won't obtain improvement. Then, teach students how to learn when they see a good work, as we shall apply good layout into our own designs. I often tell the students that imitating is quite a good way for beginners. Just like calligraphy practicing, beginners will imitate others' works at first, gradually they will have the potential to create their own style. Learning drawing as a beginner, teachers also ask us to imitate copy. Therefore, the principle of any knowledge is the same, so does the learning of layout design. Although students are in a same class, their assignment has a big gap as some are excellent and some are poor, why? The reason is not the student has a good foundation, but he knows how to learn. I have tried to let the students do so too, and the results were very well. After students have determined their topic with information already having been prepared, let students go to see some good layout design books in reference room, and shoot down the layout suit themselves, then change it in accordance with their own

contents, to make it more suitable for their own theme. As there is a saying that "we all imitate others, but we shall know the way of imitating". "Fig. 4" shows the catalog assignments that sophomore have done on the class of layout design.



Fig. 4. Student’s Assignments

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