

# Teaching Method Innovation of Visual Communication Design Serving Rural Revitalization in the Digital Media Era

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## Abstract

**This paper explores innovations in teaching methods for visual communication design majors in the digital media era, aimed at cultivating high-quality design talent capable of efficiently serving the countryside. It begins with three levels of conceptual change, methodological path, and implementation guarantee. It proposes the teaching path of "field investigation method empowered by digital tools, workshop of digital vernacular project system, and practice method of online and offline linkage" to realize the sustainable development of visual communication design education and empower the revitalization of the countryside.**

## Keywords

**Digital media; visual communication design; rural revitalization; teaching method innovation.**

## 1. Introduction

In October 2017, Comrade Xi Jinping proposed at the 19th Party Congress that agriculture and rural areas be prioritized for development and that the strategy of rural revitalization be implemented. The comprehensive revitalization of the countryside encompasses industrial, talent, cultural, ecological, and organizational revitalization. The overall goal is the modernization of agriculture and rural areas; the overall policy is to prioritize the development of agriculture and rural areas; and the overall requirements are a prosperous industry, ecological livability, civilized rural customs, effective governance, and a rich life. [1] The fundamental purpose of rural revitalization is to enrich farmers, strengthen the agricultural base, and make the countryside more prosperous. The importance of visual images as carriers of rural cultural soft power and industrial competitiveness is increasingly prominent.

In the era of digital media, the communication context for the visual image of the countryside has undergone profound changes. Rapid advances in digital media technology have created unprecedented opportunities for constructing rural visual images and for cultural communication. Communication channels have shifted from offline to integrated online and offline channels, and many villagers have begun using online platforms such as short videos, social media, and e-commerce to sell agricultural products. As a result, the visual design of agricultural products has shifted from static, planar forms to dynamic, interactive formats, such as dynamic logos, VR village history museums, and interactive maps used by some villagers to publicize their villages and promote sales. In addition, the mode of consumer participation has shifted from one-way reception to co-creation and sharing, such as the popular "cloud landlord." [2] activities in Xing'an region, the launch of the "one mu of good land - to help farmers to develop the village" program, through which two-way attention to agricultural production can be realized. In light of the new changes in the countryside in the digital media era, the visual design of the countryside should not only look good and function well but also be easy to share and engage with. The teaching system for visual communication design in the era of digital media has encountered new challenges, and traditional teaching methods have

been weak at addressing the complex, dynamic, and localized needs of the countryside. There remains a significant disconnect between teaching and learning methods, even though digital software has been widely introduced, as follows:

- (1) The teaching content of visual communication design courses tends to be urban-centered. Teaching cases and exercises are mostly focused on commercial brands and urban consumption, with little attention to rural aesthetics, local materials, and farmers' aesthetic habits.
- (2) The teaching method of visual communication design emphasizes skills rather than context. Teaching focuses on software operation and formal aesthetics training, and it is easy to neglect cultivating design thinking for problem-solving and systematic problem-solving within the social, economic, and cultural context of the countryside.
- (3) The teaching results of visual communication design majors emphasize exhibition rather than effectiveness. Design coursework is often a virtual proposal or exhibition board; it has limited contact with the market, insufficient contact with farmers, is unable to meet villagers, tourists, or consumers, and lacks testing and iteration. Its social value and market value cannot be verified. Therefore, the innovation of teaching methods for visual communication design to serve rural revitalization has become a key moment of reform connecting design education and social demand.

## **2. The Teaching Method Innovation of Visual Communication Design Serving Rural Revitalization in The Digital Media Era**

In the era of digital media, visual communication design services for rural revitalization must first update their concepts and replace traditional teaching forms and methods to achieve fundamental innovation in teaching methods. Secondly, it is also necessary to diversify and integrate the digital vernacular into the implementation path and to implement teaching innovation through digital tools.

### **2.1. Skill transfer to value co-creation of conceptual innovation**

The teaching of visual communication design to serve rural revitalization must keep pace with the characteristics of the digital media era; whether it is the teaching site, the form of teaching, or the positioning of teaching, it needs to be based on the rural environment, the goal of rural construction, and the cultural heritage of the countryside to adjust the teaching concept. First, the virtual subject needs to be transformed into the teaching concept for the real field. Teaching in a classroom, from a closed laboratory or studio, should extend to the vast countryside, so that students take the initiative to study crop growth in terms of its characteristics and rural features. The countryside is alive; there are a variety of agricultural products that require packaging design and need to be sold, and this is more complex than the commercial cases in the course materials. The materials on the countryside present a range of practical problems that need to be addressed, such as poor marketing of local specialties, a fuzzy image of tourism, and the erosion of cultural memory, which can serve as the core project driving the teaching.

Secondly, the visual communication design professional teaches from visual form supremacy to system empowerment within the concept of teaching change. [3] Visual communication design teaching has long been grounded in the formal composition of Western modern design theory, emphasizing visual impact and attention-grabbing. The teaching goal of visual communication design to serve rural revitalization in the digital media era needs to move beyond single visual beautification and toward the systematic empowerment of rural industry, culture, and community through design. This approach to systematic empowerment is not confined to a single course. Instead, it integrates the teaching across the entire visual communication design program to build a comprehensive visual image system that integrates

brand strategy, product experience, spatial guidance, and digital narrative. The top-level design view enabled by this system can support macro-level visual planning for rural revitalization.

Once again, the teaching concept of visual communication design has shifted from designer-led to community co-creation. From this perspective, visual communication designers are no longer alien rescuers but service providers and collaborators. Grounded in the countryside and in deep dialogue and collaboration with villagers, village cadres, non-genetic inheritance, local merchants, and other pluralistic subjects, the design results are truly rooted in the countryside, reflecting the common will of the villagers in the rural community and cultural identity.

## **2.2. The innovation of the path of digital vernacular multiple integration**

Based on the three concepts above, teaching visual communication design to support rural revitalization in the digital media era must also adopt new teaching paths, as it is difficult to realize the value of the co-creation teaching concept within the teaching paths of commercial branding or virtual subjects. The conventional process in the virtual classroom of visual communication design is: research - creativity - practice - assessment. This thesis seeks to integrate digitalization across these four links to enable rural revitalization teaching to achieve digital + design co-empowerment.

### **1) Field research method empowered by digital tools**

The field investigation method, empowered by digital tools, aims to move beyond the virtual classroom walk-around style of picking up and to conduct accurate, in-depth rural research. First, students are instructed to use social media tools, such as keyword crawling, heat maps, and data from Dianping.com, Ctrip.com, and other platforms, to analyze the online image of existing villages, tourist concerns, village characteristics, and word-of-mouth gaps, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. At the same time, students or villagers are instructed to use their cell phones to carry out a thematic shooting workshop titled "Hometown in the Eyes of Villagers" to obtain localized visual materials from the perspective of villages and villagers, and to complete an in-depth field survey by adopting unforgettable vernacular emotional narratives. Thirdly, we use infographic design to visualize information from the interviews and create village infographics, relationship maps, journey maps, and other visualizations that encompass villagers' oral histories, character relationships, industrial processes, festivals, and ceremonies. Thus, the tacit knowledge is systematized and visualized, providing design material for later in-depth design and production.

### **2) Workshop on Digital Vernacular Project System**

Although the traditional teaching curriculum can follow the existing teaching plan, students are not passionate about design practice and cannot engage in real-world market design projects. Centering on real village demand orders as the core, forming cross-grade and cross-discipline teacher-student project teams, and carrying out high-intensity, immersive design projects within a limited period can help students connect with the market earlier. For example, our university helped a comprehensive visual formation design project in Wujia Village, Leping City, by breaking down this comprehensive design project into modules such as packaging design for agricultural products (Fig. 1 and 2), brand positioning and digital narrative design (Fig. 3), IP image and derivation design, e-commerce visual packaging design (Fig. 4), and online tour design and interactive experience design. Different design teams were assigned to lead tasks to advance the comprehensive design project, and weekly review meetings were held with villagers or Party A to provide timely feedback and adjustments to the design program.



Figure 1. Packaging design of local eggs in Wujia Village



Figure 2. Packaging design of tea tree mushroom in Wujia Village

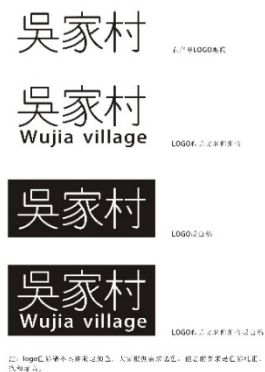


Figure 3. Wujia Village brand visualization design



Figure 4. Packaging design of agricultural products in Wujia Village

In addition, the rural project can transform characteristic material data, historical changes, ecological resources, and more into intuitive, engaging infographic interactions via WeChat applets or H5 pages, enabling consumers to access rural information actively. It also supports reserving the WeChat applet or H5 page for rural tourism, online tours of the village history museum, and other activities. Teaching activities are no longer limited to classroom content; digital technology is being introduced into teaching and applied to rural settings.

### **3) Practice the method of online and offline linkage**

In the era of digital media, the teaching outcomes of visual communication design majors are not only submitted in the program but also place greater emphasis on on-the-ground transformation and long-lasting impact, thereby realizing a leap from works to products and then to commodities. In the process of converting teaching results, students can be instructed to post their design results, such as agricultural products with packaging design, short videos of rural characteristic products, and IP image design of rural brands, on platforms such as Jitterbug, Xiaohongshu, and Video No. to carry out planned test placement, collect real traffic data and user comments, analyze the dissemination effect, and then optimize the design and put it on the market. At the same time, we can also contact the school's innovation and entrepreneurship college and local industrial parks to collaborate and provide excellent, market-potential design solutions for intellectual property rights registration and sampling incubation, helping villagers connect with sales channels to realize the commercial value of outstanding agricultural products.

In addition, to truly achieve design assistance and empowerment, the design project team returned to the countryside to organize design skills workshops for villagers and rural entrepreneurs, including cell phone photography for packaging agricultural products, short video editing for agricultural products, and the production of promotional detail pages for agricultural products. To the greatest extent possible, the design can remain in the countryside, empowering local design talent.

## **3. Teaching and Evaluation Guarantee**

To ensure the effectiveness of the above pathway innovation reform, transforming the teaching team is essential. On the one hand, teachers are encouraged to lead students in conducting practical research in the countryside to accumulate firsthand cases and to create online resource platforms, including a digital resource library of vernacular teaching materials, a database of shared excellent rural design cases, a digital material library of vernacular culture, and a project library of rural design needs, to provide continuous nourishment for teaching. On the other hand, it is necessary to hire outstanding rural entrepreneurs, e-commerce operations experts, non-heritage curators, and digital technology engineers as industry mentors to form cross-border teaching teams. In the era of digital media, only by improving the teaching team can effective teachers be developed to ensure the success of teaching reform.

In addition, the evaluation system needs to be reconstructed to establish diverse, process-oriented, and effectiveness-oriented evaluation standards. Diversification of evaluation subjects means that the satisfaction of villagers or party A, teacher evaluation, and students' mutual evaluation are all regarded as evaluation subjects. The process-oriented evaluation standard focuses on managing the practice process and is included in the final grading system. The effectiveness-oriented evaluation standard means that the broadcast volume, conversion rate, the degree of program implementation, and the contribution of interdisciplinary collaboration in online communication data are included among the important scoring dimensions, to realize the effectiveness-oriented evaluation standard rather than the graphic effect. The enrichment of the evaluation system is also a powerful guarantee of the ultimate

effectiveness of the teaching reform in revitalizing rural visual communication design services in the digital media era.

#### 4. Conclusion

In the era of digital media, innovating teaching methods for visual communication design to serve rural revitalization represents a profound educational fusion of technical methods and vernacular perspectives. By treating digital technical media as new tools, fertile rural soil as a new classroom, and valuing co-creation as a new goal, visual communication design education is liberated from virtual subjects and rooted in the broadest practice place in the countryside. Through the implementation of a series of innovative methods, such as the field survey method empowered by digital tools, the workshop of digital rural project system, and the practice method of online and offline linkage, we can not only cultivate a new generation of designers with digital skills, humanistic warmth, systematic thinking and practical spirit, but also make visual communication design education a positive and sustainable force to activate the endogenous power of the countryside, to shape the beautiful image of the countryside, and to pass on the genes of the rural culture.

#### Acknowledge

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