

# “Changed and Unchanged” Thinking and Practice of Visual Communication Design Specialty Construction in Private Undergraduate Colleges under the Background of Artificial Intelligence

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**Abstract:** Private undergraduate colleges and universities are a relatively weak group, and their own resources are relatively scarce. At the same time, they are also facing the challenge of upgrading artificial intelligence in the new era. The article takes the upgrade and development of the visual communication design major of Shanghai Sanda University as an example, from the two levels of “Unchanged and changed”, explores a path for the survival of the design major of private undergraduate colleges under the background of the artificial intelligence era. And from the four aspects of professional positioning, comprehensive reform, teacher team construction and quality assurance system construction, a feasible plan for the upgrade and development of the visual communication design major of private undergraduate colleges is proposed.

## 1. Introduction

Since the Ministry of Education issued the “Double ten thousand plan” in April, 2019, colleges and universities have taken brand professional construction as the goal in different racetracks, emphasizing professional dislocation competition. Private undergraduate colleges and universities are a relatively weak group. On the basis of their relative lack of resources, they will also face the challenge of upgrading artificial intelligence in the new era.

Founded in 1992, Shanghai Sanda University is the first private undergraduate full-time university in Shanghai. Among them, visual communication design major is the second batch of characteristic disciplines at the university level. Like other majors in colleges and universities, it also faces the problem of professional upgrading and development under the background of artificial intelligence. Taking the visual communication design major of Shanghai Shanda University as an example, this paper explores a way to survive for the design major of private undergraduate colleges under the background of artificial intelligence era from two aspects of “unchanged and changed”. From the four aspects of professional orientation, comprehensive reform, teaching staff construction and quality assurance system construction, this paper puts forward the feasible scheme for the upgrading and development of visual communication design specialty in private undergraduate colleges. Figure 1 shows the framework diagram of visual communication design specialty construction based on solving two major problems.

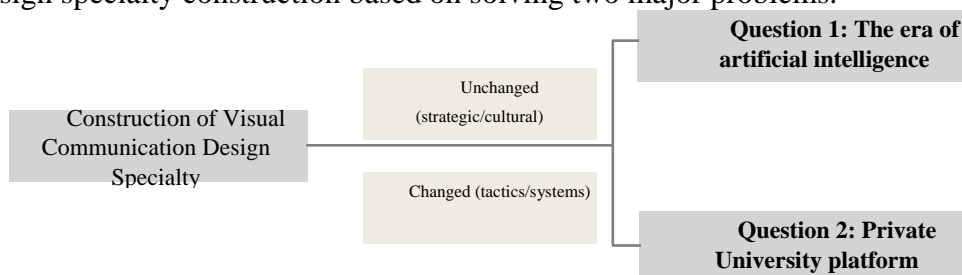


Fig.1 The Professional Construction Framework of Visual Communication Design Based on Solving Two Major Problems

## 2. What is “Unchanged” is Team Culture and Values

No matter how the technology changes rapidly, what remains unchanged is the human spirit and team culture. If you want to build a major well, you must first build a team and define the culture, mission, vision and values of this team from the beginning. This work is the basis of all specific work. Without a team with common values, it is difficult to carry out a viable professional construction work.

Private colleges and universities should pay more attention to shaping team culture and values because of their own congenital conditions. Only by grasping this point can there be hope for the professional construction of private undergraduate colleges.

In the construction of team culture, the first is the executive ability of professional leaders to lead by example; the second is the full support of the backbone members; the third is the value following of other members of the team.

Among them, the most difficult is how to formulate and implement the evaluation system of values. Under the premise of limited resources, professional leaders should stick to team culture, tolerate and unite all people, and keep moving forward in balance. This is difficult to do, but it must be done. If the values are not firm, it is difficult for private universities to establish core competitiveness and face the survival challenges in the new era.

The team culture, mission, values and vision of visual communication design major of Shanghai Sanda University are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Constant Connotation Of Team Culture Construction -- Shanghai Sanda University as an Example

Unchanged	Connotation
Culture	Love education, unite as one, forge ahead
Mission	Teaching and educating
Values	Take the student as the center
Vision	Within five years, we will create a brand major with distinctive characteristics and a design level in the forefront of Shanghai

On this basis, the visual communication design major has created a special teaching team. Usually, due to the consideration of human cost, the number of full-time teachers in private undergraduate colleges is relatively short. It is not only difficult to maintain the daily teaching operation only by the full-time teacher team, but also difficult to reach the high level of the industry, let alone adapt to the professional upgrading and transformation development in the era of artificial intelligence.

Facing this core problem, the solution is to establish a team of full-time and part-time teachers with complementary advantages, stability and high efficiency. The full-time teacher team is a core team that loves education, unites as one, and is pioneering and enterprising. Part-time teachers are a star team composed of several front-line designers who participate in the whole course, and the proportion of full-time and part-time teachers is about 1: This can ensure the high level of daily teaching quality and promote the rapid improvement of professional ability of full-time teachers.

Professional leaders should lead by example, and constantly emphasize that the team mission is “teaching and educating people”, the values are “student-centered”, and the vision is “to create a brand specialty with distinctive characteristics and the design level in the forefront of Shanghai within five years”. At the same time, we need to make clear that “value evaluation” is one of the important contents of year-end performance appraisal.

## 3. What “Changed” is Tactical Strategy

Faced with the impact of new technologies in the era of artificial intelligence and the relative shortage of resources in private undergraduate colleges. What we need to change is the tactical strategy of professional development, and we need to constantly improve the related system construction.

The specialty construction is generally guided by the demand and output, so as to clarify the specialty orientation, strengthen the specialty characteristics and advantages; deepen the comprehensive reform of the specialty from the perspective of talent training mode, curriculum system, practical teaching innovation, etc.; strengthen the construction of teaching staff from the construction of grass-roots teaching organization; form the closed-loop of specialty construction strategy from the improvement of professional teaching quality assurance system.

Each school has different subjective and objective conditions, and the specific strategies of specialty construction are also different. The visual communication design major of Shanghai Sanda University is based on its own conditions, and the professional construction ideas and feasible innovation strategies are as follows:

### 3.1 Relying on Geographical Advantages, Clear Professional Positioning

The school is located in Shanghai, so its professional services are for small and medium-sized enterprises in Shanghai and Yangtze River Delta region. The school trains applied professional design talents with international vision, Chinese traditional culture accomplishment and social responsibility, strong aesthetic ability, design expression ability, cross-border innovation ability, communication ability and project execution ability, and engaged in brand building and design, packaging design, advertising design, user interface design and data visualization design.

### 3.2 Deepen Comprehensive Professional Reform

(1) Construction of “123 + X” applied talents training mode of school enterprise and school local project cooperation

The visual communication design major trains applied professional design talents. School-enterprise and school-local cooperation is recognized as an effective training mode. However, in the teaching process, how to effectively integrate school-enterprise and school-local projects into professional courses is a major difficulty. School-enterprise and local project cooperation strategy is good, but the implementation effect is more important.

Private undergraduate colleges can give full play to the characteristics of autonomy and flexibility, and create their own characteristics of talent training mode. Based on practical experience, we have adopted the “123+X” model, which is a cooperation model in which projects are integrated into professional courses based on the project difficulty index, as shown in Fig 2.

The specific meaning of the “123+X” character is: “1” refers to items with less difficulty, “2” refers to items with medium difficulty, “3” refers to items with greater difficulty and longer period, and “X” refers to items that are not related to the course period. Supporting emergency projects.

The specific cooperation methods are as follows: integrating “level 1” projects into the practical teaching of basic courses for freshmen and sophomores, integrating “level 2” and “level 3” projects into the practical teaching of “brand system design” and “data visualization”, integrating “level X” projects into the project research institute composed of elite teachers and students, and educating people in collaboration with the project parties at different levels.

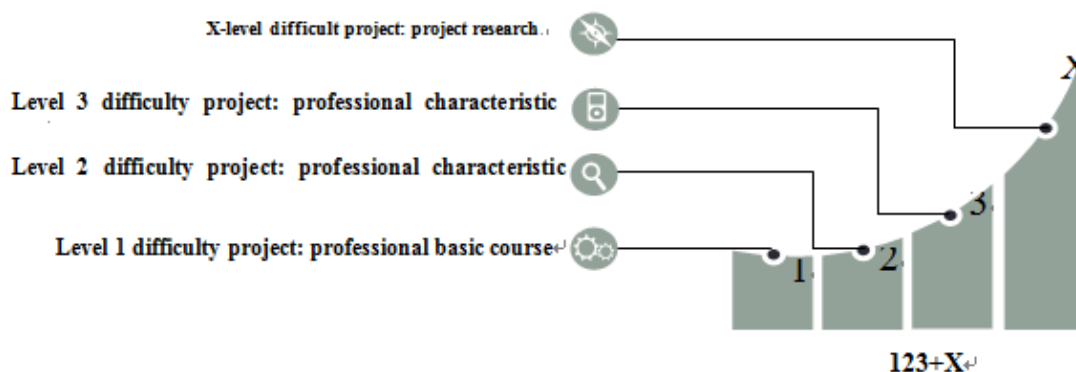


Fig.2 “123 + X” Applied Talents Training Mode of School Enterprise and School Local Project Cooperation

## (2) Reform of professional curriculum system

Facing the future, how to upgrade and transform the visual communication design major? How to embody professional value is the core issue of future survival. In the era of artificial intelligence, technological innovation is the driving force, data is the basic raw material for production, and application scenarios are the main battlefield. From the three aspects of technology, data and application scenarios, design majors are more integrated and innovative in data application and scene application with design thinking.

In the reform of professional curriculum system, we should rebuild the whole process of practical professional curriculum system based on ability, and highlight the educational reform idea of “cross-border cooperation and combination of arts and sciences”. At the same time, combined with the application value of visual communication design specialty, two major specialty characteristic course groups of “brand system design” and “data visualization” are condensed, and the creative programming content is added in the professional practice “comprehensive total data visualization”.

In terms of application scenarios, it is necessary to further strengthen the “user interface design-1 / 2” course group and promote the “1 + X” certificate certification cooperation with Tencent cloud computing company. The course content is in accordance with the assessment content of “interface design professional skill level certificate (Advanced)” issued by Tencent. The details are shown in Table 4.

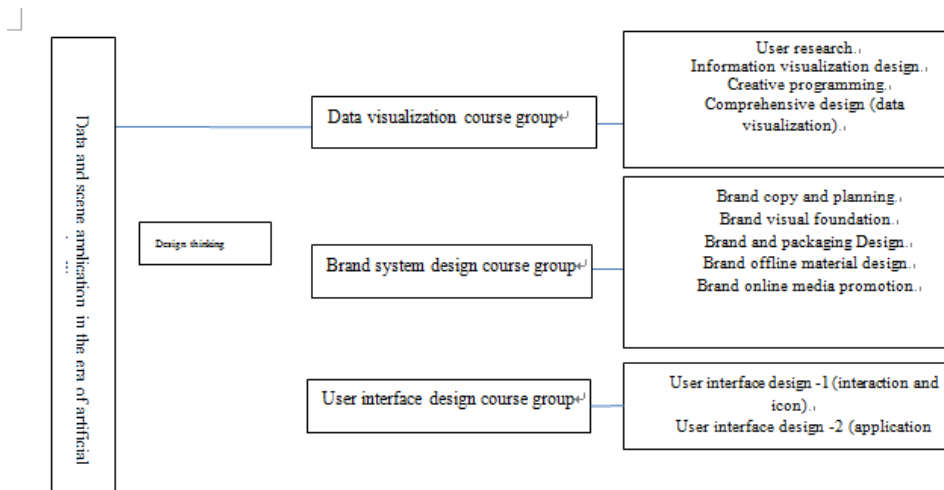


Table 4 Visual Communication Design Professional Curriculum System Framework under the Background of Artificial Intelligence

Professional curriculum practice teaching innovation under the theme of “integration of thought and education, emotionalization”

In the background of artificial intelligence, emotional theme design is particularly important. Emotional is the emotional part of artificial intelligence which can not replace human beings in an all-round way. Therefore, we should pay attention to the establishment of “emotional theme” in the course content. In addition, we also encounter the problem that “course ideological and political education” is implanted into professional courses. When two problems appear at the same time, “emotional design” and “curriculum ideological and political” collide with each other.

We constructed a practical teaching system of professional courses under the vision of “integration of thought and education and design empowerment”, that is, based on the project of “design empowerment society”, we established “seven emotional theme designs” of the curriculum practice system, which perfectly combined “emotional theme” with “curriculum ideological and political”. The details are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Practical Teaching Innovation of Professional Courses under “Integration of Thought and Education and Seven Emotional Themes”

No.	Emotional theme design	Design content	Professional courses
1	Main melody design category	1. Derivative design of the belt and road initiative construction 2. Comprehensive design for the 40th anniversary of reform and opening up 3. Red cultural design for the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China	integrated design Graduation design Photography and design, etc
2	Community service design	1. Guangfulin Cultural Site in Songjiang, Shanghai 2. Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall (symbol Shanghai Hudak theme visual symbol design) 3. The theme public service advertisement design of Ping 'an Campus in Caolu Town 4. LOGO design of Shanghai Education Resource Center	Work camp Workshop Integrated design Pingmian ad design Font and logo design Design and expression of visual symbols
3	Precision poverty alleviation design	1. Comprehensive design of the first batch of 46 precision poverty alleviation projects in Shanghai 2. Packaging design of Guizhou Juzhou Fengwu Liquor 3. Small wine packaging design for people in Xingyi County, Guizhou Province	Comprehensive design Packaging design-1 (structure and materials) packaging Design-2 (series and dynamics)
4	Social public welfare design	1. Special rectification of garbage classification in Shanghai 2. Shanghai University Student Micro Public Service Advertising Design Competition	User research and information design Pingmian ad design Digital media advertisement
5	Social focus on design	1. College students' innovation and entrepreneurship situation 2. Research on the contradiction of social doctor-patient relationship 3. Research on geomorphology and politics in the South China Sea	Graduation design Integrated design
6	Intangible cultural heritage design	1. The Chinese ancient books reengineering design project was carried out 2. Organization and cooperation of rare defense actions	Book system design Innovative design of folk art
7	Expo design	1. Atmosphere design of Shanghai Expo 2. Design of guide system for Chongming Flower Expo 3. Cultural and Creative Design of China Pavilion in World Expo Series	Brand image design Graduation design Integrated design

#### (4) Innovation of teaching process

① The online course is fully covered, and the graduation design is “flat-vertical-dynamic”;

All professional courses of this major adopt the teaching methods of small class, participation, discussion and project, involving all classes from freshman to senior. In the process of course practice teaching, whether online or offline, teachers are “one-to-one” counseling for students.

Under the background of the epidemic situation in 2020, the professional courses will achieve full coverage of online teaching, and the course management will be more data-based and information-based. In 2020, there will be a new development opportunity for the graduation design work of visual communication design major, and the graduation design achievements will go from flat to three-dimensional and dynamic, which will greatly shorten the time for the brand-new upgrade of “flat-vertical-dynamic” professional achievements, and meet the development needs of

the data era.

② Professional teachers, star designers and experimental technicians cooperate in the “three teachers” practical teaching;

Professional teachers, star designers and experimental technicians participate in professional course teaching and graduation design guidance, and “three teachers” cooperate to educate people. The teaching content keeps pace with the times, especially the team of nine star designers injected new industry information and new technology into the course during the collective lesson preparation and the whole teaching process, which made a qualitative leap in the design work level of students.

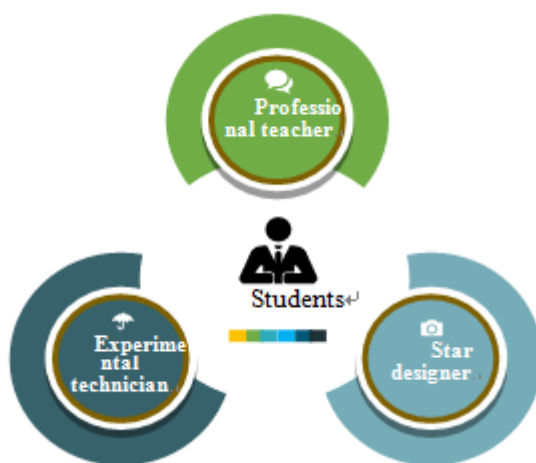


Table 6 “Three Teachers” Practice Teaching Structure

③ Expand and maintain the off-campus practice teaching base

In order to solve the problem of over-reliance on school-level training platform and limited training resources, we actively established production, education and research practice bases and entrepreneurial employment bases, and established nine effective practice teaching bases outside the school based on the strategy of “expanding one to maintain one”. It is not difficult to expand the practice teaching base outside the school. The key point is to do a good job in long-term maintenance and realize the sustainable win-win situation of cooperation.

④ Characteristic teaching with discipline competition and innovation and entrepreneurship activities as the starting point

Discipline competition is an important starting point to improve the professional level of this major, and choosing to participate in the design competition with high industry recognition is helpful to recognize your own design level. In China, student works are more suitable to participate in GDC Design Award, Platinum Creative Design Competition, Jin Daiqiang Design Award, etc. In the case of shortage of competition funds, you can also cooperate with enterprises to jointly participate in internationally renowned awards, such as the German Red Dot Award, the IF Design Award, and the Italian A’ Design Award.

At the same time, combined with professional courses, design competitions and school-enterprise and school-local cooperation projects, teachers actively encourage and guide students to apply for innovation and entrepreneurship projects at all levels. Students can stimulate their enthusiasm for innovation and entrepreneurship, explore the road of future development independently and feed back teaching by obtaining the national, Shanghai municipal and school level entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship projects.

(5) Carry out international exchanges and cooperation

How to reflect the international vision in the orientation of talent cultivation. The most effective way is to cultivate teachers' team's international vision. Through the “introduction+training” strategy, select key teachers to visit and exchange studies abroad, introduce foreign high-quality educational resources, promote joint training with foreign universities, and explore the way of mutual degree granting. In addition, international creative design workshops can be held regularly,

and exhibitions can be held in cooperation with internationally renowned universities to promote international cooperation and achieve teaching results.

At the same time, take the initiative to serve countries along the belt and road initiative, recruit international students, and designate special personnel training programs for international students.

### **3.3 Construction of Teaching Staff and Grass-Roots Teaching Organizations**

Starting from shaping the culture of teachers' team, we should introduce and train teachers from outside to strengthen the strength of teachers' team. Introduce high-level talents, support young teachers to apply for doctorates, and employ enterprise design directors and star designers as part-time teachers. Send teachers to work part-time or on-the-job in enterprises, learn about industrial enterprises, and participate in enterprise design and management. Establish and improve the teacher development mechanism, and encourage teachers to participate in professional academic conferences.

The most important thing is the daily grass-roots teaching organization activities, including:

(1) Monthly regular department teaching and research meeting. From the aspects of professional construction, curriculum, teaching reform, employment practice, satisfaction survey results analysis, etc., the regular meeting of professional teaching discussion will be held. Every semester, the teacher in charge of communication submits a meeting record book.

(2) Daily discussion of course group. Each professional core course is led by a senior teacher, and 2-3 professional teachers form a teaching team, which forms a team teaching mode that promotes each other from the aspects of lesson preparation content, teaching progress, teaching methods, teaching resources, and comments on finished works.

(3) Tutorial system is implemented in graduation design, and guidance to young teachers is strengthened. Tutorial system is adopted, and young teachers are given one-on-one guidance by old teachers with professional titles above the vice-high level and rich teaching experience.

### **3.4 Construction of Professional Teaching Quality Guarantee System**

(1) Normalized teaching quality supervision and evaluation system

According to the regulations of the school and college, the mid-term teaching inspection is carried out on time every semester, including spot checks on the implementation of teaching documents, lectures by supervisors at all levels, student symposiums, online evaluation of teachers and students.

According to the strong application-oriented characteristics of visual communication design specialty, the teaching management documents such as Professional Curriculum Syllabus, Professional Curriculum Practice Syllabus, Record Table of Peacetime Results, Final Evaluation and Grading Standard of Visual Communication Design Specialty are formulated to standardize the management methods of curriculum archives. The final design works must be engraved into the CD for archiving in the form of electronic version or drawings and photos.

The graduation thesis (design) management system of Shanghai Sanda University strictly controls the quality from all aspects, and makes the archives management of graduation design clearer and more complete.

(2) Unique professional quality evaluation system

In order to realize “professional data management”, the specialty of visual communication design has established a special evaluation system. From the aspects of “freshmen's admission satisfaction-four years' satisfaction with all professional courses-graduation design satisfaction-graduates' employment quality-employers' satisfaction with graduates”, the satisfaction survey and accurate data analysis system will be built in an all-round way. This system is very helpful to teaching. As shown in Figure 7.



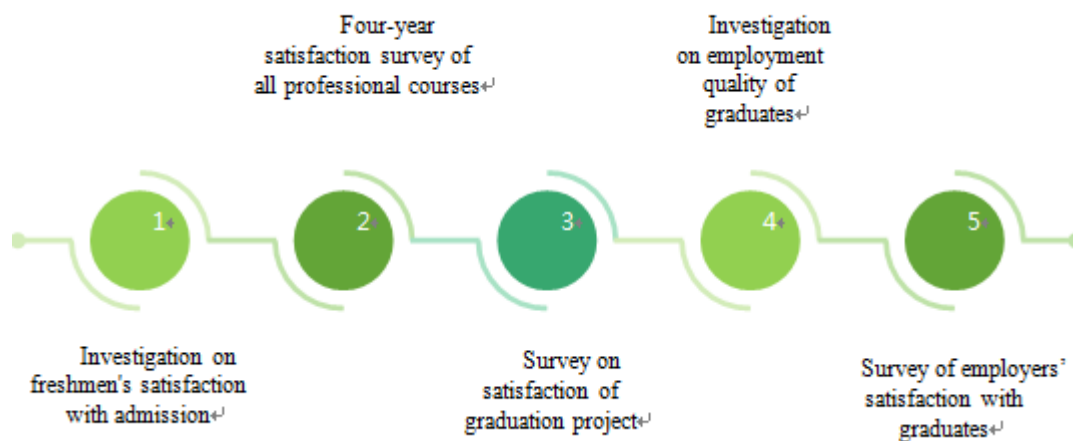


Fig.7 Five Satisfaction Surveys and Accurate Data Analysis Systems

#### 4. Upgrading in “Changed and Unchanged”

To sum up, “Unchanged” is team culture and values, and it is strategic thinking; “Changed” refers to the perfection of professional construction scheme and system, and is a tactical strategy. The author is in the front-line practice of professional construction, and deeply understands that only by finding the professional orientation, can we calmly face the challenges of the times with the idea of “Unchanged and changed”. The visual communication design major in private undergraduate colleges can also find a new way to upgrade, and the professional construction can be done brilliantly on the relatively weak platform. The author is looking forward to discussing the future-oriented development plan of visual communication design major with colleagues.

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