

**NAN YUE IMPRESSIONS · CRAFTSMANSHIP CULTIVATING TALENTS:  
PRACTICAL PATH OF FOSTERING MORALITY AND CULTIVATING PEOPLE  
DRIVEN BY SPECIAL ZONE SPIRIT AND PROJECT-BASED TEACHING METHOD  
IN HIGHER VOCATIONAL VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN MAJOR**

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**Abstract**

Addressing the practical problems in higher vocational art and design education such as "disconnection between skill training and value guidance" and "misalignment between curriculum practice and regional needs", this study takes the Guangdong Special Zone Spirit (openness and inclusiveness, innovation and breakthrough, pragmatism and progress) as the core guidance. Focusing on two major practical training scenarios of the Visual Communication Design major— the course "Book Binding and Layout Design" and "Graduation Design", it embeds three book binding practical training cases including Red and Green Intertwined · Nan Yue Impressions, Breaking Waves Forward · Special Zone Genes, Passing on the Torch · Foundation of Talent Cultivation, as well as graduation design cases such as Qi'ao Island Red Culture Creative Tourism Route, Maritime Silk Road, and intangible cultural heritage Sanzao Bamboo and Grass Weaving Craft. A four-dimensional talent cultivation model of "spirit decoding - case deconstruction - project practice - evaluation upgrading" is constructed. Adopting literature research method, action research method, case study method and questionnaire survey method, a one-year teaching practice was carried out with 68 students of the 2023 Visual Communication Design major from Zhuhai Art College as the research objectives. The results show that this model significantly improves students' professional competence, cultural identity and social responsibility: the excellent rate of book binding works reaches 83.8% (an increase of 28.3% compared with traditional teaching), the implementation rate of graduation design works is 41.2% (seven times that of the traditional teaching group), and the moral education indicators such as red culture cognition and ecological protection awareness are increased by an average of 38%. Through the practical implementation of specific training cases, this study provides a replicable and promotable talent cultivation paradigm for the in-depth integration of regional spiritual resources and higher vocational art and design courses.

**Keywords:** *Special Zone Spirit, Project-Based Learning, Moral Education, Vocational Education, Visual Communication Design*

# Introduction

## 1.1 Research Background

Policies such as the Guangdong Province Nan Yue Red and Green Path Development Plan (2024-2028) (Department of Education of Guangdong Province, 2024) and the Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area have clearly put forward the strategic requirements of "inheriting red genes, promoting the Special Zone Spirit, and promoting the coordinated development of culture and ecology", anchoring the development direction of "regional empowerment and moral education casting soul" for higher vocational art and design education. As a core course of the Visual Communication Design major, book binding and layout design is not only an important carrier of cultural communication, but also a key scenario for implementing the fundamental task of fostering morality and cultivating people. Currently, there are obvious shortcomings in higher vocational book binding and layout design teaching: first, most teaching cases are virtual propositions, lacking combination with regional development needs such as Nan Yue's red culture, ecological protection, and special zone reform; second, skill training focuses on layout arrangement and material technology, ignoring the excavation of spiritual connotations and value guidance; third, graduation design is disconnected from market demand and local cultural tourism development, making it difficult to achieve "applying what is learned". The spiritual core contained in the Guangdong Special Zone Spirit is highly consistent with the cultural connotations of training themes such as Red and Green Intertwined · Nan Yue Impressions, and the project-based teaching method provides a practical path for the implementation of these thematic cases. The integration of the three has become an effective starting point for solving teaching difficulties.

## 1.2 Research Significance

### 1.2.1 Theoretical Significance

It breaks through the traditional framework of "superficial implantation of ideological and political elements" and constructs a theoretical system of in-depth integration of "regional spirit - practical training cases - teaching methods - moral education goals". Taking specific practical training cases as the link, it enriches the application research of the Special Zone Spirit in higher vocational art and design courses and fills the gap in empirical research on the collaborative education of book binding and layout design, regional culture, and fostering morality and cultivating people.

### 1.2.2 Practical Significance

Through the practice of three binding practical training cases and graduation design cases, operable teaching plans and curriculum resources are formed to directly serve the curriculum reform of higher vocational book binding and layout design. It cultivates design talents with professional skills, cultural literacy and social responsibility, provides talent support for the construction of Nan Yue Red and Green Path and the development of local cultural tourism industry, and offers a practical reference of "case-driven + spirit integration" for fostering morality and cultivating people in similar colleges and universities across the country.

## Research Objectives

Focusing on the integrated practice of the Special Zone Spirit and project-based teaching method in higher vocational book binding and layout design courses and graduation design, this study sets the following specific objectives:

1. Analyze the internal connection between the Special Zone Spirit and the five practical training cases and clarify the transformation path of spiritual connotations in teaching.
2. Construct a four-dimensional teaching model of "spirit decoding - case deconstruction - project practice - evaluation upgrading" with practical training cases as the core and formulate implementation strategies for each link.
3. Verify the effectiveness of the teaching model through empirical research and evaluate the role of the five practical training cases in improving students' professional competence, cultural identity and social responsibility.
4. Summarize the successful experience and optimization suggestions of case teaching and form a replicable practical paradigm for fostering morality and cultivating people in higher vocational book binding and layout design courses (Guangdong People's Publishing House, 2024).

## Literature Review

Research on moral education and talent cultivation practices in higher vocational art and design education has formed key theoretical supports around four core dimensions: cultural integration, teaching methods, value guidance, and case design. Each theory focuses on the synergistic goal of skill development and value shaping, yet research gaps remain in aspects such as the in-depth integration of regional spirit with professional courses and the design of cases aligned with diverse needs. Below is a brief overview of the connotations and research status of these four core theories:

### 1. The Theory of Integrating Regional Culture with Art and Design Courses

The core of this theory lies in transforming regional cultural resources (e.g., historical heritage, intangible cultural heritage, ecological concepts) into teaching content and practical training cases for design courses, thereby realizing the synergy between cultural inheritance and skill development. Notably, Wang (2021) proposed that the integration of regional culture into book binding design should run through the entire process of "material extraction - form transformation - connotation expression." Complementarily, Guangdong Polytechnic of Science and Technology. (2025) verified the educational value of cultural cases through the "carbonization of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) elements" project. Despite these contributions, existing studies mostly focus on single cultural elements, lacking multi-dimensional integration frameworks such as "culture + ecology," and have not yet developed systematic plans aligned with regional development strategies.

### 2. The Theory of Synergy between Skill Training and Moral Education in Project-Based Teaching

Centered on real projects as instructional carriers, this theory achieves the unification of skill training and value shaping through the sequential process of "research - design - implementation -

reflection." Li (2022) empirically confirmed that this method effectively cultivates collaborative competence and professional ethics among higher vocational art and design students. From an international perspective, Wingler (2020) and Smith (2021) emphasized that project design should be social value-oriented to strengthen students' sense of service. However, existing research fails to establish an accurate connection between regional spirit and project-based teaching, with moral education objectives remaining overly vague and lacking refined paths tailored to specific professions.

### **3. The Value Guidance Theory of Integrating the Special Zone Spirit into Vocational Education**

This theory focuses on transforming the Special Zone Spirit—characterized by openness and inclusiveness, innovative breakthroughs, and pragmatism and progress—into value resources for vocational education, with the goal of shaping students' innovative awareness and pragmatic attitudes. Zhang (2023) noted that this spirit is highly consistent with the talent training objectives of vocational education and further explored macro-level integration paths. Nevertheless, most existing studies are confined to ideological and political courses, lacking empirical exploration in art and design majors. Additionally, the proposed integration strategies tend to be overly macro and not closely integrated with professional skills.

### **4. The Real-Case-Driven Design Education Theory**

The core tenet of this theory is to move beyond virtual propositions and design teaching cases oriented to industry demands and social problems, thereby enhancing students' adaptability to real-world contexts. Wingler (2020) emphasized that effective cases should embody "problem orientation + achievement transformation," while Jones (2022) argued that cases should integrate regional values. Smith (2021) further verified the effectiveness of this theory through a community book design project. However, foreign studies lack adaptation to China's regional spirit and development strategies, requiring localized adjustments to case logic. Moreover, no systematic plan has been formed to integrate this theory with graduation design requirements.

## **Research Methods**

This study adopts a mixed research method (integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches) rather than a single qualitative or quantitative research method.

### **1. Research Objects**

A total of 68 students from two classes of the 2023 Visual Communication Design major in Zhuhai Art College were selected as research objects. Class 1 (34 students) was the experimental group, adopting the integrated teaching model of "Special Zone Spirit + project-based teaching method + five practical training cases"; Class 2 (34 students) was the control group, adopting the traditional teaching model (focusing on theoretical teaching and general case practice). There were no significant differences in professional foundation and academic performance between the two groups of students (independent sample t-test,  $P > 0.05$ ), which were comparable.

## 2. Research Methods

### 2.1 Literature Research Method

Systematically sort out policy documents such as the Guangdong Province Nan Yue Red and Green Path Development Plan (2024-2028) (Department of Education of Guangdong Province, 2024), as well as relevant research literature on the Special Zone Spirit, project-based teaching method and book binding case teaching, to construct a theoretical framework.

### 2.2 Action Research Method

Carry out a one-year teaching practice in three stages: 1) Preparation stage (September-November 2023): Analyze the connection between the Special Zone Spirit and the five practical training cases and design an integrated teaching plan. 2) Implementation stage (December 2023-June 2024): Integrate the three-book binding practical training cases into curriculum teaching, implement the two graduation design cases, and dynamically adjust teaching strategies. 3) Summary stage (July-September 2024): Sort out the experience of case teaching and optimize the teaching model.

### 2.3 Case Study Method

In-depth analysis of the teaching implementation process of the five practical training cases, focusing on the integration strategy of the Special Zone Spirit in themes such as "innovation and breakthrough" in *Breaking Waves Forward · Special Zone Genes* and "symbiosis of ecology and history" in *Red and Green Intertwined · Nan Yue Impressions*.

### 2.4 Questionnaire Survey and Interview Method

Before and after the experiment, questionnaires were distributed to the two groups of students to investigate the changes in their professional competence, cultural identity (red culture, ecological culture) and social responsibility. In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 students, 6 professional teachers and 4 representatives of cooperative units (such as Zhuhai Culture, Radio, Television, Tourism and Sports Bureau, Jinwan Library) to collect feedback on case teaching.

### 2.5 Data Analysis Method

SPSS 26.0 software was used for statistical analysis of questionnaire data (descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test); content analysis method was used for quantitative and qualitative analysis of students' work and case reports.

## Research Results

### 1. Significant Improvement of Students' Comprehensive Quality

#### 1.1 Professional Competence

The excellent rates of the three book binding practical training case works in the experimental group were: 85.3% for *Red and Green Intertwined · Nan Yue Impressions*, 82.4% for *Breaking Waves Forward · Special Zone Genes*, and 82.4% for *Passing on the Torch · Foundation of Talent Cultivation*, with an average excellent rate of 83.8%, which was 28.3 percentage points higher than that of the control group (55.5%); the implementation rates of the two graduation design cases: 44.1% for *Qi'ao Island Red Culture*

Creative Tourism Route and 38.2% for Maritime Silk Road, with an average implementation rate of 41.2%, seven times that of the control group (5.9%).

### 1.2 Moral Education Indicators

Questionnaire results showed that the average score of the experimental group students' cognition of red culture was 86.7 points (an increase of 43% compared with before the experiment), the average score of ecological protection awareness was 84.5 points (an increase of 40%), and the average score of youth mission recognition was 87.2 points (an increase of 35%). All three indicators were significantly higher than those of the control group ( $P < 0.01$ ). In the interview, 88.2% of the students said that "through the case of Red and Green Intertwined · Nan Yue Impressions, they have deepened their understanding of Nan Yue's red culture and ecological protection".

### 1.3 Innovation and Practical Ability

94.1% of the students in the experimental group could independently integrate the Special Zone Spirit into case design. For example, Breaking Waves Forward · Special Zone Genes adopted the integrated design of "AI technology + retro layout" to reflect "innovation and breakthrough"; 85.3% of the students could select environmentally friendly materials and optimize process costs according to the case theme, and their pragmatic design ability was significantly improved, 38.2 percentage points higher than that of the control group (47.1%).

## 2. Improvement of the Case Teaching System

### 2.1 Curriculum Resource Achievements

Formed Book Design - Ideological and Political Project Cases, including supporting resources such as teaching syllabuses, assignment sheets, and evaluation standards for the five cases; built a "Nan Yue Culture Book Binding and Layout Design Material Library", covering more than 100 thematic materials such as red culture, ecological culture, and special zone reform, which has been promoted and applied in 3 similar colleges and universities.

### 2.2 Teaching Model Optimization

Summarized the key implementation points of the "four-dimensional teaching model": 1) Spirit decoding: decompose the Special Zone Spirit into specific requirements for case design (such as emphasizing "innovative expression" in Breaking Waves Forward · Special Zone Genes). 2) Case deconstruction: clarify the cultural core, design points and moral education goals of each case. 3) Project practice: adopt "school-enterprise dual tutors" for guidance to connect with real needs. 4) Evaluation upgrading: construct a four-dimensional evaluation system of "professional + moral education + industry + communication".

### 2.3 Achievements in Teachers' Team Construction

6 professional teachers have formed the teaching ability of "case teaching + moral education integration", among which 4 teachers have obtained "school-level ideological and political project approval"; the school-enterprise cooperative tutor team has expanded from 5 to 12 people, covering experts in cultural tourism, intangible cultural heritage, design enterprises and other fields.

## Conclusions

### 1. Research Findings

The five practical training cases are highly consistent with the Special Zone Spirit and the goal of fostering morality and cultivating people: Red and Green Intertwined · Nan Yue Impressions reflects "pragmatism and progress" (serving regional ecological and cultural construction), Breaking Waves Forward · Special Zone Genes highlights "innovation and breakthrough" (inheriting the spirit of reform), Passing on the Torch · Foundation of Talent Cultivation strengthens "youth mission", and the graduation design cases realize "talent cultivation driven by real needs". The constructed four-dimensional teaching model of "spirit decoding - case deconstruction - project practice - evaluation upgrading" effectively solves the problem of "disconnection between skills and moral education", and realizes the transformation of the Special Zone Spirit from "abstract concept" to "design practice" through specific cases. Empirical research shows that case teaching can significantly improve students' professional competence, cultural identity and social responsibility, especially in the inheritance of red culture and the cultivation of ecological protection awareness.

### 2. Innovations

Case system innovation: Construct a diversified thematic system of "three binding practical training cases + two graduation design cases", covering dimensions such as history and ecology, reform and innovation, youth and mission, and connecting with regional development needs. Integration path innovation: Decompose the Special Zone Spirit into specific design requirements for each case, forming a closed-loop integration path of "spirit - case - skill - moral education", avoiding the emptiness of spirit integration. Evaluation system innovation: According to the characteristics of different cases, optimize the weight of the four-dimensional evaluation system (such as increasing the weight of "ecological concept implementation" for ecological theme cases) to achieve precise evaluation.

### 3. Limitations and Prospects

This study has certain limitations: the case practice is concentrated in Guangdong, and the sample scope needs to be expanded to verify its universality; the digital design depth of some cases is insufficient. Future research can be carried out in the following aspects: 1) Expand case themes (such as "Digital Nan Yue" and "Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Coordinated Development") and integrate new technologies such as metaverse and AI design. 2) Deepen school-enterprise collaboration and co-build "case teaching practice bases"(Zhuhai Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television, Tourism and Sports, 2024). 3) Establish a long-term tracking mechanism for graduates to evaluate the long-term impact of case teaching on career development and further improve the teaching model.

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