

# Aesthetic Education Courses in Higher Vocational Colleges in China: A Case Study of Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University

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## Abstract

*This research aimed to (1) identify the aesthetic education courses status in Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University, (2) optimize the aesthetic education courses of Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University in terms of teaching mode, integration of production, education and evaluation methods. This study adopted quantitative method, and the research population was the 562 students in the School of Intelligent Manufacturing of Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University in Shanxi Province, China. The sample was composed of 230 students from Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University in Shanxi Province. The research tool was a questionnaire. The study used the software IBM SPSS 25.0 for data analysis through frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation.*

*The research results showed that (1) Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University offered a 2-credit aesthetic education course,*

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*but the setting and implementation of the course were not perfect: The current aesthetic education course having unclear goals, serious theoretical content tendencies, single implementation methods, and lacking course evaluation, (2) Based on the characteristics of higher vocational education and guided by the existing problems in aesthetic education courses, they should clarify the goals of higher vocational aesthetic education courses, optimize the content of higher vocational aesthetic education courses, and innovate the evaluation model of aesthetic education courses. Through the research and improvement of the aesthetic education courses of Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University, the high-quality and comprehensive vocational skills talents adapted to the on-going requirements could be cultivated.*

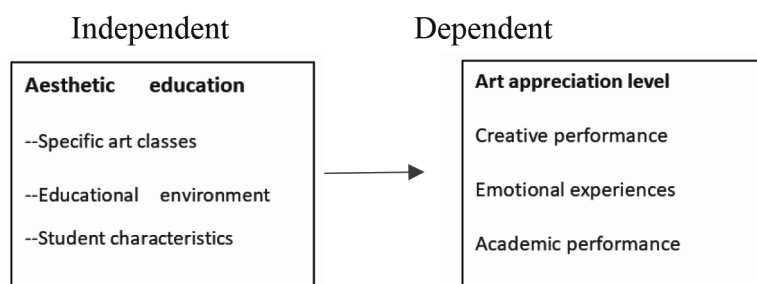
**Keywords:** Aesthetic Education, Higher Vocational Education, Aesthetic Consciousness

## 1. Introduction

(1) Expected situation: Enrich the curriculum format of aesthetic education courses, strengthen the aesthetic content of professional courses, practical courses, and club activities, cultivate the aesthetic quality of vocational students, and promote the comprehensive development of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor qualities. In the context of industry-education integration and school-enterprise cooperation, the integration of the process of aesthetic education and production, as well as diversified evaluation, should be achieved. (2) Real situation: Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University offers aesthetic education courses, but the school does not value aesthetic education. The course format is single, the content is lacking, and there is almost no student activity in aesthetic education. The traditional teaching model cannot achieve the concept of combining vocational education with production, and the traditional evaluation model with students as the main body. (3) Current problem: The form of aesthetic education courses is single, the content is lacking, and there are almost no student aesthetic education activities. The traditional teaching model has low student participation. The traditional evaluation method is student-centered. (4) problems that are studied: Through a questionnaire survey, it was found that there are problems with the aesthetic education courses at Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University. The optimization of the aesthetic education courses at Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University is based on teaching modes, integration of industry and education, and evaluation methods. (5) Rationale: Cai Yuanpei (1912) proposed the idea of promoting five types of education simultaneously when systematically writing “New Education Theory”. To implement this important requirement, it is necessary to vigorously strengthen the work of aesthetic education, and regard aesthetic education as the basic link to promote the high-quality development of school aesthetic education. Wang Yuming, Yang Fang, Wang Yan, and Sun Yuanyuan (2020) Optimization Policies for General Art Education Curriculum in Higher Vocational Education.

## 2. Literature Review

Exploring and constructing a new system for aesthetic education in higher education is an urgent and significant task for educational reform in higher education, with far-reaching implications. As an aesthetic constructing education, aesthetic education can utilize various forms of beauty to influence individuals' aesthetic perception, enhance their aesthetic abilities, and indirectly promote their overall development in morality, intelligence, sport, and labor, thereby forming a comprehensive and harmonious personality.



**Figure 1** Conceptual Frame work

Caiyuanpei (1912) when he wrote “New Education Theory” systematically and proposed the simultaneous development of five types of education.

Aesthetic education is not only aesthetic education, but also sentiment education and spiritual education, which plays an irreplaceable role in cultivating people through virtue. General Secretary Xi Jinping (2018) emphasized that it is necessary to comprehensively strengthen and improve school aesthetic education, insist on educating people with aesthetics and culture, and improve students' aesthetic and humanistic qualities. To implement this important requirement, we must make great efforts to improve the work of aesthetic education and make it a basic link to promote the high-quality development of aesthetic education in schools. Feng Jin (2018) argue that the subsidiary objective of art education in higher vocational education should be guided by the overall objectives of vocational education. Therefore, art education curriculum in higher vocational education must possess and strengthen the “practical” and “professional” attributes of vocational education.

Xu Ling and Zhang Hong fang (2019) propose the exploration of art education elements in teaching content. Every course in higher vocational education, beyond imparting knowledge and skills, contains varying degrees of artistic and aesthetic elements. Foundational and professional courses possess unique aesthetic qualities, and the hidden art education functions within these courses can effectively convey artistic elements to students, playing a certain role in art education.

### **3. Methodology**

This design can be divided into three steps. First, determine the variables and questionnaire. Next, perform data analysis. Then a pilot study was conducted, including Index of item Objective Congruence (IOC) testing, etc., after which a formal questionnaire was obtained and confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Finally, the results are discussed.

Before forming a formal questionnaire, this study invited three experts to conduct IOC testing. The average score of the expert consultation questionnaire is greater than 0.5. Therefore, the validity of the content of the measurement items can be guaranteed. Secondly, SPSS was used for analysis.

Population: The population under study includes junior students from the Faculty of Intelligence manufacturing in Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University, with the total number of 562.

Sample: The sample consisted of two hundred thirty (230) of students in Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University, Shanxi Province. The sample size is determined by the Krejcie and Morgan tables (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). And using simple random sampling.

The instrument of this research is the questionnaire about Aesthetic Education Courses in Vocational Colleges Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University, Shanxi Province. divided by 2 parts as follows:

Part1: About the general information of the respondents.

Part 2: The questionnaire to Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University Aesthetic Education Courses including all factors are as follows:1) Art appreciation ability.2) Creative performance.3) Emotional experiences.4) Academic performance.

#### 4. Results

This chapter entails the findings of the statistical data analysis, organized into different key sections. First are the results of the descriptive statistics of the respondents' demographic profiles.

**4.1 Phase 1** To identify the Aesthetic Education Courses status in Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University by questionnaire.

In this phase, the emphasis was on the first objective of the research (To identify the Aesthetic Education Courses ability in Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University by questionnaire.) By investigating the current situation of aesthetic education courses at Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University, 7 specific aspects are involved in three primary dimensions: aesthetic education course objectives, vocational aesthetic education course content, vocational aesthetic education course design, vocational aesthetic education course implementation, and vocational aesthetic education course evaluation:

**Table 1** Survey on the Current Situation of aesthetic Education Courses at Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University

First level dimension	Secondary dimension	Investigation content
Content of aesthetic education courses	Course format	Compulsory and Elective
	Course offerings	Credit
	Teaching Content	Appreciative and factual
Educational environment	Teaching approach	Classroom, extracurricular, and integrated theory and practice
	Teaching method	Teaching, demonstration, interaction, exploration
Course evaluation	Evaluation subject	Classmates, teachers, and enterprises
	Evaluation method	aesthetic, process, outcome

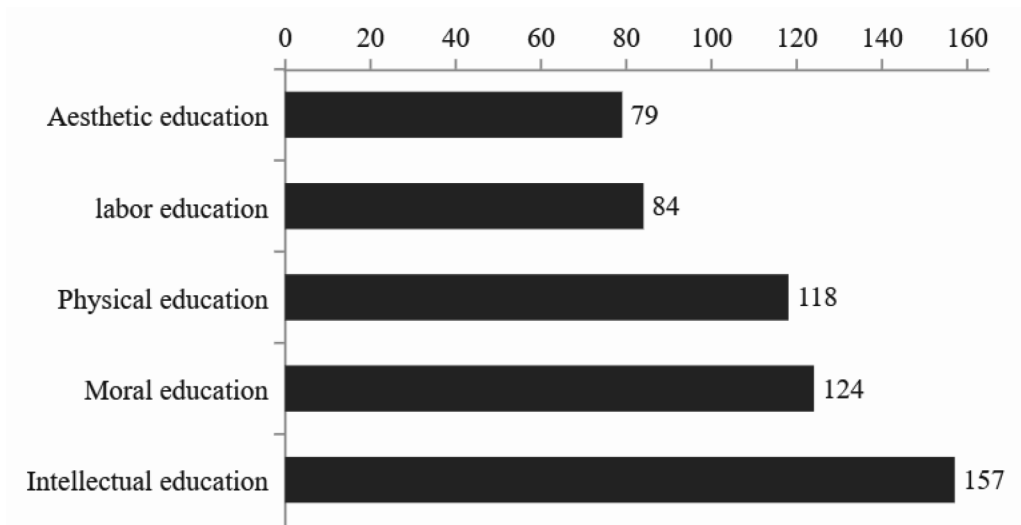
Create a questionnaire using the Question Star platform and conduct surveys through platforms such as WeChat and QQ. A total of 562 valid survey questionnaires were collected, with a validity rate of 100%. Among them, male students account for 39% and female students account for 61%. The data was obtained through questionnaire survey and processed and analyzed using statistical software (IBM SPSS 25.0). Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University offers aesthetic education courses, a total of 2 credits, which is a required course. It shows that Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University attaches great importance to it. The survey shows that there are significant differences in students' understanding of the connotation of aesthetic education.

**Table 2** Basic information of students

Gender	Male	343	39%
	Female	219	61%
Student source	Countryside	303	54%
	City	259	46%
There are aesthetic education classes		562	100%
2 credits		562	100%

As a subsystem of the education system, aesthetic education complements moral education, intellectual education, physical education, and labor education, and plays a crucial role in cultivating well-rounded individuals. However, influenced by traditional educational concepts, education in China has encountered problems such as intellectual bias and aesthetic suppression, which seriously hinder the sound development of students' visual thinking and lead to a lack of perceptual, emotional, imaginative, and creative abilities.

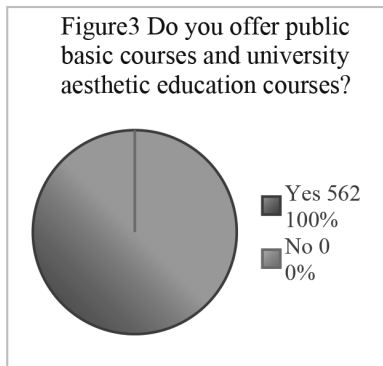
Aesthetic education is in a marginalized position. Due to the weak awareness of aesthetic education among students, intellectual education ranks first at 28%, moral education at 22%, second only to intellectual education. Physical education at 21% ranks third, labor education at 15% ranks fourth, and aesthetic education at 14% ranks last.



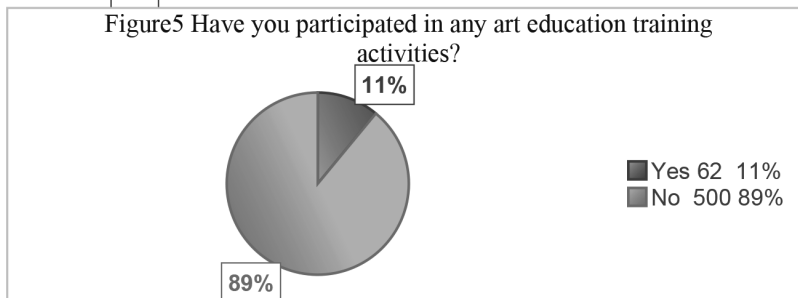
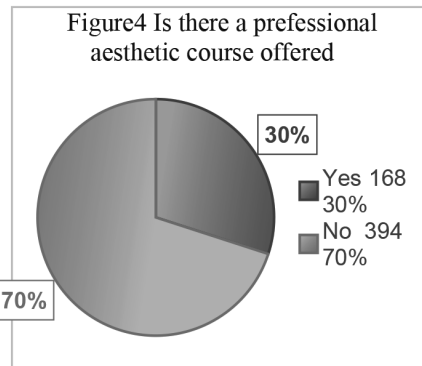
**Figure 2** The status of morality, intelligence, sport, aesthetics, and labor in education

There are various forms of beauty, and aesthetic education courses are not limited to the expression of aesthetic courses. In addition to the aesthetic education courses stipulated by educational policies, the curriculum system of Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University also includes other types of courses that contain rich elements of aesthetic education, such as public basic courses (ideological and political education, college psychology, etc.), aesthetic courses (aesthetic principles, life aesthetics, etc.) Professional aesthetic courses (literary appreciation, film and television appreciation, etc.), and practical training courses in aesthetic education (tea aesthetic, ink painting, etc.).

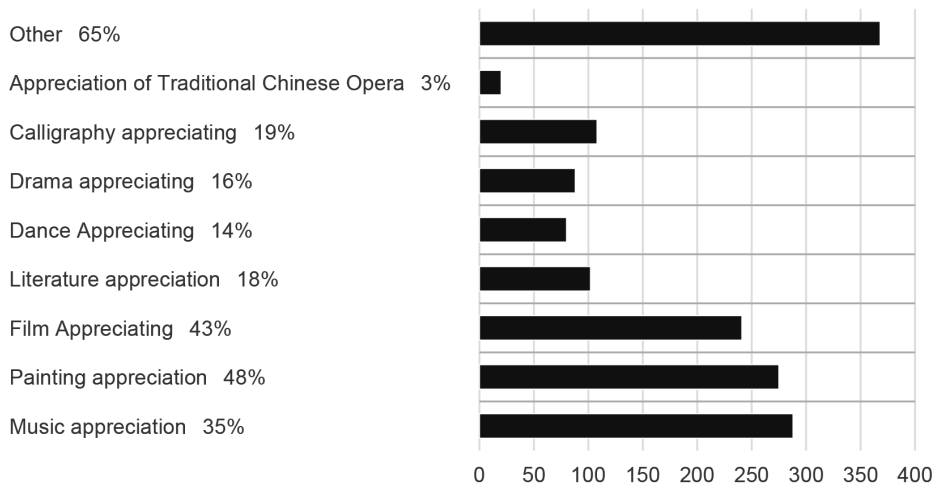




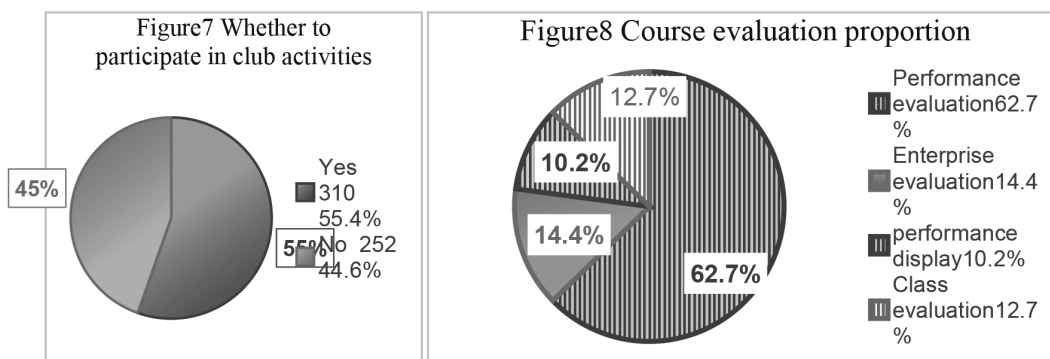
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It can be seen that Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University has a relative lack of professional aesthetic courses and practical activities related to aesthetic education. Public aesthetic elective courses are a concentrated expression of aesthetic education. Establishing public aesthetic courses is the main means for Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University to carry out aesthetic education.



It can be seen that music appreciation, aesthetic appreciation, and film and television appreciation courses are more popular among vocational college students, followed by calligraphy and literature appreciation. Dance appreciation and drama appreciation require a certain level of basic knowledge, and the interest of opera appreciation students is relatively low.



Club activities are an important carrier of aesthetic education in universities. With the expansion and extension of classroom teaching, the aesthetic education functions possessed by club activities make up for the lack of quality education and broaden the avenues for aesthetic education. 44.6% of students did not in any form of club activities, and their enthusiasm for in clubs was not high. Among the students in club activities, there are more choices for aesthetic, dance, and choir clubs, while there are fewer choices for calligraphy, literature, and psychology clubs. The distribution of students in each club is uneven, and the development is uneven.

4.2 Phase 2 To optimize the aesthetic Education Courses of Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University in terms of teaching mode, integration of production and education, and evaluation methods.

Optimize from the perspective of teaching objectives.

Vocational aesthetic education aims to adapt to the requirements of the times for cultivating high-quality vocational skills talents, is employment-oriented, purposeful and planned. Through various forms of beauty, we cultivate the aesthetic

quality of vocational students and promote the comprehensive development of their moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labor qualities. The goals of vocational aesthetic education courses can be divided into three levels: “humanistic literacy”. “, “professional quality” and “skill quality” are the basic goals.

Integrate production and education for optimization.

Aesthetic education emphasizes knowledge transmission over ability cultivation, and the theoretical and practical teaching content is detached from the requirements of enterprises. The traditional teaching model of “teaching first” is still continuing, and the practical teaching process generally cannot be carried out according to the norms and professional standards of enterprises. In the context of promoting the integration of industry and education, as well as school enterprise cooperation, the process of aesthetic education teaching is integrated with the production process.

Optimization of evaluation mode.

Evaluation subject: In order to build a multi-faceted evaluation mechanism integrating students, teachers and society, so that the teaching of aesthetic education courses can be comprehensively evaluated, higher vocational aesthetic education courses should take the following measures: introduce diversified evaluation subjects for evaluation, such as students’ mutual evaluation, industry enterprises and so on. Student evaluation can better reflect the learning effect and feelings. Students in the whole learning process and deepen their understanding of each other. Therefore, self-evaluation and mutual evaluation are more authentic and objective, and can be used as feedback to provide basis for curriculum improvement. Enterprise personnel are familiar with job production, management and skill requirements, and understand the employment needs of the unit. The evaluation of enterprise personnel can better reflect whether the course is targeted and practical, whether the training of talents is effective, and can give opinions from the aspects of feasibility, rationality and enterprise demand. Therefore, it is more scientific to add enterprise staff as the evaluation subject in the course evaluation.

Evaluation method: The evaluation method is a necessary means and an important tool for the further implementation of the evaluation method. At present, the traditional evaluation tools such as classroom report, practice and operation are mainly used in the aesthetic education course, which can not be consistent with the subject characteristics of aesthetic and comprehensive quality training of the aesthetic education course. Therefore, the evaluation of aesthetic education curriculum should be aesthetic from the perspective of students, comprehensively use various evaluation methods, let students become the subject of aesthetic education curriculum evaluation, experience the aesthetic education of everything, and promote the natural integration of students' mind and beauty.

## **5. Discussions**

The current aesthetic education courses have a single content, and the aesthetic education elements in the course content are not sufficiently penetrated. The content of aesthetic education courses focuses on artistic beauty, and lacks knowledge of social beauty, literary beauty, and scientific and technological beauty. The lack of aesthetic education knowledge leads to students' weak theoretical knowledge of aesthetics and their inability to effectively guide the practice of beauty. Aesthetic education is not practical enough. Aesthetic activities for students are simple and accessible. Mainly appreciation and participation. They are not too keen on creating and making beautiful products or handicrafts. Students cannot fully combine factual knowledge with aesthetic practice.

Aesthetic education knowledge is the core of aesthetic education curriculum content. According to the knowledge structure theory of American psychologist Bruner (1960), the knowledge contained in aesthetic education courses is divided into factual knowledge, value knowledge and procedural knowledge. The factual knowledge of aesthetic education is composed of the things that beauty is attached to, including the beauty of life, art, nature, humanities, society, literature, science and technology, etc. Aesthetic education value knowledge includes: concepts, principles, and theories of beauty, specifically including the connotation, essence,

category, form, characteristics, essence, etc. of beauty. The procedural knowledge of aesthetic education consists of aesthetic methods and steps, including appreciating beauty, creating beauty, etc. It can be seen from the survey results that factual knowledge in higher vocational aesthetic education courses is unevenly distributed. The content of aesthetic education courses focuses on artistic beauty, and lacks knowledge of social beauty, literary beauty, and scientific and technological beauty. The lack of value knowledge leads to students' weak theoretical knowledge of aesthetics and their inability to provide effective guidance for aesthetic practice. Insufficient practical ability of procedural knowledge. Students' aesthetic activities are simple and easy, focusing on appreciation and participation. They are less motivated to create, develop and produce beautiful products or handicrafts. Students are unable to combine factual knowledge with aesthetic education. Fully integrated with practice. This finding seems to support the view proposed by Xu Ling and Zhang Hong fang (2019) of exploring art education elements in teaching content. Each course in higher vocational education, in addition to imparting knowledge and skills, also contains varying degrees of artistic and aesthetic elements. Basic courses and professional courses have unique aesthetic qualities. The hidden art education functions in these courses can effectively convey artistic elements to students and play a certain role in art education.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendation**

From the preliminary investigation of aesthetic education courses for teachers and students in higher vocational colleges, it can be seen that Yuncheng Vocational and Technical University has opened aesthetic education courses and set credit hours, but students do not understand the connotation of aesthetic education. This is the current situation of students' aesthetic literacy. As a subsystem of the education system, aesthetic education complements moral education, intellectual education, physical education, and labor education, and plays a decisive role in cultivating people's all-round development. This finding appears to support the views expressed by Caiyuanpei (1912).

The courses offered by higher vocational colleges have strong professional characteristics, and the course content is always tilted towards vocational quality education and vocational skills education. The emphasis on professional skills will inevitably squeeze the space for quality education, including aesthetic education. The marginalized status of aesthetic education stems from students' weak awareness of aesthetic education. At present, the penetration rate of aesthetic education in the courses of higher vocational colleges is not optimistic. Students' aesthetic quality plays a decisive role in craft creation and career. Aesthetic education is not limited to art courses. The curriculum system of higher vocational colleges should be oriented towards students' employment development, with professional standard work requirements as the main curriculum standards. Fully explore the aesthetic education elements in various courses in higher vocational colleges and integrate aesthetic education into the course content. This finding seems to support the view of integrated aesthetic education proposed by Feng Jin (2018).

Combining empirical research results and curriculum theory, based on the characteristics of higher vocational education, and guided by existing problems in aesthetic education courses, we clarify the goals of higher vocational aesthetic education courses, optimize the content of higher vocational aesthetic education courses, and innovate the evaluation model of aesthetic education courses.

It is necessary to closely integrate the content of higher vocational aesthetic education courses with vocational qualification standards, be consistent with the attributes of competency-based vocational education, and connect with the integration of industry, academia and research, and school-enterprise cooperation. Ensure the integration of aesthetic education with on-the-job training and practice, and cultivate students' comprehensive professional abilities in a targeted manner through the integration of operational training, products and services. Extracurricular activities are an important carrier of aesthetic education courses. Enrich club activities or training to deepen the intuitive feeling, understanding and appreciation of rich culture. Increase public welfare service-oriented club activities and social practice activities to enable students to understand the truth, goodness and beauty of human nature

and cultivate a sense of social responsibility. Increase entertainment and competition activities to influence and infect students' perception of beauty through eclectic forms. Encourage students to try hands-on production, learn to appreciate beauty, reflect on beauty, create beauty and enjoy beauty in practical activities. In order to build a multi-faceted evaluation mechanism integrating students, teachers and society, the aesthetic education course can be comprehensively evaluated. Scientifically assign the weights of different subjects in the evaluation of aesthetic education courses.

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