

Instructional Management and Teacher Innovativeness in Arts and Design Higher Education: An Educational Management Review with Implications for Private Universities in Fujian, China

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Abstract

Arts and design teachers work where studio practice, curriculum, technology, assessment, and institutional resources intersect. This narrative review synthesizes literature underpinning a doctoral study of instructional management and teacher innovativeness in private higher education. It examines four instructional management dimensions and four innovativeness dimensions. Across the literature, effective practice is associated with curriculum alignment, professional judgment, resources, autonomy, collaboration, self-efficacy, leadership support, and sustained professional learning. Systems Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, and Diffusion of Innovations Theory help explain these interactions. Evidence remains limited for arts and design teachers in private universities in Fujian Province, China. The review supports a context-sensitive instructional management program combining faculty development with policy, resource, and implementation support.

Keywords

Instructional management; Teacher innovativeness; Arts and design education; Educational management; Teacher professional development

1. Introduction

Arts and design education is changing as digital technologies, artificial intelligence, and creative industries reshape professional practice. The effects are visible in daily teaching. Students learn through studio projects, demonstrations, critique, material experimentation, collaborative production, exhibitions, and industry-oriented work, not through lectures alone. Teachers must turn curriculum outcomes into workable

briefs, organize time and resources, supervise project development, manage safety and access, assess creative work, and revise instruction when technologies or professional expectations change (McLain, 2022; Van Gamera et al., 2025). These are teaching decisions, but they also involve planning, coordination, monitoring, and evaluation.

Instructional management is often discussed at the level of school leaders or administrators. A teacher-level view is also needed. In a studio or workshop, teachers plan and sequence learning, organize participation, allocate limited resources, monitor progress, and use assessment evidence to adjust what happens next. Stronge (2018) places planning, organization, instruction, and assessment among the central practices of effective teaching. McMillan (2024) similarly treats assessment evidence as part of improving instruction. In arts and design courses, these functions are difficult to separate because open-ended work still depends on clear outcomes, fair access, understandable criteria, and responsible use of facilities and technology.

The same teachers are also expected to work with continuing change. Curriculum reform, digital platforms, artificial intelligence, industry expectations, and new assessment practices all create situations in which established routines may need revision. Teacher innovativeness is relevant here, but it should not be confused with artistic originality or novelty seeking. Liu et al. (2024) describe teacher innovation as a multidimensional construct involving the recognition, adoption, testing, implementation, and evaluation of useful change. Studies also associate innovative practice with autonomy, collaboration, self-efficacy, leadership, professional learning, and organizational climate (Lin, 2022; Liu et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2021). This narrative review uses the literature assembled for a doctoral study of instructional management practices and innovativeness among arts and design teachers in select private universities in Fujian Province, China. The review keeps the study's approved constructs and examines them through an educational management lens. It first considers teacher characteristics and the changing context of arts and design work, then reviews four instructional management dimensions and four innovativeness dimensions. The final sections connect these strands with the study's theoretical framework, professional development, institutional conditions, and the research gap. The aim is to clarify what the existing evidence supports before an instructional management program is proposed from the empirical study.

2. Arts and Design Teaching as an Educational Management Context

2.1. Professional Characteristics, Identity, and Career Context

Arts and design teachers do not form a uniform professional group. Visual communication, fashion and apparel design, environmental design, product design,

digital media art, animation, fine arts, and arts and crafts rely on different materials, software, production processes, safety requirements, and assessment traditions. These differences affect what teachers have to plan, supervise, and evaluate. Treating all arts and design faculty as if their instructional conditions were the same can hide needs that are specific to a discipline or studio environment.

Research on teacher identity helps explain this variation. Rushton et al. (2023) describe professional identity as something reconstructed through personal history, subject communities, relationships, policy, and changing work settings. Suarez and McGrath (2022) connect professional identity with agency and responsiveness during educational change. University teachers may move among roles as disciplinary specialists, practitioners, researchers, educators, critics, and collaborators. Halal Orfali et al. (2024) likewise show that higher education teachers negotiate these roles over time. Job title or academic rank therefore gives only a partial picture of professional-development needs.

Age, sex, highest educational attainment, teaching experience, and recent training are useful profile variables, but none of them is a direct measure of teaching quality. Experience can sharpen judgment and help teachers anticipate difficulties. It can also coexist with technical knowledge that needs updating. Graduate study may strengthen research literacy or disciplinary expertise, although different degrees develop different capabilities. Van Gameraen et al. (2025) show how experienced art and design teachers use practical rules of thumb when balancing structure and freedom in studio teaching. Such knowledge is valuable, but its usefulness depends on the setting, the specialization, and current teaching demands.

2.2. Digital Transformation and Changing Professional Expectations

Digital competence now enters most arts and design specializations. Basilotta-Gómez-Pablos et al. (2022) identified teaching, communication, assessment, content creation, professional engagement, and ethical use as recurring areas in higher education teachers' digital competence. Peters et al. (2022) reached a similar conclusion across systematic reviews: development works best when it is sustained, contextualized, and supported by the institution. These findings place less emphasis on operating software and more on deciding when and how technology fits the subject, the learning task, and the assessment.

China's Teacher Digital Literacy standard formalizes part of this expectation through digital awareness, knowledge and skills, application, social responsibility, and professional development (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022). Arts and design courses add questions about authorship, intellectual property, data protection, access, AI-generated content, and the authenticity of student work. Mishra's (2019) contextualized TPACK model is useful because it places technology use inside institutional and cultural conditions. Schmid et al. (2020) also found that technological, pedagogical, and content-related knowledge

are interdependent. The evidence does not support treating technology as an isolated faculty skill.

Institutional coordination follows from that point. Teachers need workable policies for technology use, access to appropriate software and equipment, time to learn new systems, and assessment rules that fit new forms of production. A teacher may be willing and capable but still unable to implement a change when infrastructure, policy, or workload works against it. Educational management therefore has to consider both faculty capability and the conditions under which that capability can be used.

3. Instructional Management Practices in Arts and Design Education

In this review, instructional management refers to the teacher-level work used to plan, organize, implement, monitor, and evaluate instruction. The study examines four dimensions: lesson planning and preparation, instructional delivery, classroom management and organization, and assessment and evaluation of student learning. They can be measured separately, but in practice a change in one area often affects the others.

3.1. Lesson Planning and Preparation

Lesson planning starts with alignment among outcomes, content, activities, resources, and assessment. Creative tasks complicate that work because students may arrive at very different responses to the same brief. Criteria still have to show what matters in the process, concept, technical execution, reflection, and communication without prescribing a single creative solution. McLain (2022) treats iterative design, material engagement, and critique as part of disciplinary learning. Project briefs, milestones, critique arrangements, and assessment criteria therefore need to work together rather than being added independently.

Online and blended teaching made the same issue visible in another form. Rapanta et al. (2020) emphasized purposeful design, teacher presence, student activity, and assessment in university online teaching. Bond et al. (2021) documented wide variation in technologies and institutional responses during emergency remote teaching. Access to a platform was not equivalent to good teaching. For arts and design programs, digital tools have to preserve the interaction, iteration, demonstration, and critique required by the task. Technology adoption is consequently a curriculum decision as much as a purchasing decision.

3.2. Instructional Delivery and Supervision

Instructional delivery in arts and design can involve explanation, demonstration, modeling, guided practice, questioning, critique, collaboration, feedback, independent work, and presentation. Different tasks call for different combinations.

A technical procedure may need a clear demonstration; conceptual development may benefit more from questions, comparison, and critique. What matters is how the teacher organizes opportunities for students to see, try, discuss, revise, and justify their work.

Supervision refers here to guidance of student learning and project development. It does not mean administrative inspection of faculty. Teachers decide when to intervene, when to demonstrate, when to question, and when to allow a student to continue working independently. Van Gameren et al. (2025) found that experienced art and design teachers make these decisions contextually rather than by following one fixed style. Milestones, peer-response routines, feedback records, and explicit criteria can make that guidance more transparent without turning studio work into continuous teacher control.

3.3. Classroom Management and Organization

Classroom management in arts and design includes more than behavior management. Teachers organize time, workflow, groups, participation, safety, equipment use, and access to specialized spaces. Sabornie and Espelage (2023) describe contemporary classroom management as closely connected with learning environments, engagement, and instructional organization. Studio and workshop courses add practical constraints because tools, materials, fabrication facilities, computers, cameras, printers, and exhibition spaces may be limited or may require safety procedures.

Resource management sits inside this instructional work. A strong project design can still produce unequal opportunities when software, materials, workshop time, or technical support are scarce. The reverse is also true: expensive equipment does not improve learning unless teachers can connect it with course outcomes. Scheduling, maintenance, licensing, technician support, and external partnerships shape what can actually be taught. Low performance in a resource-related area should therefore not be read automatically as a lack of teacher effort; some problems require budgeting, staffing, policy, or coordination beyond the individual classroom.

3.4. Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning

Open-ended creative work makes assessment difficult because there is rarely one correct product. McMillan (2024) defines classroom assessment around the collection and interpretation of evidence about learning. In arts and design, that evidence may include concept development, process, experimentation, technical execution, communication, and reflection. Rubrics, formative critique, staged submissions, peer review, reflective explanations, and revision can make judgments more transparent. They do not remove professional judgment, but they make its basis easier for students to understand.

Critique also functions as both instruction and assessment. Well-structured critique can help students explain intention, compare alternatives, and use disciplinary language. Poorly structured sessions can privilege confident speakers or allow personal taste to replace stated criteria. Teachers therefore need routines for participation, feedback, documentation, and revision. Generative AI introduces another layer because assessors may need evidence of process, disclosure, authorship, and the extent of AI assistance. These questions require explicit assessment rules rather than case-by-case responses after problems occur.

4. Teacher Innovativeness as an Educational Management Concern

Teacher innovativeness is treated here as professional practice, not as a personality label. Liu et al. (2024) found substantial variation in how teacher innovation is conceptualized and measured and cautioned against using creativity, openness, experimentation, innovative behavior, and instructional change as if they were the same construct. The present study therefore works with four specified dimensions: openness to change, integration of innovation adoption, responsible risk taking, and continuous learning.

4.1. Openness to Change

Openness to change concerns whether teachers are willing to consider new approaches, respond to changing learner or curriculum needs, and revise routines when available evidence supports a change. Openness does not imply accepting every new tool or policy. Özdemir et al. (2024) relate an open innovation mindset to organizational knowledge exploration and exploitation. Nguyen et al. (2021) found that autonomy and collaborative culture were associated with collective teacher innovativeness across countries. These studies suggest that willingness to change is partly shaped by whether teachers have room to discuss alternatives and judge their fit before adoption.

4.2. Integration of Innovation Adoption

Innovation adoption continues after initial acceptance. Dearing and Cox (2018) identify relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, observability, communication channels, and the surrounding social system as factors in diffusion. In arts and design teaching, a method may look promising but still fail to become routine if it conflicts with learning outcomes, available resources, assessment rules, or local practice. Teachers need opportunities to test an innovation, adapt it, and examine what happens before deciding whether it should be retained.

Tang et al. (2022) provide a field-specific example in which artificial intelligence and an online animation studio were incorporated into design teaching. The useful point is not the novelty of the technology itself. Adoption becomes more credible when it

is tied to an instructional purpose and can be adjusted in use. Pilot work, peer observation, resource sharing, and records of what was kept, revised, or discontinued can help institutions learn from implementation rather than treating adoption as a one-time decision.

4.3. Responsible Risk Taking

Risk taking refers to responsible experimentation under uncertainty. Teachers who try a new project format, critique routine, or digital tool cannot know every result in advance. Social Cognitive Theory helps explain differences in willingness to begin and persist with such work because self-efficacy affects effort and persistence (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Zainal and Mohd Matore (2021) also report associations among teacher self-efficacy, transformational leadership, and innovative behavior. The evidence suggests that experimentation is easier to sustain when teachers have support and workable resources and do not expect every unsuccessful attempt to be treated as failure.

Revision and discontinuation are part of that process. A pilot that does not work as expected may still be informative if the teacher can identify the problem addressed, what was tried, what evidence was observed, and why the approach was changed or stopped. This distinction matters in arts and design courses, where projects may run for several weeks and the consequences of an instructional change can appear gradually. An innovation culture should therefore make room for documented adjustment, not only visible success.

4.4. Continuous Learning

Continuous learning gives innovativeness a professional base. OECD (2019) treats teachers and school leaders as lifelong learners. Nguyen et al. (2021) found an association between integrated professional learning and collective innovativeness, while Liu et al. (2022) linked professional learning communities with teacher innovation through creative self-efficacy and an innovative climate. For arts and design teachers, continuous learning may involve formal training, independent study, feedback, reflection, collaboration, industry engagement, and attention to policy or disciplinary change. The relevant form will vary with specialization and career stage.

Online and blended communities can support this learning when the design gives teachers something useful to do with colleagues. Dille and Røkenes (2021) describe professional development in formal online communities, while Bragg et al. (2021) identify interaction, facilitation, relevance, reflection, collaboration, and application as recurring features of successful online professional development. Digital delivery can widen access. It does not remove the need for good facilitation, relevant tasks, and follow-up in practice.

5. Connecting Instructional Management and Innovativeness: Three Theoretical Lenses

5.1. Systems Theory

Systems Theory is useful because the instructional dimensions do not operate independently. Arnold and Wade (2015) describe systems thinking in terms of elements, interconnections, and purpose. A revised project brief may change assessment, supervision, timing, equipment use, and student access. A new technology may require staff learning, revised rules, licenses, and additional support. Looking at one low-scoring item in isolation could therefore miss the condition that produced it. The proposed instructional management program is better interpreted through the combined pattern of needs and constraints.

5.2. Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory focuses attention on the interaction among personal factors, behavior, and environment. Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020) describe self-efficacy as important to whether people begin, persist in, and refine difficult behavior. Teachers with similar qualifications may respond differently to the same opportunity because they differ in confidence, experience, perceived support, or expected consequences. Peer modeling, guided trials, feedback, and organizational encouragement are relevant because they change both the learning environment and the teacher's experience of the task.

5.3. Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Diffusion of Innovations Theory helps explain why useful practices spread unevenly. Dearing and Cox (2018) emphasize compatibility, trialability, observability, communication, and social systems. In arts departments, colleagues may encounter an innovation through open studios, shared rubrics, peer observation, teaching circles, or collaborative projects. Visibility can support adoption, but it should include revision and partial success as well as polished examples. Otherwise, the institution learns little about why a practice worked, failed, or needed adaptation. The three theories address different parts of the same problem. Systems Theory keeps the instructional components connected. Social Cognitive Theory explains why teachers may respond differently within similar settings. Diffusion of Innovations Theory focuses on adoption and movement through a social system. Used together, they provide a basis for examining the relationship between instructional management and innovativeness without assuming that one causes the other.

6. Leadership, Autonomy, Collaboration, and Organizational Climate

Organizational conditions appear repeatedly in research on teacher innovativeness.

Lin (2022), using TALIS data, reported relationships among distributed leadership, teacher autonomy, professional collaboration, and innovativeness. Hsieh et al. (2024) found direct and indirect associations between school leadership and teacher innovativeness in Taiwan. These studies were conducted in school settings rather than arts and design higher education, so direct transfer should be cautious. Their relevance lies in the mechanisms they examine: discretion, collaboration, and leadership support can shape whether teachers have room to test and discuss changes.

Professional learning communities are one way to organize that work. Liu et al. (2022) linked professional learning communities with teacher innovation through creative self-efficacy and an innovative climate. In an arts and design faculty, similar activity could take the form of a studio-teaching group, joint review of project briefs, peer observation of critique, a software learning group, or an industry-linked curriculum team. The label is less important than regular opportunities to examine practice, share evidence, and revise ideas with colleagues.

Training alone does not guarantee implementation. Teachers may learn a new approach and still be unable to use it because of workload, class size, assessment policy, studio scheduling, equipment, or software access. A low level of reported innovation can therefore reflect an individual need, an organizational constraint, or both. Program recommendations should keep that distinction visible so that structural problems are not converted into repeated training requirements.

7. Designing an Evidence-Based Instructional Management Program

7.1. From Needs Assessment to Program Priorities

Program design should start from the pattern of evidence produced by the study. Mean scores can identify areas that appear weaker, and group comparisons may show where support needs differ, but neither should be read mechanically. A low resource-management score, for example, may reflect limited institutional access rather than insufficient teacher knowledge. Differences across career groups may also reflect different responsibilities. Program priorities should therefore combine survey results with the literature, supplementary respondent comments, and expert review.

Strengths can also inform the program. Teachers with established studio-management routines may contribute examples or mentoring; colleagues with stronger digital skills may support technology-related work; teachers with current industry experience may help translate professional standards into project briefs and assessment. A priority matrix can consider the size of the need, its relationship with innovativeness, feasibility, urgency, and strategic relevance. The purpose is to organize support, not to label groups as deficient.

7.2. Professional-Development Design

Research on teacher professional development gives little support to one-off workshops detached from practice. Sims and Fletcher-Wood (2021) argue that program features matter through the mechanisms by which they change knowledge, motivation, technique, or practice. Sims et al. (2025) add meta-analytic evidence to this theory-driven view. Reviews of online professional development also emphasize relevance, interaction, facilitation, reflection, collaboration, and application (Bragg et al., 2021; Dille & Røkenes, 2021). Knowles et al. (2015) provide an adult-learning perspective in which prior experience and problem-centered application remain important.

For arts and design faculty, professional learning can use the same kinds of work that teachers manage in their courses. Participants might revise a project brief, compare assessment rubrics, practice critique facilitation, examine an AI-assisted task, or solve a resource problem from a current course. The work can then be tried, discussed, and revised. This produces evidence of application, such as a revised brief, rubric, supervision plan, or innovation proposal, rather than relying on attendance as the main sign of learning.

7.3. Technology-Enabled and Blended Professional Learning

Technology can extend professional development, but the delivery mode is not evidence of quality. Huang et al. (2024) found recurring attention to active learning, collaboration, expert support, feedback, reflection, and equity in technology-enabled teacher professional development during the COVID-19 period. Hennessy et al. (2022) show that infrastructure, facilitation, language, local relevance, and system support affect implementation. These conditions matter in private higher education because institutions may not have the same software, studio facilities, or staff-development resources.

A blended arrangement may fit arts and design faculty better than a single delivery mode. Online spaces are useful for discussion, resource sharing, and follow-up. Studio sessions are better suited to demonstration, critique, material practice, and peer observation. The choice should follow the learning task. Treating online delivery as a substitute for every form of professional learning would ignore the practical character of much arts and design teaching.

7.4. Evaluation, Governance, and Sustainability

Evaluation should match the distance between the program and the outcome being claimed. Morina et al. (2025) found effects of online teacher professional development at teacher and classroom levels, with smaller effects at the student level. For an instructional management program, immediate evidence could include revised course materials, project briefs, rubrics, or resource plans. Later evidence might include observations, samples of feedback, implementation records, or

student work. Sustained use, diffusion to colleagues, and student outcomes would require follow-up beyond the present dissertation.

The program also needs clear responsibility for implementation. Scheduling, facilitator preparation, access to studios or digital platforms, documentation, follow-up, and expert review do not happen automatically. Evidence collected for development should remain connected to learning and improvement rather than being converted without justification into punitive faculty evaluation. Local facilitators, shared repositories, continuing peer groups, and links with curriculum review may help sustain the work after the initial activities end.

8. Implications for Private Universities in Fujian Province, China

Fujian policy gives this discussion a local management context. Provincial guidance on cultural and arts vocational education calls for stronger teaching conditions, professional development, school-enterprise cooperation, and closer links between programs and cultural industries (Fujian Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism & Fujian Provincial Department of Education, 2023). National teacher digital literacy requirements add expectations for responsible use of digital technologies (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022). Curriculum, faculty development, industry engagement, resources, and assessment therefore have to be coordinated rather than addressed as separate projects.

The participating private universities are unlikely to have identical facilities, software access, staffing, industry networks, or professional-development opportunities. A common program may still be useful, but local conditions should determine how each component is implemented. The institutions may also contain substantial internal expertise. Practitioner knowledge, strong studio routines, or current digital capability can be used through peer learning instead of assuming that all expertise must come from external training.

Artificial intelligence makes these coordination problems more visible. Programs need rules for acceptable use and disclosure. Teachers need ways to judge AI-generated material against learning outcomes and disciplinary standards. Assessment may need process evidence when authorship is uncertain. Institutions also have to consider access, licensing, privacy, and data use. These issues sit across teaching, assessment, ethics, and resource management, so a purely technical response would be incomplete.

9. Research Gaps and Future Directions

The literature leaves a clear gap at the intersection of the two main constructs. Large studies of teacher innovativeness commonly use school-sector or mixed teacher samples. Arts and design research is more likely to focus on studio pedagogy, professional identity, or a particular technology. Few studies examine lesson planning and preparation, instructional delivery, classroom management and

organization, and assessment alongside openness to change, innovation adoption, risk taking, and continuous learning within the same teacher population. Evidence from private universities in Fujian Province is especially limited.

The level of analysis is another limitation. Some studies focus on teacher characteristics; others examine leadership, collaboration, or organizational climate. Instructional practice occurs through their interaction. Future studies could test how the instructional management dimensions relate to innovativeness while also measuring autonomy, workload, collaboration, leadership, resources, or digital infrastructure. Where several institutions are available, multilevel analysis may help separate teacher-level and institution-level variation.

Causal direction also remains uncertain. Much of the literature, and the planned dissertation study, relies on cross-sectional self-report data. These designs can describe patterns, compare groups, and estimate associations, but they cannot show that stronger instructional management produces innovativeness or the reverse. Later work could add studio observation, document analysis, student work, repeated measurement, or program evaluation. Mixed-method and design-based studies may also show how a change is tried, adjusted, retained, or discontinued over time.

Measurement is a further issue. Liu et al. (2024) show that teacher innovation is defined and operationalized differently across studies. Arts and design education makes the distinction especially important because artistic creativity is not the same as educational innovativeness. Instruments used across languages and specializations need clear construct definitions, content validation, translation and back-translation where required, pilot testing, reliability analysis, and restrained interpretation of small profile groups.

10. Conclusion

Instructional management and teacher innovativeness describe different parts of arts and design teaching, but the literature gives reasons to examine them together. Instructional management concerns how teachers plan, organize, deliver, supervise, resource, and assess learning. Innovativeness concerns how they consider, test, adopt, revise, and learn from useful changes. Both are shaped by the conditions in which teachers work, including leadership, collaboration, policy, resources, and opportunities for professional learning.

The educational management task is to connect these levels without turning every problem into an individual training need. Systems Theory draws attention to interdependence among instructional components. Social Cognitive Theory explains how personal beliefs and environment interact. Diffusion of Innovations Theory adds the conditions under which changes are adopted and shared. For private universities in Fujian Province, the next step is empirical: describe the two constructs, test their association and profile-group differences, and use those

findings with the reviewed evidence and expert judgment to build a feasible instructional management program.

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