

# A Feasibility Study of Mixed-Material Painting in Contemporary Chinese Compulsory Education

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**Abstract:** In 2022, China began revising its Compulsory Education Curriculum Programme and Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition), referred to as the “New Curriculum Standards”. Today, implementation is progressing steadily, with particular emphasis on the use of new pedagogical concepts to replace old teaching models. In contemporary Chinese painting, there is a type called mixed material painting, which has already been formed in Chinese university art education, but in China's children's education and compulsory education stage, it belongs to the new art that has just begun. Therefore, as an art teacher at this stage, they can try to change their mindset of teaching and follow the trend of the education era.

**Keywords:** New Curriculum; Compulsory Education; Mixed Material Painting; Primary and Secondary School Art

## 1. Introduction

China's new curriculum standards, revised and launched in 2022, stand like a brand-new flag, painting a new picture for the articulation of different school-age segments of China's compulsory education, and clarifying new goals for the future development of China's art education.

## 2. Interpretation of the Content of the Art Programme for Compulsory Education in China's New Curriculum Standards

The new version of the curriculum standard is designed around the art curriculum is divided into four categories of content, including “Appreciation – Commentary”, “Modelling – Expression”, “Design – Application” and “Comprehensive – Exploration” four categories of art practice, covering 16 specific learning elements, with different learning tasks set by segments and learning elements embedded in the learning tasks [1]. There are five learning

elements in each section, which are linked and complementary to each other, in which the art curriculum is centred on life, and art is taught from the shallowest to the deepest, and from the simplest to the most complex. The aim is to get closer to life, and this philosophy of teaching seems to go back to that of an early Chinese educator called Tao Xingzhi, whose main idea was that “life is education”. He said: “A good life is a good education, a bad life is a bad education; a forward life is a forward education, a backward life is a backward education.” [2], Good education is one that keeps pace with the times through continuous improvement and revision, so the revision of China's new version of the curriculum standards is education for a new era, education for the future, and revision, reform and innovation of China's compulsory education programme and curriculum standards, which have been in place for many years. It also provides a good fertile ground for comprehensive material painting, a new era of painting language, to enter the campus.

## 3. The Current Status of Mixed-Materials Painting in Contemporary Compulsory Education in China

Throughout the different versions of primary and secondary art textbooks in China, there is very little content on mixed-materials painting as a specialised course or artwork appreciation, and it's not surprising that there is only a little bit of it in the links to art resources section of the appendix chapter at the high school level, similar to mixed-materials paintings of artworks. Mixed media painting itself is a product of the development of Chinese art in the 21st century, originating from Western “Mixed Media” art, which was formally introduced to China in a very short period of time. It was not until 2010 that the China Artists Association set up the “Artistic Committee for the Preservation and Restoration of Mixed-Material Paintings and Works of Art”, which meant that “Mixed-Material

Paintings”was officially declared in China.Subsequently, the major colleges of art have set up the speciality of mixed-materials painting,and have successively exchanged with foreign mixed-materials artists , Slowly developing into a university art course offering mixed media painting, but mixed-media paintings have the eco-friendliness and versatility of materials,it quickly became popular in China. So far,the influence of mixed media painting has affected many primary and secondary art teachers,and some of them are actively promoting this matter.For example,Mr Chen Lixue teach at Shanghai Experimental School,he introduced mixed-materials painting into the primary school art “school-based”curriculum and used it flexibly in her teaching,and published an article entitled “Reflections on the Introduction of Mixed-Material Painting into the School-Based Art Curriculum of Primary Schools”,He said:“Integrated material is a unique teaching material and content that breaks through the traditional art teaching mode of painting and handicrafts,and has strong plasticity and flexibility...The introduction of integrated material into the school-based curriculum can provide students with a broader imagination by virtue of the diversity and infinite combination of integrated material itself.The introduction of mixed materials into the school-based curriculum can provide students with a broader space for imagination by virtue of the diversity and infinite combinations of mixed materials, change the form of art teaching that relies on textbooks, and open up a whole new vision of art[3]”.As another example,in her article“Integrating Integrated Materials to Innovate Primary School Art Classroom”,Mr Sun Xuhua, starting from the actual needs of the students,She said:“Primary school students are exposed to fewer materials for art creation, and they often only know how to use some traditional art materials, but they lack understanding of new materials or materials in life, and they do not know how to use them in their creations[4]”.At the same time, there is not much literature on mixed-materials painting in China's academic field, according to the most authoritative academic website“CNKI”[5] Academic Search Findings , Inputting “Mixed media painting”,we found 1396 articles in the search results, and only 13 articles in the search

results for“primary school art”,and 16 articles in CNKI's English academic search for“Mixed media painting”.In the English academic search of CNKI, there are 16 papers under the title of“Mixed media painting”,which shows that the literature on mixed media painting is relatively rich,but it only focuses on university teaching,and there is very little research in primary and secondary schools,on the one hand,it's because mixed media painting is still a relatively new discipline, and it is still in the beginning stage of the education in contemporary China, so the research on Chinese contemporary mixed media painting in the compulsory education stage is very valuable. Therefore, the study of Chinese contemporary mixed-material painting in compulsory education is very valuable.

#### **4.The Value of Mixed-Material Painting in Contemporary Compulsory Education in China**

##### **4.1 Generalised Mixed Material Painting**

What is mixed media painting? Broadly speaking, mixed media painting encompasses all types of paintings that use physical materials, including ink drawings, oil paintings and sculptures[6],That is traditional painting and technique, while mixed media painting is a discipline that combines art and life. In addition to the synthesis of traditional painting, the choice of materials can be close to the daily needs of primary and secondary school students,used in their daily lives, taken from nature...and attempts can also be made in terms of the environmental friendliness and recyclability of the materials. Because different choices of materials will determine the artistic effect of the work, especially for students in the upper age group, as they grow older, their artistic expression and artistic accumulation become rich and mature, and it is entirely possible to try to combine with scientific and technological materials to sublimate mixed-materials paintings into works of art endowed with the future life, and this kind of theme is not impractical.We should not underestimate the creative ability of students, because mixed-materials painting itself has the qualities of breaking the traditional classification of painting disciplines, creating the possibility of crossover and fusion between different disciplines, and enabling students'

creativity to move towards a broader artistic space. Therefore, the application of mixed media painting in China's compulsory education will be beneficial to the future development of Chinese education.

#### 4.2 Student-Centred Development

China's new curriculum standards emphasise the “student-centred” concept of education, which requires teachers to take the development of students as the starting and finishing point of their teaching work [7]. So what students think and do about art becomes even more important. As far as the art programme is concerned, it's not only necessary to “learn” well but also to “do” well, and teachers should think more from the perspective of “learning” and “doing”. Teachers should think more from the perspective of “learning” and “doing”. Expanding the work of art teaching by focusing more on students' lives and exploring a quality-oriented approach to teaching that is in line with the development of the new era, during which the relationship is both in traditional theory and practice and in the curricular framework of the new standards. The new standards are based on pedagogical principles, with stage-by-stage programmes developed for different levels of study: “each level of study starts with ‘Appreciation and Commentary’, which focuses on the development of students' aesthetic perception and cultural understanding literacy, and progresses to ‘Modelling and Expression’ and ‘Design and Application’, which emphasise the development of students' artistic expression and creative practice literacy, and then to ‘Integration and Exploration’, which strengthens the links between curriculum content, social life and students' experiences. ‘Modelling and Expression’ and ‘Design and Application’, which emphasise the development of students' artistic expression and creative practice, and ‘Synthesis and Exploration’, which strengthens the links between curriculum content, social life and students' experiences” [1]. Covering the intervening period in the form of theory followed by practice and a combination of theory and practice is necessary at the level of pedagogical theory. Because before entering the primary school art curriculum, many students have already studied children's sketch drawing, children's doodle drawing, children's ink

drawing, children's colour drawing and other early childhood art courses at the pre-school level, and this kind of “superficial” drawing and painting initiation course, Laying the foundation for the systematic learning and understanding of the art curriculum at primary school level, the study of traditional art and techniques will be carried out at the compulsory education level, which is a process of long term accumulation. The systematic study of art is conducive to the reinforcement of the students' learning of art theories, and also creates the conditions for the intervention of art creation and mixed-materials paintings in the higher age groups. In the upper age group, artistic thinking deepens and artistic horizons open up, and more emphasis is placed on the integrated use of art and knowledge from other disciplines. Art creation is no longer confined to easel painting, and students can express their own opinions and insights through the creation of paintings, sculptures, picture books, visual notes, animations, microfilms ... They can also understand the unique role of art in their personal development, social progress and in the building of a community of shared destiny for humankind. They will understand the unique role of art in personal development, social progress and the building of a community of human destiny, and enhance their sense of social responsibility [1]. It is worth noting that this academic period is not only a stage for the integration of art theory learning and practice, but also the best time for the degree of completion and the achievement of the effect of mixed-material painting works.

#### 4.3 Cultivating an International Perspective

The creative techniques and artistic expressions of mixed-material paintings are varied, ranging from three-dimensional installations in line with technological innovation to flat paintings that return to traditional art. For primary and secondary school art programmes, the most appropriate material choice direction environmentally friendly materials for thematic creation, such as the Czech artist Veronika Richterová environmental theme work is a good reference.

Veronika Richterová has been focusing her artistic energies on PET-ART since 2004, and has always been committed to making mixed-materials works from discarded plastic bottles, calling for environmental protection and

bringing the world into her unique vision of “environmental art” through an artistic perspective. Elaborating on her work, she says, “They are so ordinary around us, so within reach and so cheap, but for me they can all be blooming flowers”. What a great lesson in “nature education”, and if given to students, I'm sure they would be able to create works of art like Veronika Richterov's, and decorate their own classrooms and their own lives. Therefore, mixed-materials drawing will improve students' ability to think out of the box, so that they will begin to pay attention to the things around them. To look at art with the vision of a world artist and return to life, utilising the expanding capacity of “STEM transversal skills” [8], To achieve the all-round development of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and labour education for students in compulsory education.

### 5. Summary

The introduction of mixed-materials painting into the classrooms of China's contemporary compulsory education is conducive to the art education programme's articulation of the various school segments. In line with the concept of innovative education in the new curriculum standards for compulsory education, and contributing to the expansion of the study of traditional fine arts in the field of specialisation. It can stimulate students' divergent thinking about art and life, achieve the enhancement of students' core qualities, and help the comprehensive development and improvement of the talent cultivation mechanism. China's art education needs to keep up with the times and needs fresh blood injection [9]. In the future, as an emerging art form, mixed-materials painting will gain more attention and recognition, complementing the continuous revision and development of the

new curriculum, and it is only a matter of time before mixed-materials painting is integrated into primary and secondary art education.

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