

The Value and a Preliminary Study of the Integration of Traditional Chinese Painting and Calligraphy & Modern and Contemporary Art in Primary School Art Teaching

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Abstract

Finding a unique way to help students better accept between traditional Chinese Painting and Modern and Contemporary Art is an increasing concern in primary school art teaching. The purpose of this study is to investigate fine art education field according to analyze the current situation of Chinese traditional painting and calligraphy together with Modern and Contemporary Art in the art curriculum of primary schools: shallow embedded curriculum, shortage of Class Hours and relatively simple teaching method. Based on the key competence of the disciplines, it discusses the value of integrating those two in art teaching of primary schools, proposes a Bridge to connect the Chinese painting and calligraphy & Modern and contemporary art and provides a curriculum construction model that connects the artistic language with the concept of disciplines. This study takes the work of artist *A.R. Penck* as the theme, starting from the big idea, looking for basic problems, designing a curriculum with the integration of two kinds of art forms, and teaching practice at The China Soong Ching Ling Science & Culture for Young People. This study not only answers the feasibility of the curriculum construction model but also gives some critical thinking about it.

Keywords: traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy, modern and contemporary art, primary school art teaching, integration

1. Introduction

Traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy is a manifestation of traditional Chinese art which mainly includes calligraphy and traditional Chinese painting. Chinese traditional painting and calligraphy highlight the intentional concept, and applies brushwork to express the painter's emotions. Western modern and contemporary art is roughly divided into two major stages of development. One is the modernist period which mainly refers to the half a century time that starts from the post-impressionism since 1870 to abstract expressionism. The Second period is contemporary art which starts from 1960 to modern times, also known as postmodernism.

With the development of the times, western modern and contemporary art has gradually entered our lives. Ye (2014), suggests that an opener and more positive view has been adopted by the art circle with a higher degree of acceptance. In art education, the combination of Chinese and Western education models has been a major trend emphasizing the individuality of students as well as basic modeling which led to a sharp contrast with the realism and modernism in the past. The rationality of Western modern and contemporary art and the great wisdom of the traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy give us a better of life.

2. Method

2.1 *The Status Quo of Traditional Chinese Painting and Calligraphy & Modern and Contemporary Art in Primary School Art Teaching*

2.1.1 Shallow Embedded Curriculum

Textbook is the carrier of the curriculum. The content of traditional Chinese painting and modern and contemporary art in primary art textbooks are mainly presented in an embedded way in specific lessons. Very few special classes are dedicated to talk about these two art categories. For example, *Flowers in Life and Art*-Lesson Ten in the textbook for the first half of the fourth grade published by the People's Fine Arts

Publishing House (hereinafter referred to as *People's Art Textbook Edition*) is chosen to explain life and flower. Pictures of the French artist Dufy's oil painting *Anemone*, Cézanne's oil painting *Blue Vase*, Song Dynasty Lin Chun's *Sketching Jade*, Pan Tianshou's *Dew* are listed together with some artifacts with flower in life and apparel. However, this lesson fails to elaborate on the ontology of modern and contemporary Chinese painting and traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy, hence it is a simple *Jiewushuowu* (To demonstrate something with itself).

From this point of view, students only know that there are flowers in the works of art, but they do not know the meaning based on the ontology of the art language. It can be seen that such embedded courses are still in the initial stage of knowledge structure, which is not conducive to the continuous understanding of students.



Figure 1. A textbook published by the People's Fine Arts Publishing House

2.1.2 Shortage of Class Hours

Take the art textbook of *People's Art Textbook Edition* as an example. The total class hour of all the six grades in elementary school is 226. Among them, only 27 class hours of textbook content are related to Chinese traditional painting and modern and contemporary art, accounting for 11.94% of the total class hours. The curriculum of modern and contemporary art has 10 lessons, accounting for 4.42% of the total class hours. It can be seen that traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy and modern and contemporary art have fewer hours in primary school, and traditional Chinese paintings have more hours of teaching than modern and contemporary art. That is to say, modern and contemporary art pays received less attention than Chinese traditional painting and calligraphy in the art stage of primary school. The number of class hours determines how much knowledge the students have learned in the classroom. That is to say, students have less chance of learning these two parts of knowledge in the primary school stage, and the chances of in-depth exploration are even smaller.

2.1.3 Relatively Simple Teaching Method

Traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy teaching methods mainly include art appreciation and artistic practice. The teaching process is usually divided into 2-3 hours. Firstly, through the appreciation course, students will be capable of understand the development of Chinese painting and calligraphy and the characteristics of specific art styles in a specific period. The second lesson will lead students to feel the change of brushwork while in third class students start to create their own work. The key competence of art disciplines - students' image reading, aesthetic judgment, fine art performance, cultural understanding and creative practice are cultivated. In the meantime, the courses on modern and contemporary art are mainly based on appreciation courses, and only a small number of schools can offer practical courses. This also speaks to the fact that traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy is more highlighted than modern and contemporary art courses.

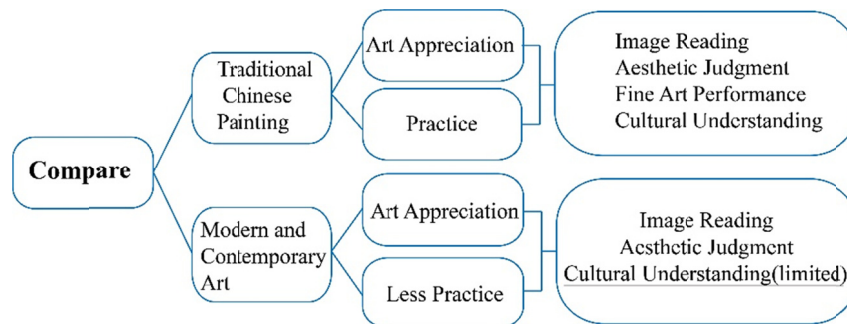


Figure 2. Compared with Chinese painting and calligraphy and modern contemporary art

2.2 The Ideas of Course Design

2.2.1 To Connect the Chinese Painting and Calligraphy & Modern and Contemporary Art with a Bridge

A bridge is required to achieve the integration of traditional Chinese painting and contemporary art. This bridge is the integration of artistic language extracted from traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy & modern and contemporary art under the guideline of big idea.

In the new round of art curriculum reform in China, five key competence of art disciplines were proposed: image reading, art performance, aesthetic judgment, creative practice and cultural understanding. The big idea is the only way to achieve the key competence of art disciplines. There are plenty of views about *big idea's* origin. Morgan (2012), suggests a big idea in mathematics is mathematical thinking (p. 49) while Alvarado, Canada, Garritzc, and Melladob (2015, p. 610) suggest that pH/relative strength of acids and bases (p. 610) is a big idea. However, in China, Basic Education Course (2018), a periodical about fundamental education studies comments that the term *big idea* first appeared in the natural sciences. In the field of science education, big idea refers to the most essential and valuable content in a subject area. The *big idea* usually uses a statement to express a point of view. Such as *Biological diversity and adaptability are the result of evolution*. This is a confirmed idea or opinion of scientists. The main point stated in the big idea is the concrete expression of the understanding of the core concepts of a discipline. In the field of biology, they are the concrete components of the concept of life. The big idea reflects the natural laws in the material or life world, revealing people's cognition and scientific perspective on the rationality of the natural world. Besides, it is a concrete manifestation of the scientific view of nature and the world view in science education. In the science curriculum, each big idea must be able to run through the whole subject, be accepted and understood by the students and maintain a long time on the basis of understanding. The curriculum framework consisting of several big ideas entitles to a better coverage of the subject. Whiteley (2012) adds to this idea stating: 'Big ideas are the building material of understanding. They can be thought of as the meaningful patterns that enable one to connect the dots of otherwise fragmented knowledge' (p. 42). Big idea includes social issues and major discipline concepts. Social issues refer to topics that we encounter in our lives that inspire people to discuss, such as *Equality* and *Respect*. The concept of discipline is based on disciplines. An example is that humanistic ideas have profoundly influenced the theme of art expression and led to the change of ideas and the innovation of techniques.

Artistic language, also known as artistic vocabulary, refers to the materials and tools used by various artistic genres to shape the artistic image and convey aesthetic emotions. Artistic language is the basic building block of the form of art work. The specific content of an art work must be expressed by means of a certain artistic language and become an object that people can appreciate. The artistic language of art is mainly composed of lines, shapes, colors and tones. The types of artistic language are realistic, exaggerated, metaphorical and symbolic. Artistic language aims to present content while bear an independent aesthetic value.

Due to the limited cognitive ability of pupils, it is difficult for them to understand the big idea of social issues. Therefore, the author uses the concept of discipline as the starting point to find the art language of traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy & modern and contemporary art. Based on the bridge, two ideas were brought about: first is the integration of traditional painting and calligraphy art language with modern and contemporary art works, second is the fusion of modern and contemporary art and paintings language with traditional paintings and calligraphy.

2.2.2 Choice of Bridges: From Three Sieves to Three Concerns

First of all, this bridge should have two attributes-mobility and practicality. Mobility means that traditional

calligraphy and painting are both interrelated with and independent from each other. The interrelationship is mainly reflected in the integration of the two. The two types of art work we selected separately are related in some aspects, and the independence of each other is based on them per se. For example, the works of modern and contemporary artist Jiang Baolin are mainly expressed in the form of lines, and Zhongfengyongbi (using the center brush) is one of the traditional Chinese calligraphy and painting techniques. From the perspective of art language, the two are connected while in chronological order, one is the category of modern and contemporary art, and the other is traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy.

Practicality refers to requirement that the selected bridge is suitable to the majority of primary school art classes. In other words, while many works of traditional Chinese calligraphy and painting and modern and contemporary art are existing, not all of them are applicable to the primary school art class. This requires teachers to strictly control the three sieves in teaching. The first sieve is the philosophy of education, that is, the curriculum resources should be conducive to the realization of the ideal of education and the purpose of running a school, reflecting the development needs and progress of the society. The second sieve is the theory of learning, that is, the curriculum resources should be consistent with the internal conditions of students' learning, and conform to the characteristics of students' physical and mental development. To meet the students' hobbies and development needs. The third sieve is the teaching theory, that is, the curriculum resources should be compatible with the realistic level of teachers' teaching and training. Wu (2005) suggests that the first sieve reflects whether students' knowledge can adapt to this society. In this process, we are concerned with natural selection. The second sieve reflects the students' ability to accept knowledge. Whether the key competence of the students, which can be formed in this process, is concerned. The third sieve is related to the teacher and reflects the intuitive principle of teaching. What we concerned in this process is the art teaching itself. From the three sieves to the three concerns, a unit is formed with three aspects of society, teachers and students to solve existing problems.

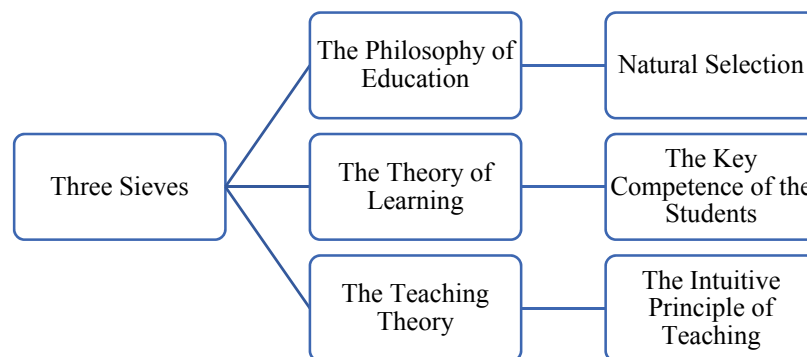


Figure 3. Three sieves and three concerns

2.2.3 Curriculum Construction System

The key competence of the art discipline emphasizes the characteristics of the art discipline and the unique educational function. The key is to solve the problem. The latest edition of the “Normal Edition High School Art Curriculum Standards” proposes to create problem situations and advocate inquiry-based art learning. Create problem situations and guide students to develop art learning activities such as identifying topics, observing feelings, collecting materials, learning from ideas, conceiving ideas, selecting materials and techniques, exploring performance methods, creating works, presenting communication, and describing, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating. Encourage students to acquire knowledge and skills in an informational environment, by means of autonomy, cooperation and inquiry, to form ideas and insights, and to learn to solve problems in study, life and work in an art and interdisciplinary manner. Although the reform of the basic art education stage has only proposed the concept of core literacy in the high school stage, with the beginning of the revision of the new round of compulsory education and education, the core literacy is throughout the basic education stage, because in this Process, it is more concerned with the problem of students learning and cultivating people.

Based on the “course standard”, combined with core literacy and big ideas, the author proposes a curriculum construction flow chart of the integration of traditional Chinese painting and modern and contemporary art.

First, the teacher should walk in front of the teaching, discover the artistic phenomenon in life according to the

characteristics of the students' physical and mental development, and choose the theme. If the students in the lower grades are good at expressing their lives with symbols or villains, then teachers can correspond this feature to modern and contemporary art, and they will find that A.R.Penck's works are good at using scattered narratives and symbols to express their emotions. At this point, we determine that Penck's work is the subject of this lesson; second, the teacher determines the concept of the subject according to the theme. According to Penck's works, we can extract the big idea of this lesson as "the artist uses specific symbols to convey his own emotions". Third, according to the big idea, it is decomposed into basic problems. There must be logic between the basic questions. It is in line with the characteristics of students' physical and mental development. The basic question of Penck's class is "Why does Penck like to paint a little man?", "What are the characteristics of the little man in Penck?", "How do you express your emotions through symbols?", "You want to express What kind of content?" Fourth, the order of the basic questions determines the teaching process, thus determining what core literacy of the discipline to be cultivated in this lesson. This course begins by appreciating and discussing Penck's works, cultivating students' "image reading", "aesthetic judgment" and "cultural understanding" qualities, and cultivating students' "artistic performance" literacy in painting performance; The guidance and organization of students' cooperative inquiry methods help students explore basic problems and then understand the big idea of this lesson. Sixth, students can feedback the whole class through the display of works and filling out the evaluation form.

2.3 The Course Practice

2.3.1 Basic Information of the Course

Title: *Why does A.R.Penck particularly like to paint little people?*

Grade: The First grade

Class hours: One lesson

Students' condition analysis: This class was taught in The China Soong Ching Ling Science & Culture, a doctoral outside educational institution in Beijing, China. There are twelve students who from surrounding primary schools in this class. Students here have access to know more about art styles because of the abundant of public educational resources. For example, it is convenient for them to National Museum of China and the 798 Art District, places that obsess plenty of exhibitions. As a consequence, students here can easily ingest knowledge that including Traditional Chinese Painting and Calligraphy & Modern and Contemporary Art.

2.3.2 Teaching Objectives:

Based on the work of artist A.R.Penck with the Big idea of *Artists using specific symbols to express their emotions*, the lesson aims to teach the students how to appreciate Penck's works and guide them to understand the importance of symbols in artistic expression. Students are encouraged to express their emotions through their own designed symbols to form a certain cultural understanding. With the comprehension of the big idea, students can take the Chinese painting as the medium to create works of art.

2.3.3 Focal and Difficult Points in Teaching

Focal Points: To comprehend the role of symbols in artistic expression, and be able to use the techniques of Chinese painting to create works according to their own understanding.

Difficulties: To understand the concept of symbols in artistic expression

2.3.4 Teaching Process

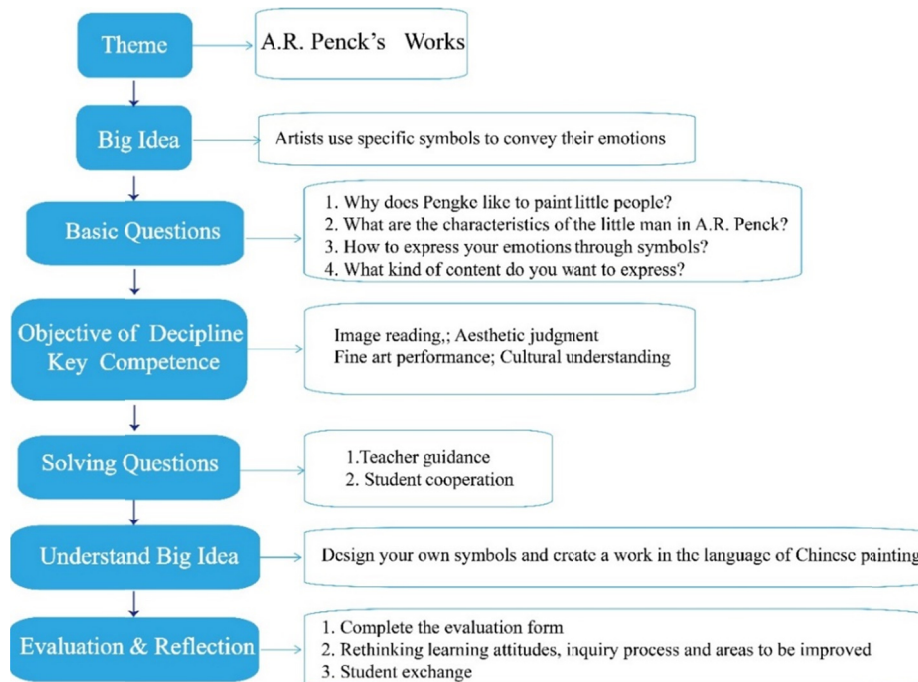


Figure 4. Teaching process

3. Results

3.1 Works of the Students



Figure 5. Works of the students

3.2 Reflection after Class

This lesson is an initial attempt by the author to integrate traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy with modern and contemporary art. It can be seen from the student works that they have grasped the characteristics of A.R. Penck's works: expression through symbols, full frame, and colorful. Students also create symbols based on their own lives. The pictures above are all the works of girls. In their creations, they all mentioned that they have learned to dance, therefore some of the symbols are dance moves. The first little painter thinks that the dancer must have a perfect figure, so the line should not be too thick. The painter of the second work also carefully designed the emoji to better combine the image of the little person with the emotion expressed. The third little painter designed different hairstyles for her symbols. She thinks that the person who dances in the street dance should wear a very cool hat and the hairstyle must be flying with a happy dance! It can be seen that the works created by each student are expressions of inner feelings. However, from the perspective of the picture, Penck's

works of art interfere with the students. Later teaching can lead the students to try to get rid of the impact of Penck's works and express their feelings.

4. Conclusion

4.1 *The Integration of Traditional Chinese Painting and Calligraphy with Modern and Contemporary Art Can Promote the Development of Both*

The diverse cultural environment in art education also presents a diversified trend in art and education. In the process of learning, students have a strong sense of Chinese traditional culture and can open their minds to embrace new artistic elements. In the long run, not merely the integration of traditional Chinese painting and contemporary art in Chinese art education can promote the development of both, but also help students form cultural understanding.

4.2 *Grasping the Three Sieves and Three Concerns Can Help Better Position the Course*

The *three sieves* are a good control of the choice of curriculum resources. The *three concerns* are used throughout the teacher's preparation and student learning as well as the overall process of student long-term development. From *the three sieves* to the *three concerns*, not only it helps teachers to more accurately position the curriculum, but also conforms to the overall trend of China's basic education reform. In terms of curriculum design, *three sieves* and *three concerns* shall be the grip for teachers to keep in line with the key competence of the discipline, and pay attention to students' continuous understanding of the big idea.

4.3 *The Necessity of "Bridge" In the Construction of Curriculum*

"Bridge" connects the concept of the discipline with the language of art, making the abstract content of modern and contemporary art concrete, and the students truly move from art form to art content, so that they can better understand the big idea. Only in this way the transformation of knowledge acquisition and knowledge application can be achieved.

4.4 *The Scope of Application about This Teaching Model*

This model only be practiced in Beijing, the capital of China. The level of education in Beijing is much higher than other provinces, especially for some western province such as Gansu, Xizang and Guangxi. Students in these areas have less opportunity to go to museums or art districts. As a result, they will have problem in knowing the introduction of A.R.Penck, a person far away from their life. In this method, the integration of traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy with modern and contemporary art only could be applied in areas that gain higher level of economic development, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin and Shenzhen. In later investigation, the author will pay more attention to the scope of application about this teaching model.

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