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From Subject-Based to Integrated: A Comparative Study on the Implementation Practice of the 2011 and 2022 Versions of the Compulsory Education Art Curriculum Standards

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Abstract. The 2011 Compulsory Education Music Curriculum Standard and the 2022 Compulsory Education Art Curriculum Standard are two important guiding documents in the field of art education at China's compulsory education stage. Focusing on frontline teaching practice, this paper systematically compares the practical forms, realistic difficulties, and response strategies of the two versions of curriculum standards in the process of implementation. The 2011 version takes subject-based teaching as the basic framework, and in practice faces problems such as "teaching the textbook," single evaluation, and the divergence of urban and rural resources; the 2022 version incorporates music into the comprehensive art curriculum system, and in implementation faces new challenges in terms of teachers' comprehensive competencies, supporting resources, and diversified evaluation. The problems of the two versions of curriculum standards in the four dimensions of teaching staff, resources, evaluation, and training are in the same line and have been upgraded to some extent, reflecting a certain gap between the text of the curriculum standards and teaching practice. The effective implementation of curriculum standards does not depend only on the text design itself; it also calls for the coordinated follow-up of supporting mechanisms such as teacher cultivation, resource guarantee, evaluation tools, and research and training systems.

Keywords: compulsory education, music curriculum standard, art curriculum standard, curriculum standard implementation, comparative study

1. Introduction

The art curriculum standard at the compulsory education stage is the core guiding document for aesthetic education teaching in primary and secondary schools. The 2011 Compulsory Education *Music Curriculum* Standard and the 2022 *Compulsory Education* Art Curriculum Standard correspond respectively to the needs of aesthetic education construction at different development stages of China's basic education. Among them, the 2011 version is a phased product of the continuous deepening of the basic education curriculum reform in the new century. On the basis of the 2001 experimental draft, and in light of the Outline of the *National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development* Plan *(2010-2020*), it completed a systematic revision [1],

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continued the overall framework of subject-based teaching, stood on the ontological value of the music discipline, and established a curriculum concept centered on aesthetic education. As China entered a new era, compulsory education achieved universal coverage, and the focus of basic education development shifted from guaranteeing access to schooling to improving the quality of schooling. Under the policy orientation of the state to vigorously strengthen school aesthetic education, the Ministry of Education launched the revision of the new version of the curriculum standard in 2019, and officially issued the *Compulsory Education* Art Curriculum Standard in April 2022. This curriculum standard breaks through the traditional single-discipline separate curriculum model, integrates music, fine arts, dance, drama, and film and television to form a comprehensive art curriculum, and uses the four core competencies of aesthetic perception, artistic expression, creative practice, and cultural understanding to lead curriculum construction [2], with emphasis on interdisciplinary integration and whole-stage coherent cultivation.

At the level of curriculum structure and content arrangement, the 2011 version maintains the independent disciplinary establishment of music, divides the course content into four learning areas of feeling and appreciation, expression, creation, and music and related culture, divides the teaching stage according to three learning periods, and allocates disciplinary class hours separately; the 2022 version puts music under the category of comprehensive art curriculum, the various art contents blend with each other, the curriculum system is built around the four core competencies, and at the same time it refines the stage stratification according to the law of students' physical and mental development, implements a four-stage division, music no longer sets class hours independently, shares the total art course hours with disciplines such as fine arts, and the proportion of class hours is about 9% [3]. Teaching practice and evaluation also show clear distinctions. The 2011 version focuses on consolidating basic music skills such as singing, instrumental performance, and work appreciation, and classroom activities are mainly music practice under the guidance of teachers; the 2022 version promotes the shift of teaching logic from subject-based lecturing to interdisciplinary integration, and from sticking to textbooks to overall large-unit design, relies on project-based and theme-based unit teaching to promote the linkage of music with history, drama, and other contents, emphasizes students' creative practice activities such as impromptu creation and digital music creation, and establishes a diversified curriculum evaluation model mainly based on process evaluation and performance evaluation.

Based on the above sorting out of the concepts, structures, and requirements of the two versions of curriculum standards, the following discussion is carried out from the two major plates of the implementation status, realistic difficulties, and local responses of the 2011 music curriculum standard, and the practical exploration, implementation difficulties, and response methods of the 2022 art curriculum standard.

2. Implementation practice of the 2011 compulsory education music curriculum standard

2.1. The normal form of teaching operation

Under the guidance of the 2011 version of the curriculum standard, primary and secondary school music has long been taught in the form of an independent single subject. Each school formulates semester teaching plans based on the four learning areas of feeling and appreciation, expression, creation, and music and related culture defined by the curriculum standard, uses the unified textbook as the core carrier, and sets the regular class hours to 1-2 periods per week. Classroom teaching is mainly based on song learning and singing and the appreciation of musical works, and instrumental performance and impromptu creation are mostly supplementary contents. Teaching and research

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activities within schools also mainly revolve around traditional lesson types such as singing lessons and music appreciation lessons. The teaching implementation of urban and rural schools shows obvious differences: city schools with better school conditions rely on various clubs to offer expanded activities such as chorus and instrumental music, achieving the complementarity of classroom teaching and extracurricular art practice; while rural and weak schools, constrained by conditions, mostly can only complete basic song teaching [4].

2.2. Prominent problems in the implementation process

Although the 2011 version of the curriculum standard established the concept of "taking students as the main body and emphasizing music practice," multiple deviations in implementation have appeared in actual promotion. First, the phenomenon of "teaching the textbook" is common [4]. Most teachers teach lesson by lesson strictly in the order of the textbook, and rarely adjust the teaching content flexibly in combination with the learning situation, and the "teaching with the textbook" advocated by the curriculum standard has not been truly implemented. Second, the evaluation method is single and rigid [4]. End-of-term singing and listening tests have become the main evaluation means, and the process evaluation of classroom participation, team cooperation, and creative expression has been absent for a long time due to the lack of supporting tools and recording mechanisms [4]. Third, the gap in urban and rural resources intensifies the differentiation of implementation [5]. City schools can carry out diversified teaching activities such as instrumental music, chorus, and musicals; rural schools generally lack professional teachers and teaching instruments, and music classes are gradually simplified into a single "follow-singing class."

2.3. Frontline localized response strategies

In order to alleviate the realistic resistance to the implementation of the curriculum standard, frontline teachers have explored many practical methods in combination with school conditions and regional characteristics. Many rural teachers integrate local folk songs and nursery rhymes into teaching, shortening the distance between the classroom and students' lives; some teachers make simple percussion instruments by themselves to make up for the shortage of equipment; and some teachers use the network and mobile devices to obtain high-quality audio and video resources [4] to improve the conditions for music appreciation teaching. To a certain extent, this kind of independent innovation resolves the current teaching difficulties, but it also reflects the status quo that the systematic supporting support system for aesthetic education teaching is imperfect.

3. Implementation practice of the 2022 compulsory education art curriculum standard

3.1. The preliminary exploratory practice of the new curriculum standard

After the *Compulsory Education* Art Curriculum Standard (2022 edition) was issued, various experimental areas and schools gradually started the exploration of comprehensive art courses. The reform requirements of curriculum integration first brought about the adjustment of curriculum arrangement: at the present stage, most schools still retain the separate teaching mode of music and fine arts, but actively integrate interdisciplinary contents in unit design; at the same time, relying on after-school services and student clubs, they carry out comprehensive art activities such as dance, drama, and film and television. In terms of teaching mode, some schools try to reconstruct the classroom with large units and project-based learning, integrate multiple tasks such as music

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creation, prop production, and scene performance around themes, and practice the design idea of comprehensive art courses [2].

3.2. The main difficulties in the implementation of the new curriculum standard

Compared with the 2011 version of the single-subject music curriculum standard, the implementation difficulty of the 2022 comprehensive art curriculum standard has increased significantly, mainly concentrated in three aspects. First, teachers' comprehensive art literacy is insufficient [6]. Traditional music teachers only deepen their own major, lack systematic learning in dance, drama, film and television, and other fields, and find it difficult to adapt to the teaching requirements of comprehensive art courses. Second, the construction of supporting teaching resources lags behind. At present, the textbook is still in the transition period of updating, the supply of supporting resources such as teaching references, courseware, audio and video is insufficient, teachers need to independently develop a large number of teaching materials, and the burden of lesson preparation increases greatly. Third, it is difficult to build a diversified evaluation system [6]. The new curriculum standard mainly promotes performance evaluation and process evaluation, but most schools have not yet established corresponding evaluation rubrics and students' art growth files, and the traditional scoring mode that teachers are used to cannot meet the requirements of the new curriculum standard for academic quality evaluation.

3.3. Diversified response methods and existing shortcomings

Facing new challenges, schools and teachers have formed three types of response methods: some teachers take the initiative to participate in special training at all levels, supplement relevant art knowledge such as dance and drama, and try to integrate elements such as rhythm and rhythm games into the music classroom; some teachers adopt conservative adjustment strategies, follow the old mode in teaching content and form, and only apply the terms of the new curriculum standard in written materials such as lesson plans; and some schools rely on dual-teacher classrooms and invite off-campus art experts to teach in schools to make up for the shortcomings of on-campus teachers. Although the above methods can temporarily relieve the pressure of implementation, the disadvantages are obvious: the improvement of teachers' professional ability lacks long-term and systematic training plans, school-based teaching and research become a mere formality, the interdisciplinary integration between art disciplines also stays only at a shallow level, and the educational value of the comprehensive art curriculum has not been fully brought into play [6].

4. Common problems and improvement directions in the implementation of the two versions of curriculum standards

The 2011 subject-based music curriculum standard and the 2022 comprehensive art curriculum standard have essential differences in curriculum positioning, educational philosophy, and curriculum structure: the former adheres to the independent disciplinary standard of music and builds four major music learning areas centered on aesthetic education; the latter integrates multiple categories of art to form an integrated curriculum, and leads the interdisciplinary and large-unit teaching reform with the four core competencies. But sorting out the practical status of the implementation of the two types of curriculum standards in primary and secondary schools at the front line, it is not difficult to find that the two have exposed many structural problems in the same line in the implementation and promotion, which are concentrated in the four dimensions of the

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teaching staff, teaching resources, academic evaluation, and teacher training. These realistic difficulties that run through the whole process of aesthetic education reform completely present the practical evolution logic of music education in primary and secondary schools in China from subject-based teaching to comprehensive art education, and are also the core entry point to solve the disconnection between the concept of the curriculum standard text and the classroom teaching practice [4].

4.1. Teacher building: from "A shortage of teacher numbers" to "A shortfall in comprehensive competence"

Teacher strength is the primary bottleneck restricting the implementation of the two versions of curriculum standards, only the form of the problem changes significantly with the iteration of curriculum reform requirements. In the implementation stage of the 2011 single-subject music curriculum standard, the contradiction of teachers focused on the uneven distribution of numbers. City schools have relatively complete allocation of full-time music teachers, while rural and weak schools generally have the problem of shortage of teachers of music, physical education, and fine arts, and a large number of music classes are concurrently taught by teachers of cultural classes such as Chinese and mathematics; restricted by professional ability, concurrent teachers find it difficult to complete teaching tasks such as instrumental teaching, work appreciation, and music creation, and rural music classes are finally simplified into a single follow-singing classroom, and the gap in the quality of urban and rural aesthetic education teaching continues to widen. After the implementation of the 2022 comprehensive art curriculum standard, the contradiction of teachers has changed from "whether there are full-time teachers" to "whether teachers can be competent for comprehensive teaching." The original music teachers have long deepened a single music major, lack systematic learning of art categories such as dance, drama, and film and television, and often appear professional blind spots in the face of interdisciplinary integration and project-based comprehensive art classrooms; in contrast, the talent training system of music education majors in colleges and universities is oriented to traditional music skill teaching, the curriculum lacks multi-art category integration training, the knowledge structure of the output teachers is single, and it is seriously disconnected from the comprehensive education requirements of the new curriculum standard. From the lack of full-time teachers in rural areas to the mismatch of the comprehensive competence of all art teachers, the long-term dislocation of teacher supply and curriculum reform needs has become an unavoidable underlying problem in the implementation of the two versions of curriculum standards.

4.2. Teaching materials and resources: from "mechanical application of textbooks" upgraded to "the dilemma of self-developed resources"

Both versions of the curriculum standards put forward innovative requirements for the use of teaching resources, but at the present stage, the supply of supporting resources in schools and the ability of teachers to develop courses have not kept up with the pace of reform, and the short board of resources shows differentiated characteristics at different stages. When implementing the 2011 version of the curriculum standard, the curriculum standard clearly advocated "teaching with the textbook" rather than "teaching the textbook," but frontline teachers generally formed a solidified teaching thinking, taught lesson by lesson completely according to the order of the textbook catalog, and rarely adjusted the teaching content in combination with local learning situation and regional culture; rural schools are even short of musical instruments and multimedia equipment, can only rely on textbooks to complete basic singing teaching, and the awareness and ability of teachers to

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independently expand curriculum resources are generally weak. Entering the 2022 comprehensive art curriculum reform stage, the curriculum standard puts forward new requirements such as overall large-unit design, interdisciplinary theme teaching, and digital creative music practice. The identity of teachers has changed from textbook executors to curriculum designers, and the demand for diversified teaching materials, supporting teaching aids, audio and video, and interdisciplinary teaching aid resources has increased significantly. However, at present, the art textbook is still in the transition stage of updating, the supply of official supporting teaching references, standardized courseware, and comprehensive art practice materials is seriously lagging behind, the vast majority of teachers need to independently collect and create teaching resources, and the burden of lesson preparation increases sharply; at the same time, the art class hours of rural schools are difficult to guarantee, often squeezed by cultural classes, and the total class hours have not yet reached the 9% proportion requirement of the curriculum standard, and the double constraints of insufficient resources and compressed class hours restrict the implementation of the comprehensive art curriculum. In summary, the contradiction at the resource level has evolved from "not knowing how to use the existing textbooks flexibly" in the past to "lacking supporting resources to support autonomous curriculum construction," which puts higher standards on the school's hardware guarantee and teachers' curriculum development ability.

4.3. Evaluation methods: from "single terminal assessment" to "the obstruction in the implementation of diversified evaluation"

The evaluation system is the key starting point to lever the transformation of classroom teaching. The two versions of curriculum standards advance layer by layer at the level of evaluation orientation, but the transformation of the frontline teaching evaluation mode has significant practical barriers. The 2011 version of the curriculum standard advocates diversified evaluation that takes into account knowledge and skills and classroom practice, but in the process of implementation, the evaluation method is highly rigid, and end-of-term singing tests and paper-and-pencil listening assessments become the only basis for evaluation; the procedural performances such as classroom participation, group cooperation, and impromptu creation are left aside for a long time due to the lack of standardized recording tools and normal evaluation mechanisms, and the evaluation malpractice of "emphasizing results and despising process" is widespread. The 2022 version of the curriculum standard relies on the four major art core competencies to formulate a complete academic quality standard, vigorously promotes performance evaluation in real situations, advocates the establishment of students' art growth files, and investigates students' aesthetic perception, creative practice, and cultural understanding abilities in an all-round way. But the majority of frontline teachers have vague cognition of the connotation and implementation process of performance evaluation, lack evaluation rubrics and file recording templates that can be directly applied, and the evaluation inertia of traditional scoring and end-of-term unified examinations is difficult to reverse. Although the concept of curriculum reform has completed the upgrade from "skill-only end-of-term examination" to "process + performance comprehensive evaluation," the lack of evaluation tools, implementation processes, and supporting systems has caused a huge fault between advanced evaluation concepts and daily teaching practice, and neither of the two versions of curriculum standards has completely solved the problem of evaluation implementation.

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4.4. Teacher training: from "one-way theoretical indoctrination" to "the absence of practical training"

Teacher training is an important bridge between the curriculum standard text and classroom practice. The supporting training modes of the two versions of curriculum standards have the short board of homogenization and cannot meet the continuous growth needs of frontline teachers. After the 2011 version of the curriculum standard was issued, although various places organized large-scale special training for the curriculum standard, the training form was mainly concentrated offline lectures, the content focused on the interpretation of theoretical provisions, lacked classroom practical guidance combined with the lesson types of singing, appreciation, and creation, the training content was disconnected from the teachers' daily teaching scenes, the training results were difficult to transform into the real classroom, and the overall training effect was limited. The 2022 comprehensive art curriculum standard puts forward higher requirements for teachers' comprehensive art literacy, large-unit teaching design, and interdisciplinary project implementation ability, and the limitations of the traditional single lecture-style training are further amplified. The existing training generally has the problem of "emphasizing theoretical preaching and despising classroom practice," and lacks immersive training such as normalized in-school teaching and research, classroom polishing, and interdisciplinary joint lesson preparation; short-term concentrated training can only complete the popularization of shallow concepts, cannot build a long-term and systematic path for teachers' ability improvement, teaching researchers and university experts are difficult to continuously follow up the frontline classroom, and teachers lack long-term guidance when they encounter practical problems such as interdisciplinary teaching and performance evaluation design, and the problem that the training system lags behind the pace of curriculum reform continues to exist in the implementation cycle of the two versions of curriculum standards.

5. Conclusion

Integrating the staged practical research and comparative analysis of the 2011 subject-based music curriculum standard and the 2022 comprehensive art curriculum standard in the full text, the 2011 independent music course relied on the four learning areas to build a basic aesthetic education framework, and urban and rural schools relied on clubs, local folk songs, and simple teaching aids to carry out localized teaching, but were constrained by insufficient teachers, solidified textbooks, and single evaluation for a long time; the 2022 version integrates multiple categories of art, leads large-unit interdisciplinary teaching with the four core competencies, and various places try project-based classrooms and dual-teacher collaborative teaching to promote the implementation of comprehensive art, but face new challenges of insufficient teachers' comprehensive art literacy, lagging supporting resources, and difficult practical operation of competency evaluation.

Comparing the whole process of the implementation of the two versions of curriculum standards, it can be found that in the past ten years, the reform of music aesthetic education in primary and secondary schools in China has continued to iterate and upgrade, and the educational logic has shifted from single music aesthetics to comprehensive art competency cultivation, but the structural dilemmas in the four dimensions of teaching staff, teaching resources, academic evaluation, and teacher training are in the same line and constantly upgraded: the contradiction of teachers has changed from the shortage of the number of full-time teachers in rural areas to the mismatch of the comprehensive teaching ability of all art teachers; the contradiction of resources has evolved from mechanically copying textbooks to the lack of supporting material support for interdisciplinary large-unit teaching; the evaluation reform has moved from getting rid of the single skill test at the

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end of the term to the lack of implementation tools for performance and process evaluation; and teacher training has advanced from shallow curriculum standard theory preaching to the lack of normalized classroom practical guidance. The progressive changes in the four dimensions completely outline the practical evolution track of China's aesthetic education from subject-based teaching to comprehensive education.

Although the localized teaching innovations spontaneously explored by grassroots teachers can alleviate the resistance to implementation in the short term, the fragmented autonomous countermeasures cannot make up for the lack of the top-level supporting system. A high-quality curriculum standard is only the starting point of aesthetic education reform, and the key to the actual effect of curriculum reform lies in building a full-chain guarantee mechanism covering normal student training, standardized supporting resources, systematic evaluation tools, and long-term immersive teaching and research. From 2011 to 2022, the concept of aesthetic education curriculum has continued to innovate, but the deep structural contradictions have not yet been fundamentally resolved, which is also the core direction that the high-quality promotion of the compulsory education comprehensive art curriculum needs to systematically tackle in the future. In the long run, only by simultaneously improving the teacher supply, resource guarantee, evaluation system, and training system can we truly realize the implementation of the core competency education concept of the curriculum standard in primary and secondary school classrooms, and promote the balanced and high-quality development of compulsory education aesthetic education.

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