

UNITY IN EDUCATION: EXPLORING CHINESE AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON PRIMARY SCHOOL MUSIC EDUCATION

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Abstract:

The teaching methods of music lessons in primary schools in China have been a topic of debate for many years. This study aims to explore strategies that enhance the participation and enjoyment of students in music classrooms in Chinese primary schools by comparing the teaching methods in ordinary Chinese primary schools and Chinese international primary schools. Qualitative methodology was employed to gather data from four music teachers, two from ordinary Chinese primary schools, and two from international primary schools in China. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Results showed that music lessons in ordinary Chinese primary schools were simplistic, lacking creativity, and interest among children, while music teachers in international schools played an inspiring and stimulating role in the classroom, organizing student learning, and cultivating their emotions. The study concludes that by changing the teaching model in primary school music classes, it is possible to improve the participation of students in the music class and give full value to the music class.

Keywords: music lessons, primary schools, teaching methods, student participation, Chinese international primary schools,

Introduction

All along, music is closely related to people's lives. People feel emotional so that they cannot stand singing and dancing. They often use screaming, moving, tapping, and other actions to vent their inner emotions. They are used to looking for stimulation; the purpose is to achieve a balance between body and mind; music has always been a spontaneous demand for human beings (Nina, 2014). Modern music education must awaken this musical instinct. According to Reimer's (1989) study, Chinese students are trained by their teachers to "teach the rules". Moreover, 80% of the students do not know notation and do not know the pentatonic notation (Reimer, 1989). Furthermore, according to Reimer's study, it is known that students' early musical education and experiences are erased due to the imperfection of the Chinese music education system (Reimer, 1989).

The music education methods of Chinese music classrooms and international music classrooms are very different. Not only is there a difference in the number of students, but there is also a difference in the teaching style and atmosphere of the classroom. (Nina, 2014) The form of music classroom teaching in China is basically simplistic. When singing lessons, the general form is that the teacher sings in front of the piano, and the children follow the lesson and repeat it over and over again (Wenjuan, 2016). This lessons

do not play the value of music lessons (Wenjuan, 2016). The topic of this research is to explore pedagogical strategies to encourage student participation and enjoyment in primary music classes. According to Wang's (2013) study, the problems of elementary school music teaching can be understood, the overall quality of the current elementary school music teacher team is low, and schools need to take further effective measures to improve the overall quality of the teacher team. According to the current statistics of the Ministry of Education, in the process of elementary school music education, only about 70% of the teachers are music majors, only about 55% are teachers with bachelor's degree or above, and about 60% are teachers with teacher training background (Wang, 2013). In addition, Wang (2013) also pointed out that in the current music curriculum teaching process, most music teachers still adopt teaching methods that are too rigid and single to significantly improve the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum, and most music teachers still use one-way teaching methods to carry out teaching activities. (Wang, 2013). Chinese teachers and students face many problems in music class, most of the teachers have superficial practical skills and lack of teaching experiences. There is less interaction between teachers and students in the classroom. Students rarely have the opportunity to practice. Many teachers' teaching methods are single and boring, so it always challenging for the teacher to inspire students. So, the interest of students is not useful for teaching. The teaching method of music lessons in international schools divides students with similar interests into a group, such as string group, wind group, vocal group, etc. On the contrary, Chinese students will gather together to participate in the same class. Zhang (2018) points out that in China's traditional consciousness in all types of teaching models carried out, the teacher is necessarily the dominant of and the protagonist. (Zhang, 2018). The difference lies in the emphasis on transforming one dimension into multiple dimensions on interactive objects. Music teaching in China is the original single mode of interaction between teachers and students only. Music teachers in international schools mainly play a role in inspiring, and stimulating, organizing student learning, and the role of teachers has changed. The role of teachers is not only a teacher but an audience. Zhang & Song point out that students' active participation in classroom teaching is the act or state in which students give full play to their subjective role. By creating an atmosphere in which students' thinking is exhausted in a predetermined scenario, teachers make it more effective and convenient for students to understand music and thus cultivate their emotions. Engaging students in the learning process and experiencing the inherent beauty of music is an important tool in music. Teachers need to cultivate students' awareness of independent learning, to create opportunities for students to learn independently, and to provide them with an environment for independent learning. For students to take the initiative to absorb and learn independently we need to affirm and support and encourage them. (Zhang & Song, 2011)

1. Research Objective and Significance

On the whole, because it is a primary school student, it is difficult for children to concentrate for a long time (Zhang, 2018). If they are not interested in the course, they will like to talk in the classroom and cannot concentrate on listening to the teacher. If the class is boring, then for elementary school students, it is more difficult to increase concentration and engage the lesson. So in my research, I wish to investigate which

pedagogical strategies encourage student participation and enjoyment in primary music classes through interviews with teachers, as well as the comparison between ordinary Chinese primary schools and Chinese international primary schools. The objective is to find a teaching method suitable for the music classroom. Through research, teachers can find problems, improve teaching methods, provide useful data for other researchers, improve the teaching methods of primary school music, make the music classroom no longer boring.

Therefore, in this research, we discussed the issues in the Chinese music classroom through the literature and then conduct the interview. First, we can through compare the different models to find how to stimulate students' musical creativity, and then improve the pedagogy, and enable students to participate in music activities actively, and become active and have a specific music appreciation ability to enjoy music and enjoy the meaning of beauty. These make music courses become more attractive in music class but also have a beneficial impact on students future life, let more primary school students fall in love with the music classroom, enjoy music.

2. Literature Review

An early research shows that "most Chinese school teachers engaged in music teaching have never heard of names such as Kodley, Karl Orff, and Dacroze, nor do they understand various music education philosophies." (Mu, 1988). Many music teachers even lack the necessary musical knowledge. As pointed out in an official document submitted by a group of leading Chinese musicians and music educators, not only is there a severe shortage of music teachers, but many of the current music teachers seriously lack the necessary knowledge, skills and teaching music Ability (Reimer, 1989). Music education plays an important role in the overall development of people. Music lessons are an undeniable part of basic education. People's emotional world purifies people's hearts. As a school music course, music education needs to pass on the teaching of students' musical knowledge and the cultivation of musical ability through teachers (Zixuan, 2010). China's music classroom teaching method is single and lacks diversity, just direct instruction or simple knowledge transfer in the classroom. The music classroom should be the most dynamic. "Music is one of the means of aesthetic education in the school. It is definitely not only a single teaching process such as singing in the classroom and listening to the music". (Wei, 2013). As early as many years ago, the single problem of the Chinese music teaching model was exposed. Many music schools in primary and secondary schools do not highlight the artistic characteristics of music teaching. They use the same teaching methods as other disciplines, focusing on explanation and feelings; rationality and emotions; passive acceptance and active participation. Teachers emphasize more on the learning of basic knowledge and mastering of skills. The teaching method is single, and the atmosphere in the classroom is serious. (Yanping, 1999).

Professor Zhang once conducted a survey and research on the status of music education in Guangming Primary School in Dongchangfu District, China, and analyzed the situation of music in most elementary schools in China. In his article, Guangming Primary School in Dongchangfu District was mainly selected as the representative survey and research object. In the writing process, a variety of methods such as questionnaire survey method, literature method, data statistics method and interview method were used.

He believes that "under the influence of China's traditional education model, the lack of attention to music education often neglects the construction of the music discipline, resulting in the music discipline not being well developed". And according to the survey, it is found that the current primary school students are not interested in music lessons, their enthusiasm for class is not high, they have less understanding of music knowledge, and their school teachers are less enthusiasm for the class (Wanjin, 2018).

Orff said: "Let children practice and create Music by themselves is the most critical " (Thresher, 1964) In a previous study, researchers explored the Orff teaching method, children are the centre of music classes. Teachers should let children practice by themselves. According to their imagination, using their various possibilities to arrange content. The teacher gives them a task, and each child can go entirely according to their own to do what he is willing to do. Teaching activities are mainly children's activities; the final result of teaching should be reflected from the children. Carl Orff's teaching method advocates that music education should cultivate children's ability to create or improvise according to musical habits. The teacher must help the children make their music, which originates from his own experience in talking, singing, moving, dancing and playing. Also, at the age of three and four years old of European children's records showed that the surprising fact is that children's singing style is very close to the earliest two and four-note singing Brandow (Brandow, 2021). The Orff teaching method insists that children should be allowed to discover music from a simple, almost primitive level. By encouraging primitive creative expressions and starting from basic musical expressions, children are not immediately instilled in complex classical music. They are also not expected to master delicate musical instruments. Taking into account the previous research articles, and in combination with the actual situation, Music is smart and makes people happy, a platform for cultivating students' aesthetic taste and improving overall quality. Positive and effective evaluation is a means to promote music education. During the evaluation process, Teachers must change their roles to become active organizers, modest collaborators, plain guides, and sincerely listen to appreciators see students as participants in active development, satisfying students' interests and emotional needs through various external incentives, igniting their knowledge, progress, and development sparks, and promoting students' vivid learning and active development (Nina, 2014).

3. Research Question

Qualitative sub-studies are characterized by an emergent, inductive design that involves an iterative and reflective approach to sampling, data collection, and analysis (Norman & Whyte, 2021). This qualitative study aims to find which pedagogical strategies encourage student participation and enjoyment in primary music classes. This goal leads to the following research questions: 1. At present, what are the main issues in the primary school music classroom in China? 2. What is the difference between music classroom teaching methods in international schools and those in China? This research is beneficial to the development of the music classroom. First of all, we can sum up and find the problems in the current Chinese music class, and make comparisons and improvements based on their respective strengths. It may improve the activity level of primary school students, encouraging the student to participate in the music

class in order to play the value of the music class. The results are obtained through the interview with teachers, content analysis and statistical data.

First, analyze the teaching mode of Chinese music lessons. The single teaching mode is the most typical problem in existing music teaching in China. In the classroom, the teacher usually performs in front of the podium, then the students sing and repeat, and even did not learn until the end of the class. Students become board, their interest in music will gradually weaken, and even show resistance. However, music education in international schools is the opposite. If the multi-dimensional teaching method of international school music is applied to Chinese elementary school classrooms, it may break the traditional teaching concept and enrich the form of music classrooms, thereby changing the students' response to music lessons and greatly increasing their interest in music. By changing the teaching model of the independent variable music class, it can improve the participation of students in the music class and give full play to the value of the music class.

4. Method

5.1 Recruitment and Informed Consent

Before participating in the study, invite music teachers from two different schools to participate via the Internet. All participating teachers are voluntary participants. Moreover, before starting the interview, we explained the informed consent to the four teachers, allowing them to ask questions at any time and voluntarily quit. All participants are voluntarily sign the informed consent before starting the study, this is to ensure the experiment able to proceed smoothly.

5.2 Participants

The four participants are from two different schools, an international school and an ordinary Chinese elementary school. The schools are located in Shanghai (international school) and Anhui province (Chinese ordinary elementary school). The four music teachers are all over 18 years old; the genders are two men and two women; all have more than three years of music teaching experience; all have regular higher music teacher qualifications; no hearing problems and language barriers. At the same time, some teachers have different musical directions before teaching, each of them studying different musical instruments, and there is a female teacher who specializes in vocal music. Considering that this does not affect the accuracy of the results, all the experimental data of the four teachers are retained.

5.3 Design and Methodology

The study is qualitative methods research and uses interview to obtain data. In order to diversify the data, the whole interview was semi-structured, and the interview questions, except for the fixed questions, would be explored and expanded based on the teachers' answers. Before starting, we should ensure that all participants meet all conditions. Then, it will be conducted as qualitative research, which mainly obtain data through an interview. Moreover, the total interview time for each participant is about 30 minutes. The data from the interviews will be guided by thematic analysis. The research will based on a music class with similar grade level, and choose teaching content with a similar difficulty between Chinese and international schools. then observed the teacher's teaching status and interviewed through video. Interviews will be

conducted on different issues, such as how they feel after class; students' participation in the classroom; there are areas for improvement, etc. Finally, through the notes of the video interview records, organize and analyze the data.

5. Data Analysis

As previously described, the data were analyzed by the thematic analysis. Thematic data analysis is a widely used qualitative method. The classification of data into units of analysis is indispensable (Peel, 2020, as cited in Duran et al.) The interview data were collected and transcribed into text form for analysis. In this paper, first, the interview transcripts were initially read to understand the context and content of the interviews and to compile initial impressions and questions. Then perform sentence-by-sentence marking, reading the interview text sentence by sentence, marking or coding key words, themes or concepts for each sentence or paragraph, and using distinctive colors for important data, numerical coding, etc. Then merge codes: similar or related codes are merged or categorized to form thematic or conceptual categories. This paper is divided into, according to the content of the interviews, Chinese traditional elementary music teacher interviews and international elementary music teacher interviews. Next check coding is performed, where the previous overall codes are checked to ensure accurate and comprehensive categorization. Finally, interpretation of themes and report writing are performed to explain and analyze each theme.

The overall result data consisted of approximately 5 hours of recorded material, and the total number of pages recorded during the interview was 9. The form is for one person, and the interview is for one-to-one. The final data results were analyzed as follows. Data obtained from four teachers:

- (1). The number of students in international schools is less than 15, while the number of music students in China exceeds 30. Obviously, the smaller the number, the easier it is for teachers to manage.
- (2). There are no less than two teachers in each class of the international music class, and one person can only complete the teacher of the Chinese music class. So there are few opportunities for communication between teachers and students in Chinese music class.
- (3). Teaching methods in international schools are rich and varied. China has only a single teaching model, only singing.
- (4). From the perspective of teaching experience, teachers in international schools believe that classrooms are more colourful than Chinese, but the number of employees is not easy to manage. The Chinese teacher thinks this class is annoying, but because of the unique content, it is easier to prepare lessons after class.
- (5). In international schools, the satisfaction of music lessons is very high.

6. Discussion

It can be seen from the interview that the richer the content of the classroom, the higher the student's participation, the higher the teacher's enthusiasm, which is consistent with the experimental results predicted at the beginning. As suggested by Yanping (1999), the teacher's attitude and teaching atmosphere are important (Yanping Z). It is also crucial who takes the lead during the lesson. As mentioned above, Orff said: "Let children practice and create Music by themselves is the most critical" (Thresher, 1964). For

example: by adding song scenes when learning music, asking students to play some related games or play some related videos to attract students' attention, and repeatedly playing the learned music through background music will make students intoxicated by this plot. Change the original object. There is only one mode of teacher-student interaction, and it actively promotes the interaction between teachers and students and individual students or groups, as well as the multidirectional interaction mode between individual student groups. This also means a significant change in the role of teachers. The teacher has changed from an original soloist to a concerto with students, or even just accompaniment. Teachers play a role in inspiring, inspiring and organizing student learning. The roles of teachers are not only teachers, narrators, listeners or mentors, but also scholars, thinkers, listeners, flexible arrangers of the entire process, and followers of classroom information and organizers.

7. Ethics Statement

In my research, I will mainly compare the teaching methods between Chinese elementary school music classrooms and international elementary school music classrooms. My primary purpose is to encourage elementary school students to participate more actively in the music classroom. Therefore, in this study, I will invite four teachers which came from two schools in order to avoid unreliable data due to personal character. Before the study began, I will collect written consent. Participating teachers are all voluntary participants. Moreover, if needed, teachers can choose to participate in the survey anonymously.

The form filled out are all conducted on the Internet and will not involve any personal privacy. Then, I will conduct a one-on-one interview with four teachers, and participants can ask questions at any time. If the issues discussed involve personal feelings, participants could also be anonymous or suspended, all data will be protected from leakage, and the privacy of the participants will be protected. Finally, after the interview and after collating the data, the participants' consent will be sought again.

All data will be anonymous and the numbers are coded and set in a new folder. Finally, I will also prepare in advance to avoid any unpleasant situations and ensure that the interview goes smoothly.

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