

Exploration of Teaching Path for Ethnic and Folk Music Unit in High School Appreciation Course Taking Zang-Qiang-Yi Corridor Ethnic Music as an Example

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ABSTRACT

As an excellent traditional culture in China, ethnic music carries the spiritual interests and artistic pursuits of the Chinese nation, and should be valued in high school music education. Frontline educators should base themselves on the concept of high school music curriculum, innovate teaching methods, integrate ethnic music into all stages and links of school education, and strengthen students' sense of cultural identity with their own ethnic group. However, the arrangement of ethnic music works in textbooks is relatively scattered, which is not conducive to students building a macro knowledge system. Large unit teaching emphasizes the connection and integration of knowledge. Through the design of large unit teaching, ethnic music works in textbooks can be reorganized and constructed, enabling students to have a deeper understanding of ethnic music and master knowledge.

Keywords: *Large unit teaching, Ethnic music, High school music, Zang-Qiang-Yi Corridor, Music appreciation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Ethnic music is an important carrier of national spirit and cultural heritage, with significant aesthetic value. The music appreciation course in high school aims to cultivate students' perception ability, aesthetic taste, and understanding and appreciation of different music cultures. Especially ethnic and folk music can enable students to not only master music knowledge and skills, but also understand the history, customs, and spirit of different ethnic groups through music.

The traditional music appreciation classroom has the problem of fragmented teaching content and a lack of "big concepts" to guide the teaching content, resulting in students' understanding and appreciation of ethnic and folk music remaining on the surface, lacking systematic and in-depth understanding. Professor Cui Yunhong pointed out, "The design of large units targeting the core competencies of disciplines is an inevitable requirement for implementing moral education, developing quality education, and deepening curriculum reform. It is also a key path for the

implementation of core competencies of disciplines." This article will be based on curriculum standards and use Zang-Qiang-Yi Corridor ethnic music as an example to design large-scale teaching units. From multiple dimensions such as teaching objectives, content selection, and teaching methods, it will analyze how to integrate ethnic folk music into high school music education, explore effective strategies and implementation paths for large-scale teaching of ethnic folk music, and promote students' deep understanding of ethnic music.

2. LARGE UNIT TEACHING OF ETHNIC MUSIC IN HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC APPRECIATION

2.1 *The Importance of Ethnic Music in High School Music Teaching*

At the 13th National People's Congress, Chinese leaders and educators proposed to further strengthen and improve the integration of ethnic music education into schools; The "Opinions on

Strengthening and Improving School Art Education in the New Era" issued by the General Office of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council in 2021 also mentioned that the teaching content of school art education courses should be rooted in China, reflect the basic values of China and nation, and highlight the spirit of Chinese art education; In recent years, cultural confidence has become one of the important national policies in China. Ethnic music is an excellent musical work produced by the Chinese nation in the historical process of development. These works have been passed down to this day and still have a certain aesthetic effect on the Chinese people. Classic art has high humanistic value in promoting comprehensive human development, improving people's quality of life, and enhancing their life realm. In high school music appreciation courses, Chinese ethnic music is also indispensable. It is not only an excellent traditional Chinese culture, but also an important carrier of the Chinese national spirit. Cultivating the spirit of the Chinese nation and inheriting excellent Chinese culture is not only a call for the whole society in the new era, but also a responsibility and task entrusted to school education. Therefore, the teaching of ethnic music should not only impart music knowledge and skills, but also pay attention to the historical and cultural knowledge behind it. This is of great significance for promoting Chinese national culture, cultivating students' national spirit, and establishing cultural confidence. High school music teachers should follow the trend of education, select excellent ethnic music, combine with the core literacy of music subjects, explore teaching strategies suitable for high school students, fully play the aesthetic education role of ethnic music, and cultivate students' comprehensive literacy.

2.2 *The Concept of Large Unit Teaching*

Large unit teaching refers to breaking the original natural units arranged in the textbook, deeply analyzing the textbook, and reorganizing the teaching content according to the refined concepts. Large units are not simply a reorganization of units, but a secondary development of teaching content. Jonassen (D. H.) believed that "the only legitimate purpose of education is to solve problems".¹ When arranging course content, subject knowledge should

be linked to real life situations based on the "big concept", so that the learned subject knowledge can continue to exert its life value and enhance students' ability to solve problems in life, rather than simply imparting fragmented knowledge of formalism. Bruner believes that the essence of learning is for students to actively form cognitive structures. Therefore, in teaching, attention should be paid to the development of students' intelligence, allowing them to participate in the process of establishing the subject knowledge system, and using their own abilities to solve new problems and discover new things. Ausubel's theory of meaningful acceptance suggests that new knowledge should establish non artificial, substantive connections with the knowledge already present in students' cognitive structures. The design of large unit teaching is based on students' own cognitive structure, linking subject knowledge with real life, and helping students complete knowledge transfer.

3. THE ADVANTAGES OF LARGE UNIT TEACHING IN ETHNIC MUSIC EDUCATION

3.1 *Integrating Learning Content*

The previous high school music appreciation teaching model was more based on class hours, teaching according to the natural units of the textbook, with fragmented knowledge and a lack of overarching concepts, resulting in students lacking a holistic understanding of each ethnic music. In high school music appreciation textbooks, works related to Chinese ethnic music are scattered across three units and not organized according to certain concepts. Piaget proposed that "the essence of cognitive development is adaptation, which refers to the continuous development from lower to higher levels through assimilation, adaptation, and balance based on existing schemas."² In the past, teaching was based on natural units, which were simply arranged logically according to style, type, and other factors. In fact, the curriculum should be reorganized at a higher level with the goal of developing students' core competencies and helping them complete knowledge transfer. The teaching content of a single class hour is not connected to previous knowledge, making it difficult for students to establish a connection between the knowledge of a certain class hour and the knowledge within their

1. Jonassen, et al., *Learning To Solve Problems With Technology: A Constructivist Perspective Second Edition* [M]. Beijing: Educational Science Publishing House, 2007: 2-33.

2. Anita Woodwalker, *Educational Psychology* (8th Edition) [M]. Chen Hongbing, Zhang Chunli, trans., Nanjing: Jiangsu Education Press, 2005: 30.

existing cognitive structure. This makes it difficult to enrich students' emotional experience and achieve the effect of aesthetic education. Professor Cui Yunhuo pointed out that the current teaching objectives should focus on students' application of subject knowledge in daily life, concentrate on continuous work, and emphasize the understanding and application of knowledge points.³ Therefore, teachers should have a deep understanding of the textbook, consider students' personality and emotional development when arranging teaching content based on their existing cognitive level, connect knowledge with real life, use music to touch students' emotions, and unleash the aesthetic function of music, such as designing large-scale teaching units for ethnic music according to the logic of different regions, with music from the same or similar regions arranged in the same unit. Ethnic people from the same or similar regions have similar living customs, and music is created through labor and production, so their music culture also has similarities. Reorganizing ethnic music works with this concept, starting from the humanities of different regions to understand ethnic music in different areas, is conducive to stimulating students' interest and helping them build a knowledge system.

3.2 Breaking down Discipline Barriers

In the past, there was a lack of connection between real-life situations and stories in high school music curriculum teaching, and teachers found it difficult to influence students' emotional aspects through single lesson teaching. There was a huge gap between curriculum knowledge and real life, making it difficult to realize its value in daily life. Professor Cui Yunhuo pointed out that core competencies are not directly instilled by teachers, but are achieved by students through internalizing subject knowledge and constructing their own cognitive structures for self-comprehension. The music of each ethnic group is inseparable from the history, customs, and culture of its place of origin. If the focus is only on imparting knowledge and skills during teaching, it will not only fail to make students feel the connection between ethnic music and real life, but also fail to appreciate the charm of ethnic music. The advantage of large unit teaching lies in the ability to connect subject knowledge with real life through situational stories during course

3. Cui Yunhuo, Core Competencies of Disciplines Call for the Design of Large Unit Teaching [J]. Journal of Shanghai Educational Research, 2019(04): 1.

arrangement, rearrange course content according to expected goals and task logical frameworks, closely link content between class hours, and intervene with real situations to help students build their own knowledge framework, thus forming a true, good, and beautiful personality. It is necessary to reorganize the ethnic music in textbooks according to different regions, starting from different cultural customs in each area, to establish students' interest in learning ethnic music. This can connect teaching content with daily life and achieve knowledge transfer.

Taking ethnic music in high school music appreciation as an example, Chinese ethnic music works are distributed in four different units in the natural unit. If taught according to the natural unit, students may find it difficult to establish an overall cognitive framework of Chinese ethnic music and understand the humanistic knowledge behind this ethnic group in a single work. In the design of large unit teaching, the works of similar ethnic groups in the region can be arranged for teaching in the same class hour according to the geographical environment of each ethnic group's life. The rearrangement of teaching content is conducive to students' building their own cognitive framework and facilitating students to mobilize their knowledge framework in the subsequent learning process. Based on the concept of ethnic music, there is a must to organize ethnic music works by region, starting from students' existing geographical and cultural knowledge, first to generate students' interest in learning, and then help them understand the music of different ethnic groups.

4. TEACHING DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR ETHNIC MUSIC APPRECIATION UNIT IN HIGH SCHOOL

4.1 Constructing the Course Reversely and Planning Teaching Activities

“Reverse curriculum design”⁴ is a theory proposed by American scholars Wiggins and McTaggart in "Understanding by Design", which refers to the process of optimizing curriculum design by reverse thinking based on expected learning outcomes. It consists of three steps: establishing learning objectives, pre evaluating, and

4. (U.S.) Grant Wiggins, Jay McTeigle, Understanding by Design (2nd Version) [M]. Yan Hanbing, et al. trans., Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 2017: 1.

arranging learning activities based on task logic. The "Opinions on Strengthening and Improving School Art Education Work in an All-round Way" issued by the General Office of the State Council clearly requires the improvement of art education and teaching. To fundamentally improve the current situation of aesthetic education teaching, teachers cannot just stay at the theoretical level. It is necessary to focus on students' emotional experiences, enhance their core competencies as the result oriented approach, prioritize evaluation, and design courses based on task logic.

When designing high school music teaching units, people can think backwards from the learning outcomes and determine teaching objectives guided by core competencies. This can largely avoid two extremes - indoctrination based teaching and activity-based teaching. Instilling teaching only focuses on the correctness of knowledge points, while ignoring the emotional experience that music itself can bring. However, activity-based learning tends to become a mere formality and is difficult to achieve teaching objectives. Reverse curriculum design, starting from the results, can strike a good balance between the two. When designing a large unit, the first step is to determine the expected results and clarify the learning objectives that students should achieve after studying ethnic and folk music through the unit. Music appreciation is a compulsory course in high school music, and it is clearly stated in the standard curriculum for regular high school music that after studying this course, one should not only gain spiritual pleasure and beauty, but also make judgments and reflections on the artistic, ideological, and humanistic qualities of the works. In other words, it should play a role in character education for students. Therefore, these goals should be based on curriculum standards and students' core competencies, involving aspects such as knowledge understanding, skill mastery, and emotional attitudes. For example, students can understand the stylistic characteristics of different ethnic music, master the basic dance movements of ethnic music, understand the humanistic knowledge of different ethnic groups, and cultivate appreciation and tolerance for ethnic music. After clarifying the learning objectives, teachers can design evaluation tasks, evaluation criteria, and evaluation methods to ensure that students achieve the expected learning outcomes, such as music performances, group presentations, etc. After having clear learning objectives and evaluation methods, teachers can start planning teaching activities. These activities aim to help students

achieve their expected learning goals and match them with the evaluation content. Teaching activities should encourage students to actively participate, collaborate on learning, and engage in deep thinking. For example, in the teaching process of Tibetan folk music, the characteristics of Tibetan dance music are introduced by creating situational activities of Tibetan people tapping around bonfires on snowy plateaus.

4.2 Extracting the "Big Concept" of the Unit and Integrating Diversified Teaching Resources

Wiggins mentioned, "Big concept is both the core of various well-organized relationships and a conceptual anchor that makes facts easier to understand and useful."⁵ The big concept is a higher-level concept with life value, which is the core connecting knowledge in our cognitive structure and can help students continuously absorb new knowledge. It is often mistaken as an important disciplinary concept that connects knowledge within a discipline, while a big concept should actually be a higher-level concept that connects disciplinary knowledge with real life. In high school music teaching, ethnic music should play its role in aesthetic education, enhance students' aesthetic ability, cultivate their sentiments, and beautify their hearts, and should not be limited to subject knowledge. If students only learn fragmented knowledge without connecting it with real life, then these knowledge will be forgotten when you leave school. In the design of ethnic music courses, music can be linked to real-life experiences as a broad concept, using music to touch students' emotions and achieve the aesthetic value of ethnic music.

For example, in the teaching process of high school ethnic and folk music in Sichuan, the concept of "integration of diverse and integrated ethnic music" is used to guide and integrate the music of Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi ethnic groups in Sichuan. This concept emphasizes the diversity and integration of different ethnic music in Sichuan region, reflecting the richness and inclusiveness of Chinese ethnic music. Students explore the commonalities and differences among the music of the Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi ethnic groups, and how they collectively constitute the unique ethnic music landscape of Sichuan region, with this overarching

5. (U.S.) Grant Wiggins, Jay McTeigle, *Understanding by Design (2nd Version)* [M]. Yan Hanbing, et al. trans., Shanghai: East China Normal University Press, 2017: 1.

concept as the core. At the same time, by designing project activities based on this core concept, students can master disciplinary knowledge and acquire the ability to appreciate ethnic music through participation in the activities. Therefore, in the design of large unit teaching, teachers should start from the big concept and select appropriate teaching content. Reverse design emphasizes the integration of teaching content, requiring teachers to connect scattered knowledge points together to form logical and hierarchical teaching units. In the ethnic and folk music section of Sichuan region, the author not only selected one Tibetan and one Yi folk song from the "Music Appreciation" textbook, but also added the Tibetan dance song "Snow Field Tap" from the music and dance textbook, as well as excellent ethnic music works outside the textbook: Yi ethnic "Duo Le He", Qiang ethnic "Back Water Girl" and "Leihua". By integrating these teaching contents, students can gain a comprehensive understanding of the ethnic music in Sichuan region and the characteristics of their hometown's ethnic and folk music, thus breaking down the barriers between subject knowledge and real-life situations, and enabling students to acquire the ability to transfer knowledge.

5. CASE DESIGN FOR LARGE UNIT TEACHING

5.1 *Establishing Teaching Objectives - Guided by Learning Outcomes*

Ethnic music is a carrier of China's excellent traditional culture and has rich aesthetic value. Its

singing style, dance, accompanying instruments, clothing, and other elements all reflect beauty. By appreciating ethnic music works, students can better understand and appreciate their own ethnic culture and traditions, feel the unique charm of different ethnic music, enhance their aesthetic taste, and enrich their emotional experience. In the "Opinions on Implementing the Project of Inheriting and Developing Excellent Chinese Traditional Culture" issued by the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council on January 25, 2017, it was mentioned that "the value connotation of the excellent Chinese traditional culture should be deeply excavated and inherited. The excellent Chinese traditional culture contains rich moral concepts and norms, reflects the value standard of judging right and wrong, and exerts a subtle influence on the behavior of Chinese people." Chinese ethnic music carries excellent traditional moral concepts and value connotations. Therefore, ethnic music is not only an art that can meet the cultural and entertainment needs of the people, but also an important way to promote and inherit traditional Chinese virtues. If only superficial knowledge learning or fragmented melody appreciation is carried out in the process of teaching ethnic music, it is difficult to achieve its unique aesthetic value. Therefore, based on the basic concept of high school music curriculum, the author has designed the following teaching objectives. (See "Table 1")

Table 1. Teaching objectives of ethnic music in the Zang-Qiang-Yi Corridor

Promote ethnic music and understand multiculturalism	Expand cultural perspectives and understand the diversity and richness of music from different ethnic groups
	Understand and appreciate ethnic music works, and comprehend their humanistic connotations
Enrich course options to meet development needs	Add different ethnic music works according to different regions, Enrich course content through the development of school-based curriculum and characteristic curriculum resources
	Reorganize course content based on overarching concepts
Improve evaluation mechanisms based on core competencies	Establish a correct moral consciousness, internalize the excellent traditional virtues of China, Establish a value standard of right and wrong
	Evaluate based on the connotation and ability expression of aesthetic perception, artistic expression, and cultural understanding
Highlight the function of aesthetic education and enhance aesthetic taste	Perceive the artistic charm contained in ethnic music and enhance appreciation ability
	Form aesthetic values with humanistic sentiment and health
Emphasize music practice and develop	Participate in music situational activities and experience the music atmosphere of

creative potential	different ethnic groups
	Create simple actions
Deepen emotional experience and highlight musical characteristics	Perceive the artistic language and emotions of different ethnic groups based on their music works
	Experience the personalities of characters from different ethnic groups through musical works

5.2 Selecting the Teaching Content of the Large Unit and Extracting the Major Concepts of the Unit

Taking the "Minority Music" unit in high school music appreciation as an example, teachers design the teaching content for the large unit (see "Table 2"). Taking the schools in Sichuan Chongqing area as an example, many ordinary high schools have added local ethnic minority music content to their school-based curriculum. For example, Chengdu Tanghu Foreign Language School teaches Tibetan tap dancing, and Chengdu Liewu Middle School arranges Qiang dance as a recess exercise. The

Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi ethnic groups are the most prominent ethnic minorities in Sichuan, and are more familiar and easily accepted by local students in Sichuan. The "2017 Edition of the National High School Art Curriculum Standards" points out that in order to meet the personalized development of students, school-based curriculum can be expanded and characteristic resources can be developed according to the actual situation in various regions. Therefore, the content of this unit aims to cultivate students' ability to appreciate ethnic music, draw on traditional Chinese virtues as the "big concept", and incorporate local Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi music works from Sichuan into a large unit.

Table 2. Large unit teaching content of ethnic minority music in Sichuan Province

Unit Main Line	Ethnic minority music in Sichuan region		
Big task	1. Perceive the charm of Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi music, understand the unique charm of ethnic minority art, and learn the musical characteristics of Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi people. 2. Understand the cultural knowledge of the Tibetan, Qiang, and Yi ethnic groups, and experience the different personalities of people from different ethnic groups. 3. Enhance students' aesthetic taste, enrich their emotional experience, and draw on excellent traditional Chinese virtues.		
Time allocation	First lesson Zang nationality	Second lesson Yi nationality	Third lesson Qiang nationality
Course content	"Zongba Langsong" "Xueyu Tap"	"Axi Jumping Moon" "Duo Le He"	"Leihua" "Back Water Girl"

In order to provide students with a more comprehensive understanding of ethnic minority music in Sichuan, music works outside of textbooks can be included as school-based curriculum. In addition to the Tibetan folk song "Zongba Langsong" in the second unit of the high school appreciation textbook and the Yi folk music "Axi Jumping Moon" in the seventh unit, the author also selected the Tibetan dance "Snow Field Tap" and Yi traditional music "Duo Le He" from the "Music and Dance" textbook, and simultaneously incorporated the Qiang folk songs "Back Water Girl" and "Leihua" into the large-scale teaching design.

To enhance students' interest in learning ethnic music, at least one dance music that can create a

context should be arranged for teaching when learning the music of each ethnic group. Therefore, the first lesson is Tibetan music "Zongba Langsong" and "Xueyu Tap". To stimulate students' interest in learning, before enjoying the music "Zongba Langsong", "Xueyu Tap" can be used to create a happy and healthy life scene for Tibetan people on the snowy plateau and allow students to participate. At the same time, it showcases the connection between Tibetan dance movements and the daily life of Tibetan people, helping students understand and construct knowledge of Tibetan music. The second lesson is "Axi Jumping Moon" and "Duo Le He" by the Yi ethnic group. "Duo Le He" is the most distinctive form of female collective song and dance among the Yi ethnic

group in Liangshan, Sichuan. Every year during the Torch Festival of the Yi ethnic group, women hold butter cloth umbrellas and dance "Duo Le He", creating a festive atmosphere. During the teaching process of this lesson, a Torch Festival scenario can be created to introduce the "fire" culture of the Yi ethnic group to students while enjoying the performance of "Duo Le He" and understanding its singing style. "Axi Jumping Moon" originated in the Yi ethnic areas of Yunnan Province. Unlike "Duo Le He", it is divided into elderly dance and youth dance, with a lively and cheerful rhythm and bold and rough movements. During the teaching process, it is possible to compare the differences in dance, melody, rhythm, and cultural customs of the Yi ethnic group in different regions. At the same time, it is important to focus on music and pay attention to students' emotional experiences. In the third lesson, teachers will select Qiang folk songs "Back Water Girl" and "Leihua". In this lesson, activities should still be created to allow students to experience and feel the unique charm of ethnic music. "Leihua" is a folk song of the Qiang ethnic group that has been passed down in the Wenchuan area. The song presents the characteristics of Qiang clothing in a lively and interesting way through a Q&A format. During the appreciation process, students can be divided into two groups, singing this folk song in a Q&A format while learning simple Qiang dance movements to experience the characteristic of "one smooth edge" in Qiang dance. The song "Back Water Girl" not only allows students to experience the typical rhythm of Qiang ethnic songs, but also allows them to preliminarily feel the charm of Qiang language through the lyrics. At the same time, they can also learn about the cultural knowledge of the Qiang ethnic group on the clouds.

6. CONCLUSION

Ethnic music is not only an art form, but also an important carrier of a nation's history, culture, and emotions. Ethnic music not only cultivates high school students' aesthetic ability and improves their musical literacy, but also helps to enhance their sense of ethnic identity and cohesion. After the integration of large units, the teaching content of ethnic music can refine core knowledge, and through certain task logic arrangements, make it easier for students to improve their knowledge framework and understand the artistic characteristics of ethnic music. Large unit teaching is the future trend of teaching development. Although it is still on the path of continuous

exploration, it can still demonstrate its advantages in teaching. For teachers, designing large unit teaching can help them deeply familiarize themselves with the textbook, understand students' physical and mental development levels, and explore new teaching methods. For students, the activity design in large unit teaching is linked to real-life situations, which is beneficial for students to transform knowledge into the ability to solve life problems.

As educators, the fundamental task should be to cultivate students' moral character and improve their core competencies. Only by adhering to music curriculum standards, conducting in-depth analysis of textbooks, designing courses based on students' music abilities, and innovating teaching strategies can we help students improve their comprehensive literacy and acquire the ability to continuously apply subject knowledge.

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