

# Comparison and Reference Research of Chinese and Foreign Basic Music Education Curriculum Ideas from a Cross-Cultural Perspective

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**Abstract:** This study, from a cross-cultural perspective, conducts an in-depth comparison and reference research on the curriculum concepts of basic music education at home and abroad. The characteristics and advantages of music education under different cultural backgrounds are revealed by analyzing the differences between China and countries such as Europe, America, Japan, and South Korea in terms of the curriculum goals, contents, teaching methods, and evaluation systems of basic music education. Research has found that foreign basic music education focuses on cultivating students' creativity, individual expression, and understanding of diverse music cultures, while in China, more emphasis is placed on the inheritance of ethnic music and skills training. Drawing on advanced foreign concepts and combining them with China's national conditions can help improve the curriculum system of basic music education in our country, enhance the quality of education, cultivate new era talents with an international perspective and musical literacy, and promote the sustainable development of basic music education in our country.

**Keywords:** Cross-cultural perspective; Basic music education; Course concept; Comparative study; Reference

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## 1. Introduction

Music basic education, as an important component of the national education system, plays an irreplaceable role in cultivating students' aesthetic ability, creativity, and cultural literacy. Under the background of globalization, the music cultures of different countries exchange and integrate, bringing new opportunities and challenges to basic music education. It is of great theoretical and practical significance to conduct a comparative and reference study on the curriculum concepts of basic music education at home and abroad from a cross-cultural perspective.

Foreign countries have rich experience and advanced concepts in the field of basic music education, such as the comprehensive music perception education in the United States, the Orff music teaching method in Germany, and the Kodaly music education system in Hungary. These concepts and methods have achieved remarkable results in cultivating students' musical literacy and creativity. In contrast, although China's basic music education is constantly developing, there are still certain deficiencies in aspects such as curriculum concepts, teaching methods, and evaluation systems. By

comparing the differences in the curriculum concepts of basic music education between China and foreign countries, we can draw on advanced foreign experience, combine China's cultural traditions and educational reality, explore a development path of basic music education suitable for China's national conditions, and improve the quality and level of basic music education in China.

## **2. Comparison of curriculum objectives for basic music education between China and foreign countries**

### **2.1. Objectives and characteristics of basic music education courses abroad**

The curriculum goals of basic music education abroad usually emphasize the cultivation of students' creativity, individual expression, and understanding of diverse music cultures. Take the United States as an example. Its music education goal focuses on enabling students to develop their personal musical talents and creativity through music experience and creation, and encourages students to freely express their emotions and ideas. Music courses in the United States cover music cultures from all over the world, enabling students to understand and appreciate different styles of music and cultivate a global perspective and multicultural awareness. In Europe, the Orff music teaching method in Germany aims to cultivate students' sense of rhythm, musical perception ability, and teamwork spirit. Through games, dances, and instrument performances, it enables students to learn music in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere.

### **2.2. Characteristics of the curriculum goals for basic music Education in China**

The curriculum goals of basic music education in China mainly focus on the inheritance of ethnic music and skills training. The course emphasizes enabling students to understand and master traditional Chinese music culture, and cultivating students' love and identification with national music. In terms of skills training, emphasis is placed on cultivating students' singing, playing abilities, and basic knowledge of music. For instance, in the music courses of primary and secondary schools, a large number of teaching contents such as singing ethnic songs and playing ethnic Musical Instruments are arranged. Through systematic training, students' musical skills are improved. Music education in China also focuses on cultivating students' aesthetic ability and emotional expression ability. However, relatively speaking, the emphasis on creativity and multicultural education still needs to be enhanced <sup>[1]</sup>.

### **2.3. Difference analysis and implications**

The differences in the curriculum goals of basic music education between China and foreign countries mainly stem from different cultural backgrounds and educational concepts. Abroad, emphasis is placed on the free development of individuals and the integration of diverse cultures, while China places more emphasis on the inheritance of national culture and collectivist values. This difference enlighten us that when formulating the curriculum goals for basic music education, we should not only inherit and carry forward the excellent traditional national music culture of our country, but also draw on advanced educational concepts from abroad, pay attention to cultivating students' creativity and multicultural awareness, so that students can better adapt to the development trend of globalization while mastering music skills.

## **3. Comparison of the contents of basic music education courses between China and foreign countries**

### **3.1. The content setting of basic music education courses abroad**

The content of basic music education courses abroad is rich and diverse, covering various music styles and forms. In addition to traditional classical music and pop music, it also includes folk music, jazz, rock music, etc. Take the UK as an example. Its music courses introduce ethnic music from all over the world, such as drum music from Africa and rag

music from India, allowing students to understand the characteristics and forms of expression of music in different cultural backgrounds. Music courses abroad also emphasize the integration of music with other disciplines, such as the combination of music with fine arts, drama, literature, etc. Through interdisciplinary teaching methods, they broaden students' horizons and enhance their comprehensive qualities <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **3.2. Curriculum content setting for basic music education in China**

The content of the basic music education curriculum in China mainly focuses on Chinese folk music and classical Chinese and foreign musical works. In primary and junior high school, the curriculum will include a large amount of Chinese folk songs, ethnic instrumental music and traditional music appreciation content, allowing students to understand the development process and cultural connotation of Chinese music. It will also appropriately introduce some world-renowned musical works, such as classic pieces by composers like Beethoven and Mozart, to cultivate students' musical aesthetic ability. However, the basic music education in China still needs to be strengthened in terms of the diversity and contemporariness of the curriculum content, and the involvement in modern popular music and emerging music forms is relatively limited.

### **3.3. Difference analysis and implications**

The differences in the content of basic music education courses between China and foreign countries reflect different cultural values and educational demands. Abroad, emphasis is placed on the diversity of music and cross-cultural communication, while China places more emphasis on the inheritance of ethnic music and the study of classic works. This difference enlightens us that when enriching the content of basic music education courses, we should, based on maintaining national characteristics, increase the proportion of modern popular music and multicultural music, making the course content more closely related to students' lives and interests, and enhancing students' enthusiasm and participation in learning. Strengthen the integration of music with other subjects to cultivate students' comprehensive qualities and innovative abilities.

## **4. Comparison of teaching methods for basic music education between China and foreign countries**

### **4.1. Characteristics of teaching methods for basic music education abroad**

Foreign music basic education adopts a variety of flexible and diverse teaching methods, emphasizing students' dominant position and participation experience. For instance, the comprehensive musicality education in the United States emphasizes that students should independently explore and discover the mysteries of music through musical practice activities such as performance, composition, and appreciation, thereby cultivating their musical perception ability and creativity. The Orff music teaching method in Germany mainly uses games and improvisation as teaching means, allowing students to learn music in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere and stimulating their interest and initiative in learning. Music teaching abroad also emphasizes group cooperative learning and personalized instruction. According to the different characteristics and needs of students, personalized teaching plans are formulated to meet their learning requirements <sup>[3]</sup>.

### **4.2. Characteristics of teaching methods for basic music education in China**

The traditional teaching methods of basic music education in China mainly rely on teachers' lectures and demonstrations, emphasizing the imparting of knowledge and the training of skills. In the classroom, teachers usually first explain the key points of music knowledge and skills, and then have students do imitation exercises. This teaching method has certain effects in improving students' musical skills, but it has certain limitations in cultivating students' creativity and autonomous learning ability. In recent years, with the advancement of educational reform, China's music education has also begun to introduce some new teaching methods, such as inquiry-based learning and cooperative learning, but their application in

actual teaching is still not widespread enough.

### **4.3. Difference analysis and implications**

The differences in teaching methods of basic music education between China and foreign countries mainly stem from different educational concepts and teaching goals. Abroad, emphasis is placed on students' dominant position and individualized development, while China places more emphasis on the leading role of teachers and the systematic imparting of knowledge. This difference enlightens us that in the teaching of basic music education, we should draw on advanced teaching methods from abroad, pay attention to the students' dominant position and participation experience, and stimulate their interest in learning and creativity. Based on the actual situation of education in our country, explore music teaching methods suitable for our national conditions to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching.

## **5. Comparison of evaluation systems for basic music education at home and abroad**

### **5.1. Characteristics of the Evaluation System for basic music education abroad**

The evaluation system for basic music education abroad emphasizes diversity and process-oriented evaluation. The evaluation content not only covers students' musical skill levels, but also their musical creativity, emotional expression ability, teamwork spirit, and other aspects. The evaluation methods are diverse. Besides the traditional examinations and assessments, they also include students' musical works display, performance evaluation, self-evaluation, and peer evaluation etc. For instance, in music classes in the United States, teachers regularly organize students to engage in music creation and performance activities, and invite students and parents to participate in evaluations. This evaluation method can comprehensively and objectively reflect students' music learning situations and promote their all-round development <sup>[4]</sup>.

### **5.2. Characteristics of the evaluation system for basic music education in China**

The evaluation system for basic music education in China mainly focuses on examinations and assessments, emphasizing students' musical skill levels and their mastery of knowledge. The evaluation content is relatively simple, mainly focusing on singing, playing techniques and music theory knowledge. The evaluation method is mainly based on teacher evaluation, with less self-evaluation and peer evaluation by students. This evaluation system can reflect students' academic performance to a certain extent, but it is difficult to comprehensively and objectively assess students' musical literacy and comprehensive abilities.

### **5.3. Difference analysis and implications**

The differences in the evaluation systems of basic music education between China and foreign countries reflect different educational concepts and value orientations. Abroad, emphasis is placed on the all-round development and individual differences of students, while China places more emphasis on the objectivity and standardization of evaluation. This difference reminds us that when improving the evaluation system of basic music education in our country, we should draw on the diversified and process-oriented evaluation concepts from abroad, enrich the content and methods of evaluation, pay attention to students' self-evaluation and peer evaluation, comprehensively and objectively evaluate students' music learning situations, and promote the improvement of students' music literacy and comprehensive abilities.

## **6. Draw on foreign experience to improve the curriculum concept of basic music education in our country**

### **6.1. Adjustment and improvement of course objectives**

Drawing on the advanced concepts of foreign music basic education curriculum goals, while maintaining the inheritance of

China's ethnic music and skills training, more emphasis is placed on cultivating students' creativity, individual expression, and understanding of diverse music cultures. Incorporate the cultivation of students' global vision and multicultural awareness into the curriculum objective system, enabling students to better understand and appreciate music from different cultural backgrounds in the context of globalization, and enhance their musical literacy and comprehensive abilities.

## **6.2. Enrichment and expansion of course content**

When enriching the content of basic music education courses in our country, the proportion of modern popular music and multicultural music should be increased to make the course content more closely related to students' lives and interests. Strengthen the integration of music with other disciplines, develop interdisciplinary music courses, and cultivate students' comprehensive qualities and innovative abilities. For instance, music can be combined with subjects such as fine arts, drama, and literature to carry out comprehensive art activities, enabling students to enhance their understanding and perception of music through the cross-integration of different disciplines.

## **6.3. Innovation and application of teaching methods**

Drawing on advanced music teaching methods from abroad, such as comprehensive music perception education, the Orff music teaching method, and the Kodaly music education system, we should emphasize students' dominant position and participation experience, and stimulate their interest in learning and creativity. Based on the actual situation of education in our country, explore music teaching methods suitable for our national conditions, such as combining the traditional lecture method with modern inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning, and other methods, to improve the quality and effect of teaching.

## **6.4. Reform and optimization of the evaluation system**

Draw on the diversified and process-oriented evaluation concepts from abroad to reform the evaluation system of basic music education in our country. Enrich the evaluation content, which should not only include students' musical skill levels, but also their musical creativity, emotional expression ability, teamwork spirit and other aspects. Adopt diverse evaluation methods, such as students' musical works display, performance evaluation, self-evaluation and peer evaluation, etc., to comprehensively and objectively assess students' music learning situations and promote their all-round development<sup>[5]</sup>.

# **7. Conclusion**

The comparative and referential research on the curriculum concepts of basic music education in China and abroad from a cross-cultural perspective provides important inspirations for the development of basic music education in China. By comparing the differences between Chinese and foreign music basic education in terms of curriculum objectives, contents, teaching methods, and evaluation systems, we can see the advanced experiences and concepts of foreign countries in the field of music education. Drawing on these experiences and concepts, and in combination with our country's cultural traditions and educational realities, we can adjust and improve the curriculum concepts of basic music education in our country, and enhance the quality and level of basic music education in our country.

In terms of course objectives, greater emphasis should be placed on cultivating students' creativity, individual expression, and understanding of diverse music cultures. In terms of course content, the proportion of modern popular music and multicultural music should be increased, and the integration of music with other disciplines should be strengthened. In terms of teaching methods, we should draw on advanced teaching methods from abroad, emphasizing students' dominant position and participation experience. In terms of the evaluation system, diversified and process-oriented evaluation methods should be adopted to comprehensively and objectively assess students' music learning situations.

However, in the process of drawing on foreign experience, we should also pay attention to maintaining the national

characteristics and cultural traditions of our country's music education, and not blindly copy foreign models. Based on inheriting and carrying forward China's excellent music culture, we should absorb advanced concepts and methods from abroad, explore a development path for music basic education that suits China's national conditions, cultivate new era talents with an international perspective and musical literacy, and promote the vigorous development of China's music basic education cause.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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