

Intercultural Dialogue in Art Education: Practices and Reflections on the Integration of Chinese and Foreign Art

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Abstract. Art integration has become a hot topic nowadays and is worthy of attention, but at present, due to the imperfection of the education curriculum system and the cultural differences between learners, the process of "art integration" is difficult to complete. This paper studies the case of the integration of Chinese and western art education, analyzes its current situation to find out the advantages of its development, and gives suggestions based on the shortcomings. It is found that the integration of Chinese and western art education has gradually penetrated life, and has a positive impact on the development of cultural horizons and the cultivation of diversified artistic thinking, the enhancement of the sense of cultural identity and cultural understanding, and the improvement of creative and critical thinking, etc. However, it also needs to be further strengthened and improved in terms of the design of cross-cultural curricula, cross-cultural art expression strategies, and the cultivation of students' innovative thinking cooperation and communication abilities. However, it also needs to be further strengthened and improved in terms of cross-cultural curriculum design, cross-cultural art expression strategy and cultivating students' innovative thinking cooperation and communication ability. This paper summarises the development of the integration of Chinese and foreign art education at present and provides a comparison and direction for the further improvement of this field in the future.

Keywords: Integration of Chinese and Foreign Arts, music education, cross-border artistic expression, cross-cultural perspective.

1. Introduction

Following the advent of the 21st century, the paradigm of "arts integration" has emerged as a paramount concern within the domain of art education research [1]. This concept advocates the utilization of artistic or art-related subjects as a medium to facilitate students in constructing a comprehensive repository of knowledge from their unique perspectives, while simultaneously delving into profound educational significances through the integration of theory and practice. In the contemporary domain of art education, particularly for international educators, a significant challenge exists: the constraints inherent in educators' personal comprehension of diverse cultures, coupled with the disparities in interpretation among students hailing from varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds, exert a profound influence on the pedagogy of art. In this context, students are in urgent need of a novel and accessible approach to augment their comprehension of the facets of their major that differ from their own cultural background.

The essay finds that most of the studies in the existing literature focus on international student education mobility, but there are only a handful of studies and analyses in the field of art education. For example, Michael Ramage, director of Cambridge's Centre for Natural Materials Innovation and associate head of the Department of Architecture, said: "This is ground-breaking are bringing together art and science under the big umbrella of creativity and design, and building the curriculum to be as open and interesting as possible" [2]. The essay should note that in the current art education from a multicultural perspective, the essay is faced with a complex and multi-dimensional challenge: How

to respect and integrate the uniqueness of different cultures while maintaining the universal value of art education.

At present, there exist two primary modalities of public art curriculum training within institutions of higher education, each boasting its unique merits. The first is the explicit way of offering courses separately represented by the United States, which is essentially an attempt to cultivate "whole person" in general education. The second is the recessive way of integrating general studies into specialized courses represented by Europe. In the view of German scholar L. Huber, general education should not only not be separated from the learner's professional field, but should start from its field [3]. Take the practice of "disciplinary professional association model" in Oxford University as an example, this model can be divided into "A+B" two-discipline major and "A+B+C" three-discipline major [4]. The "generalization of professional education" refers to the establishment of a suite of interconnected subject clusters, utilizing the horizontal relationships among subject matter content and the vertical alignment of difficulty levels to facilitate students' comprehension of the curriculum. By eliminating the necessity for an additional course selection, this approach can enhance the efficiency of student learning.

From both perspectives of multi-culture and art education, this study examines the current situation of the integration of Chinese and foreign art courses, analyzes the advantages of the integration of Chinese and foreign art courses, and gives suggestions for the future development of Chinese and foreign art courses.

2. The Current Situation of Integration of Chinese and Foreign Art - Taking Music Arts as an Example

2.1. The Case of Integrating Western Music in Chinese Music Teaching Today

China has learned and borrowed a lot from the west in music education, especially in terms of skills, and this phenomenon is attributed to the fact that the west has absolute strength in most of the music fields, so the Chinese music education sector has made a lot of attempts to actively try to absorb and learn from the west in all aspects, from music fusion to education borrowing.

As early as 2019, China Music Education Network released the teaching method integration whole system training and display activities - the application of the three major international music pedagogies in Chinese school music classroom teaching, which is a typical case of integrating the three major international music pedagogies (Orff Music Teaching, Kodály Music Teaching and Dalcroze Music Teaching) in China for whole-system training [5]. It is a typical case of integrating the three major international music teaching methods (Orff, Kodály, Dalcroze) into a holistic training programme in China, which fully demonstrates the practical application of the three major music teaching methods in the classroom, and the primary school students who are the main target group of the activity, which is a proof of the importance of the Chinese music education sector to the integration of western music teaching and learning.

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In addition, many famous musicians in China, such as Guo Lijun, who strives to be a pioneer in the fusion of Chinese and western traditional music, integrate some Chinese traditional music works into western colors for teaching and interpretation [6]. Her proposed 'polyphonic musical expression'

is precisely her research on the fusion of Chinese and western methods of expression of cross-cultural artistic creation. Her proposal of 'polyphonic musical expression' is the crystallization of her wisdom in researching cross-cultural artistic creation by integrating Chinese and western expression. By combining the concepts of drama and multilinear thinking of western music with the single melody of Chinese folk works, Guo Lijun not only broadened the field of expression of her students but also significantly improved their expressive power [6]. After several rehearsals and performances, her concept of 'polyphonic musical expression' has become one of the main forms of expression in the Chinese traditional music and art world. She has long been committed to the fusion of East and West and innovative development.

The number of such cases is countless in Chinese music education, and the forms covered by the fusion of Chinese and western music education are also very wide. Let's take Bao Yuankai's 'Flavours of Yanhuang - Orchestral Music on the Theme of Folk Songs from 24 Countries' four-handed piano adaptation suite as an example, and some scholars have pointed out that this suite integrates the national tones and western piano playing techniques, to bring out the advantages of the piano in music, and fully demonstrate the piano's ability to perform music. Some scholars point out that the suite integrates national tones and western piano playing techniques, allowing the piano to fully display its advantages in music, fully demonstrating the unique charm of the piano, while at the same time showing China's local customs and natural scenery to the fullest extent [7]. Bao Yuankai's series of works adapted Chinese folk melodies and western orchestral techniques into orchestral compositions, and Chen Shuang adapted them into a four-handed version for teaching and performance. This behavior is also a profound reflection of the fact that the Chinese music education sector is actively working to integrate and learn from the positive aspects of western music education through various means, and these pieces allow students to have a deeper understanding and experience of the fusion and exchange between Chinese and western music, and at the same time allow more western music lovers to see the uniqueness of traditional Chinese music. The fusion and integration of music and arts have an impact as Fagan (2015) argues that arts integration is an effective teaching strategy that promotes student engagement and enriches students' learning experience [8].

2.2. The Case of Integrating Chinese Music in Western Music Teaching Today

As early as in the 19th and 20th centuries, western music began to learn Chinese music, like Alensky's Piano Etude on a Chinese Theme Op.25 No.3, which not only adds the ever-changing harmonies of western techniques but also draws on the essence of the elements of traditional Chinese music, fusing the techniques of western music composition with the elements of traditional Chinese music to create a unique piano work [9]. Alensky's work adopts the Chinese folk song 'Jasmine' as the theme melody, which is found in the 'Travels in China' written by the British geographer John Barrow, and the sheet music of 'Jasmine' is included in the way of five-line score, which is widely circulated in many places abroad, so he adapted the melody of 'Jasmine' into a piano work after seeing it and included it into the 'Four Piano Pieces' OP.25. It may have to be admitted that the initial attempts and successes of the fusion of Chinese and western music went far beyond existing perceptions.

With the passage of time, Chinese and western music have continued to integrate and collide with each other during this period, resulting in the rapid development and diversification of music. In 2017, the National Bard School of Music and the Central Conservatory of Music announced a new type of partnership, with the development and implementation of the 'Chinese Music Development Plan' and the creation of a professional degree program for the performance of Chinese folk instrumental music. The first-degree program in Chinese folk instrumental music performance at a foreign institution of higher education was created [10]. The two schools provide each other with their own specialties and philosophical teaching to cultivate 'new musicians who are well versed in both east and west'. For the first time, the China Conservatory of Music collaborated with an overseas conservatory to create a degree in Chinese folk instrumental music performance, exporting traditional Chinese instrumental music culture to the west through remote video tutoring, face-to-face tutoring, and live-in

assistantships for graduate students enrolled in the corresponding degree. From the perspective of the Bard Conservatory, its philosophy of 'guiding young musicians to receive a broad education in the humanities and sciences while undergoing professional training in music performance' also provides a new way of thinking about the cultivation of Chinese national instrumental composite talents through the concrete application of the co-operation project [10].

The cooperation project between Bard College of Music and the Chinese Conservatory of Music is aimed at combining the professional teaching of Chinese instrumental music performance with the liberal arts education of American liberal arts colleges, and the cooperation between the two is constantly growing, and the overall trend is also increasing upward, and has made considerable achievements, allowing Chinese traditional music to go global as well as allowing more Chinese music students to have the opportunity to study abroad, although the case of integrating Chinese music into the teaching of western music has persisted and succeeded. Although not many cases of integrating Chinese music into western music teaching have been successful, there have been initial positive attempts and positive results, and it is believed that as Chinese and western music education continue to merge and learn from each other, there will be more successful and vivid cases for scholars to explore and study in depth.

3. Analysis of Educational Advantages of Chinese and Foreign Integrated Art Courses

3.1. The Development of Cross-cultural Vision and the Cultivation of Multiple Artistic Thinking

In a globalized educational environment, art courses are not merely tools for cultural transmission but also bridges that facilitate cross-cultural dialogue. Multicultural art education, through various forms of art, helps students expand the boundaries of their cultural awareness. In transnational educational settings, students often develop unique structures of artistic cognition due to their diverse cultural backgrounds [11]. By integrating art courses from different countries, students can gradually broaden their cross-cultural perspectives by comparing and reflecting on the characteristics and values of different cultures' art.

The formation of this cross-cultural perspective is not solely about learning artistic forms but also involves a deep understanding of the cultural contexts behind the art. Henry and Costantino (2015) point out that teachers play a crucial role in cross-cultural art education [12]. By guiding students to analyze and compare artworks from different cultures, teachers help them recognize the cultural values, historical backgrounds, and social significance reflected in these works. This broadening of cross-cultural perspectives encourages students to transcend the limitations of a single cultural mindset and develop a more open and inclusive approach to art.

Moreover, the integration of art courses from different countries is not only about showcasing diverse cultural art forms but also about stimulating and nurturing students' diverse artistic thinking. Cross-cultural education provides a platform for diverse artistic expression, allowing students to develop a multidimensional way of thinking through comparison, analysis, and practice. At the core of this thinking is the ability to not only understand and apply local artistic traditions but also to absorb and integrate artistic elements from other cultures within the global context. This enables them to create innovative artworks with cultural depth.

3.2. The Enhancement of Cultural Identity and Cultural Understanding

One of the core objectives of cross-cultural dialogue within art education is to enhance cultural identity and understanding. As a key component of culture, art embodies rich histories, traditions, and values. Therefore, in cross-cultural art courses, students not only learn about the art of different cultures in terms of techniques and forms, but they also strengthen their identification with their own culture and foster a broader understanding of other cultures.

Cross-cultural dialogue in art courses effectively promotes students' sense of identity with their own culture while enhancing their understanding of others [13]. This enhancement of identity and understanding is often achieved through students' experiences and reflections on the artworks of different cultures. Through the interaction between domestic and foreign art courses, students engage in comparative analysis of the similarities and differences between local and foreign art, enabling them to develop a deeper understanding of both the uniqueness and commonalities of each culture. This, in turn, fosters mutual reinforcement of cultural identity and cross-cultural understanding.

It is worth noting that cultural identity and understanding are not static but dynamically evolving. In cross-cultural art education, students' sense of cultural identity becomes increasingly enriched and diversified as they gain deeper insights into other cultures. This dynamic cultural identity not only helps students develop a more open cultural attitude in the context of globalization but also equips them to adopt more inclusive and constructive strategies when encountering multicultural conflicts.

Moreover, Zazulak et al. (2015), through an assessment of the impact of art intervention, found that targeted training through art courses can promote positive changes in students' empathetic behavior [14]. Through sustained cross-cultural art education, teachers can cultivate students' cross-cultural empathy—an ability to use artistic expression to step into the perspectives of others and experience emotions within different cultural contexts. The development of this empathetic ability not only enables students to capture and express complex cultural emotions in their artistic creations but also lays a solid foundation for them to build cross-cultural understanding and cooperation in the future globalized society.

3.3. The Improvement of Creative Thinking and Critical Thinking

Creative thinking and critical thinking are two highly emphasized abilities in cross-cultural art education. Peng (2023) notes that educators can skillfully cultivate students' creativity and enhance their critical thinking skills by incorporating art and regional culture into their teaching methods [15]. During the integration of domestic and international art courses, students not only broaden their creative horizons through diverse cultural expressions but also develop independent and critical thinking abilities through comparison and reflection.

Firstly, the cultivation of creative thinking is particularly prominent in cross-cultural art education. Multicultural art courses provide students with a wealth of creative materials and sources of inspiration, allowing them to spark new ideas through the collision and fusion of different cultural art elements. According to Guo (2021), by introducing multicultural artworks and cultural background information, teachers can provide students with a multidimensional platform for creativity [16]. This encourages them to innovate boldly during the creative process, breaking away from the constraints of traditional art forms, and thus creating distinctive works of art within the context of globalization.

Secondly, the development of critical thinking is also significantly enhanced in cross-cultural art education. By adopting cross-cultural and interdisciplinary approaches, art education fosters an inclusive environment that encourages students to think critically [17]. Through the comparison and analysis of different cultural art forms, students learn to approach problems from multiple perspectives, questioning and reflecting on the limitations of a single cultural viewpoint. In cross-cultural art courses, students cultivate a global perspective that transcends local cultural boundaries through the critical analysis of various cultural arts, enabling them to offer independent and profound insights into their artistic creations.

In summary, cross-cultural art courses not only provide students with a wealth of creative materials but also play a crucial role in developing their creative and critical thinking skills. This enhancement of both abilities helps students establish a unique personal style in their artistic creations and provides valuable experience and methods for interdisciplinary thinking and innovative practice in other academic fields. Additionally, cross-cultural art courses enable students to better understand and respect different cultures, helping them become individuals who can translate ideas across diverse backgrounds in an increasingly globalized society, thereby fostering their overall development in a global context.

4. Suggestions on Optimizing Chinese and Foreign Art Integrated Curriculum Education

4.1. Building Cultural Bridges: Improving Cross-cultural Curriculum Design Methods

Firstly, educators can adopt internationally recognized pedagogical methods such as interdisciplinary thematic inquiry, situational simulation and the Feynman Technique: for example, “by creating diverse teaching environments, encouraging students to apply their multidisciplinary and multicultural knowledge, and through presentations, discussions, and teamwork, to enhance their linguistic expression, critical thinking, decision-making skills, and ultimately to deepen their understanding and knowledge of the arts; secondly” [7], program integration can be achieved through diverse methods to meet diversified teaching needs and achieve specific educational goals: for integration between different disciplines, educators can string and integrate knowledge points within a single discipline. Secondly, program integration can be realized through diversified methods in order to meet diversified teaching needs and achieve specific educational goals: for the integration of different disciplines, educators can connect and integrate knowledge points within a single discipline to deepen students' understanding of the core concepts of the discipline; for students with different cultural backgrounds, some learning contents may be too abstract or have barriers to understanding due to excessive geographical and cultural differences. For students from different cultural backgrounds, some of the learning content may be too abstract or due to excessive regional and cultural differences, so course professors can adopt the storytelling method, using stories as the carrier of teaching and transforming abstract knowledge into vivid plots, so as to enhance the attractiveness and significance of learning; lastly, teachers can carry out multicultural education activities or seminars to cultivate students' ability to listen to and understand the thinking and insights of different cultures, and at the same time learn to communicate their thoughts and opinions accurately and strategically, and at the same time stimulate students to learn to communicate their own ideas and opinions accurately. Finally, through multicultural education activities or seminars, teachers can develop students' ability to listen to and understand thinking and opinions in different cultures, and learn to communicate their thoughts and opinions accurately and strategically, as well as motivate them to engage in diverse cultural experiences, exchange programs and volunteer services to explore other cultures in depth, thus broadening their global perspectives and enhancing their intercultural communication skills.

4.2. Enrich the Expression Strategies of Cross-cultural Art

It is crucial for educators to emphasize cultural confidence for their students and maintain the original authenticity of culture in the process of communication in intercultural communication, while appropriately optimizing cultural elements to adapt to the acceptability of different cultural environments. Accordingly, educators ought to base their pedagogical approaches on the individual needs of their students, viewing the enhancement of intercultural communication and dialogical skills as a tangible route to educational excellence. Furthermore, it is imperative that they integrate the unique cultural attributes of their locale to manifest the conceptual frameworks and learning proclivities of students hailing from diverse cultural lineages. Regarding pedagogical approaches, it is imperative to harness the distinctives of regional cultures, embracing methodologies that are experiential and participatory, thereby progressively incorporating regional cultural elements into the national educational framework for international students. First of all, in teaching the content of regional culture knowledge, we should not only maintain the systematicness and integrity of the knowledge system, but also pay attention to its history, times and advanced nature. Secondly, it should be based on the curriculum to strengthen the integration of the second classroom, cultural experience, academic lecture hall and other practical activities. Finally, we should base on the needs of students, fully consider their language and cultural background and learning needs, follow the law of cultural cognition and promote stratification, and implement phased integration. For example, in the initial stage, more opportunities can be provided for them to interact with local people, and experiential

learning can help foreign students integrate into the social life of their country as soon as possible through visiting museums and conducting volunteer activities. By integrating the distinctive artistic attributes of various nations with contemporary media advancements, they can enhance the allure of artistic creations. For instance, the application of editing and special-effects techniques can foster works that embody local cultural traits.

4.3. Assign Independent Learning Tasks to Cultivate Students' Creative Thinking and Cooperative Communication Ability

“Teachers are guides rather than leaders in education” [9], and the teacher-student relationship should be based on mutual respect. Teachers involved in cross-border art education should focus on the equality of teachers and students in classroom teaching, and on the improvement of students' independent learning ability. Teachers may assign independent learning tasks to students before the beginning of the course, returning the classroom to students and fully mobilizing their learning enthusiasm. For example, in order to help students to systematize their knowledge and skills for their own use, to exercise their divergent thinking ability, and to actively guide the exchange and cooperation between different cultural groups of students, to form a learning atmosphere where students learn from each other and the teacher guides them.

5. Conclusion

The study, through a multifaceted examination of the integration of Chinese and foreign arts, particularly focusing on music, reveals the gradual incorporation of Western music in contemporary Chinese music education and the integration of Chinese music elements in Western music education. This bidirectional artistic integration not only promotes cross-cultural artistic exchange but also facilitates mutual learning of educational philosophies and methods. By analyzing the educational advantages of integrated art curricula, this study further identifies the development of cross-cultural perspectives, the cultivation of diverse artistic thinking, the enhancement of cultural identity and understanding, as well as the improvement of creative and critical thinking as significant outcomes of these curricula. These findings confirm the importance of cross-cultural art education in the context of globalization, highlighting its unique value in cultivating students' multidimensional thinking abilities.

This study expands academic discourse on cross-cultural art education by providing empirical insights into the integration of Chinese and foreign arts through curriculum design and teaching methods while offering practical recommendations for educators and policymakers to enhance cultural sensitivity and artistic creativity, and promote educational reforms globally.

Despite these contributions, this study's reliance on case analyses without experimental research or large-scale empirical data may limit the generalizability of its findings, warranting future research to validate and expand upon these results with broader samples and systematic data collection.

Future research should explore the impact of cross-cultural art curricula on adolescents' cultural identity and artistic innovation capabilities, focusing on the long-term effects.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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