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An Exploration of Approaches to Contextual Teaching in Elementary School Music Education from the Perspective of Authentic Learning

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Abstract: To implement the requirement in the *Compulsory Education Arts Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)* to link contextual teaching with life experiences, integrating the concept of authentic learning into elementary school music classrooms holds significant practical value. In response to current issues in music classroom situational teaching-such as fragmented tasks, overly formalized scenarios, and superficial learning outcomes-this study clarifies the theoretical similarities and differences between authenticity-based learning and situational teaching. By addressing practical needs such as classroom scenario creation, task design, and learning experiences, it constructs a teaching pathway driven by real-world projects, featuring embodied participation, and incorporating authenticity-based assessment throughout. The study also proposes optimization strategies in three areas: identifying authentic problems, leveraging digital technology, and expanding resources and learning environments. This exploration offers insights for conducting more vivid and in-depth situational teaching in elementary school music classrooms, helping students develop musical literacy through authentic experiences.

Keywords: Authentic Learning, Situational Teaching, Elementary School Music, Embodied Cognition, Project-Based Learning.

1. Introduction

The Compulsory Education Arts Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) state: "The creation of learning contexts should be connected to students' lives, guiding them to transfer their existing (life experiences) to music-related learning content and gradually transform life experiences into musical experiences." As a classic method in music education, the situational teaching approach shares the same roots as authenticity-based learning in constructivist theory. Both oppose the mechanical of knowledge and emphasize the contextual nature and subjectivity of learning, making them important tools for implementing the principles of the new curriculum standards.Although both approaches seek to foster authentic learning, their core differences can easily be confused without a deeper understanding. In current contextual teaching practices in music classrooms, problems such as fragmented tasks, formalized contexts, and superficial outcomes remain widespread, causing the creation of contexts to devolve into mere window dressing and making it difficult to achieve a deep development of students' musical literacy. Based on these issues and shared insights, this paper explores teaching approaches from the perspective of authentic learning, integrating the theoretical commonalities and practical differences between the two approaches.

2. Commonalities and Differences in the Philosophies of Authentic Learning and Contextual Teaching

The concept of contextual teaching originated from foreign educational theories such as Dewey's pragmatism and Piaget's constructivism. It was subsequently formally and systematically established in the 1980s by Chinese educator Li Jilin, who drew inspiration from foreign language teachers and applied it to elementary school Chinese language instruction. It later expanded from Chinese language education to all subjects, including music, becoming a classic teaching method in basic education for stimulating students' interest in learning and reducing the difficulty of understanding knowledge.[1] The concept of "authentic learning" was introduced from abroad and translated from the English term "Authentic learning." The word "authentic" originally means lifelike or reliable; unlike the word "real," which simply means "true," it does not refer to complete reality but rather to something that is lifelike. Therefore, the translation "authentic learning" is quite accurate.Although situational teaching and authentic learning differ in their connotations, forms, and emphases, both are rooted in the core tenets of constructivism. They reject the passive reception and rote transmission of knowledge, emphasizing that learning is a process in which learners actively construct meaning through interactions with their environment, tasks, and others. The constructivist principles of "learner-centeredness," "emphasis on experience and context," and " emphasis on practice and understanding" advocated by constructivism collectively form the theoretical foundation of these two pedagogical approaches, which is also the fundamental reason why they are often combined and mutually reinforcing in practice. In terms of their commonalities, both the situational teaching method and authenticity-based learning reject the learning models of mechanical indoctrination and passive acceptance found in traditional teaching; they emphasize the contextual, active, and practical nature of learning, and pursue the understanding and application of knowledge rather than mere memorization. [2]Li Jilin believes that the core of situational teaching lies in stimulating interest through context and guiding learning through situations; by creating typical, vivid, and meaningful scenarios, it helps students internalize knowledge and construct experiences within specific contexts. [3]Donovan, Bransford, and Pellegrino point out that authentic learning

allows students to explore, discuss, and meaningfully construct concepts and relationships within the contextual framework of real-world problems and projects that are relevant to them.It emphasizes that learning cannot be separated from specific contexts and advocates that learning should take place within meaningful tasks closely tied to the real world, enabling students to construct their knowledge through the resolution of real-world problems. As such, both paradigms recognize the supportive role of context in learning and adhere to the basic "learner-centered" stance of constructivism; they are highly aligned in their goals of promoting deep understanding among students and enhancing their ability to transfer knowledge.[4]

Although situational teaching and authentic learning both draw on constructivism as their theoretical foundation and emphasize the supportive role of context in learning, they differ fundamentally in their understanding of the nature, degree, and practical implications of "authenticity"-which constitutes the most crucial basis for distinguishing between the two. The authenticity pursued by situational teaching is a typified, emotional, and symbolic form of reality, focusing on psychological and emotional immersion. Situational teaching does not replicate the real world; rather, it involves distilling typical elements based on instructional objectives and artistically crafting scenarios that are "true in form, vivid in emotion, profound in meaning, and imbued with underlying principles."[5] Its core lies in using emotion as a bond to awaken experiences and promote understanding. This form of authenticity does not require complete isomorphism with real-world tasks; it allows for simulation and imagination, serving to stimulate interest and construct meaning-it is a "quasi-authenticity" designed for learning. [6]Authentic learning refers to the process of connecting what students learn in school to real-world events, problems, and applications through a wide range of educational and instructional technologies. It emphasizes It emphasizes students' authentic experiences and advocates for learning through the process of addressing real-world problems. [7]In other words, the authenticity emphasized by authenticity-based learning refers to the authenticity of practical logic, problem-solving, and the derivation of outcomes, requiring learning activities to be highly isomorphic with the real world. By having students confront real problems, undertake real tasks, and produce real outcomes, this approach seamlessly integrates knowledge acquisition with practical application, ultimately fostering transferable, authentic learning competencies. This authenticity emphasizes comprehensive tasks, real-world contexts, and practical engagement, pursuing the act of doing real things to drive the development of competencies and the cultivation of literacy through real-world experiences. With the continuous advancement of science and technology and the influx of technologies such as AI and VR into the field of education, authenticity is no longer confined to the physical world; the scope of authenticity-based learning can thus be expanded to include the process by which students gain authentic experiences in either real or virtual contexts.

In short, both the situational teaching method and authenticity-based learning are rooted in constructivism and place equal emphasis on context and active construction; their core difference lies in their understanding of authenticity. The former pursues symbolic and psychological authenticity through "real form, vivid emotion, profound meaning, and underlying principles," while the latter emphasizes practical and functional authenticity, bringing learning back to authentic settings. Each has its own focus and complements the other, jointly propelling learning from superficial perception toward deep construction.

3. Implementation Strategies for Authentic Learning to Empower Situational Teaching

Having clarified the commonalities and differences between situational teaching and authentic learning, the key to overcoming the current challenges in music situational teaching lies in how to translate their core principles into actionable classroom practices.Currently, contextual teaching in elementary school music classrooms still faces prominent issues such as fragmented tasks, overly formalized contexts, and superficial learning outcomes. The teaching process often breaks down comprehensive learning content into isolated skill drills, making it difficult to establish a coherent and progressive learning sequence. Context creation often remains limited to superficial audiovisual experiences and scenario simulations, lacking a deep connection to the essence of music itself. Assessment of learning outcomes tends to focus on immediate classroom experiences, making it difficult to effectively transfer musical literacy to real-world contexts. By grounding contextual teaching in the intrinsic requirements of authentic learning-specifically, practical authenticity and the development of musical literacy-and using this approach to enhance existing contextual teaching, we can construct more effective instructional strategies across three dimensions: authentic projects, embodied practice, and dynamic assessment guided by authentic learning competencies.

3.1. Reconstructing a Task System Driven by Authentic Projects

Currently, situational teaching in elementary school music still faces the prominent drawback of fragmented tasks, often breaking down song learning into isolated components such as listening to and appreciating melodies, learning to sing in sections, rhythm exercises, and emotional interpretation. While this linear progression may appear logically coherent, it effectively severs the connection between knowledge and real life. Even when teachers create exquisite audiovisual contexts during the introduction-such as playing footage of grassland scenery to introduce "Horse Racing"-subsequent skill training remains disconnected from the context, reducing the context to mere sensory decoration in the classroom. Under this model, students acquire only mechanical muscle memory and fragmented knowledge points, failing to develop a holistic understanding of musical works. Consequently, the creation of contextual scenarios becomes nothing more than an isolated formal embellishment, making it difficult to achieve the knowledge construction and skill transfer advocated by authentic learning.In response to the issues mentioned above, the introduction of Project-Based Learning (PBL) is the inevitable path to restructuring the task system. PBLWorks (formerly the Buck Institute for Education, BIE) has outlined the "golden rules" for high-quality project-based learning, noting that PBL begins with a challenging driving question, one of the characteristics of which is authenticity. This provides authoritative confirmation of the intrinsic link between project-based learning and authenticity. As the foundation of project-based learning, authenticity-based

learning possesses three characteristics: a focus on problem-solving, an emphasis on integration, and the stimulation of creativity. Based on real-life problems, it effectively integrates knowledge and skills within disciplines, across disciplines, and beyond disciplinary boundaries.

The core of an authentic project lies in the three "golden standard" elements proposed by PBLWorks: "Authenticity," "Sustained Inquiry," and "Public Product." Building on this foundation, fragmented skill training is restructured into a closed-loop task chain-comprising role assignment, progressive inquiry, and final presentation-thereby overcoming the challenge of task fragmentation.

Take "Ode to the Yellow River" from Unit 2, "Praise for the Motherland," in the first semester of the sixth-grade People's Music textbook as an example. First, using "Authenticity" as the starting point, the vague traditional objectives of appreciating the song and understanding its cultural significance are upgraded to the authentic project goal of planning and executing a class performance titled "The History of the Yellow River During the War of Resistance." At this point, students' roles shift from song learners to performance planners and performers. All subsequent tasks-such as researching materials, assigning vocal parts, and rehearsing-are centered around the authentic goal of a successful performance, thereby avoiding fragmented objectives.Second, by using "continuous inquiry" to link the task process, we restructure the linear, fragmented stages into an ascending cycle of inquiry-rehearsal-revision. During the inquiry phase, students first work in groups to research the history of the War of Resistance and the composers' backgrounds, providing a foundation for the performance design. When issues such as disharmony between vocal parts, rhythm discrepancies, or inconsistent breath entries arise during sectional rehearsals, students can revisit the knowledge of musical form acquired during the exploration phase to readjust their coordination. Although the process emphasizes fostering students' autonomy, teachers must still provide timely "scaffolding" by posing authentic questions-such as "How can we make the chorus sound more spirited?"-to further guide corrections and ensure that skill training serves problem-solving.[8]

Finally, a "public performance" serves as the task's culmination, elevating the superficial achievement of simply "singing through" a piece-common in traditional classrooms-to authentic demonstrations such as online releases or in-class competitions. Students must ensure the quality of their performance, undergo multi-stakeholder, multi-level, and multidimensional evaluations, and ultimately close the loop with all prior tasks, thereby completely eliminating the fragmented tendency of practicing merely for the sake of practice. This represents a classic example of backward design.[9]

3.2. Deep Somatic Connections in Embodied Practice

Currently, music context-based teaching in China is constrained by classroom environments and class schedules, often relying on audiovisual materials and scenario simulations to create virtual contexts, which can easily lead to formalistic pitfalls. Students passively perceive these experiences through their senses alone, lacking active participation; their experiences remain superficial, making it difficult to fulfill the core requirement of authentic learning-"learning by doing"-and resulting in a typical state of disembodied teaching. "Our bodies are always situated within a concrete lifeworld; this lifeworld constitutes the context of our existence and endows our actions with meaning." [10]Phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty emphasized that bodily experience plays an indispensable role in shaping an individual's perception of the world.[11] This suggests that students should actively participate in various classroom activities, elevating their sensory experiences to the integration of embodied cognition into education and fully leveraging the role of the body in learning, thereby breaking through the "disembodied" classroom teaching model.

The commonalities between the authentic experiences emphasized by embodied cognition and authentic learning provide a new theoretical perspective for overcoming the tendency toward formalism and sensory-centricity in situational teaching. A five-dimensional framework comprising "problem-goal-task-embodied practice-transfer of outcomes" can be constructed, as shown in Figure 1.

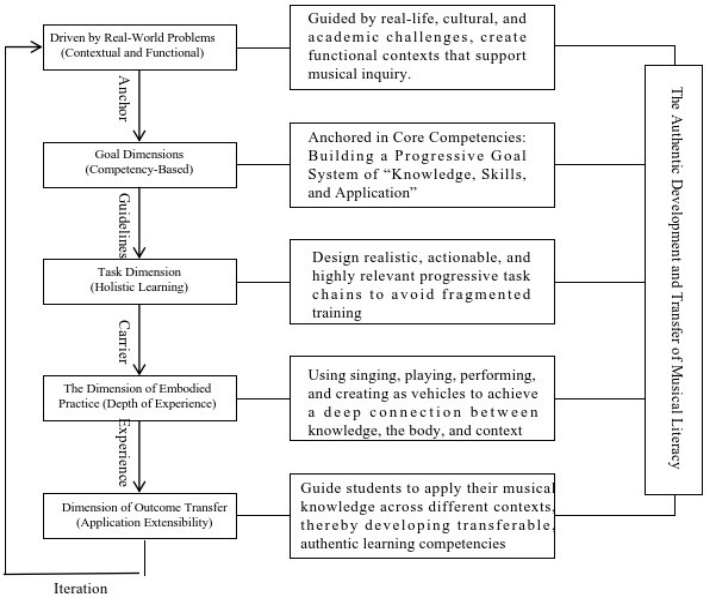


Figure 1. Five-Dimensional Framework for Embodied Practice Based on Authenticity-Based Learning

The framework consists of five dimensions: authentic problems, objectives, authentic tasks, embodied practice, and transfer of outcomes. These dimensions sequentially drive and mutually support one another, forming a continuously deepening operational mechanism for embodied practice. Starting with real-world problems, guided by objectives, carried out through real-world tasks, centered on embodied practice, and culminating in the transfer of outcomes, the process iteratively generates new real-world problems, thereby forming a complete, spiraling closed loop.

Taking real-world problems as the starting point, the "Objectives" dimension is anchored as the basis for subsequent framework design. Guided by the core competencies of the arts curriculum standards, the "Objectives" dimension establishes three-tiered, layered goals encompassing knowledge, skills, and transfer. The knowledge dimension focuses on understanding the essence of music. The competency dimension emphasizes the integration of bodily experience with musical expression and collaboration. The transfer dimension points toward application in real-world contexts. The real-world task dimension serves as the vehicle for implementing embodied practice. Based on these tiered objectives, real or quasi-real musical tasks-closely aligned with students' life experiences and cognitive levels-are designed in accordance with three principles: authenticity, appropriateness, and operability. The embodied practice dimension, as the core component of the framework, constructs meaning through physical engagement, facilitating a transition from superficial imitation to deep understanding. The outcome transfer dimension is the key to closing the loop; building on the experience of embodied practice, it drives students to achieve the transfer of skills across content, contexts, and lesson types. The "Transfer of Learning Outcomes" dimension serves as the value anchor, driving the transformation of learning abilities into real-world applications and, in turn, iteratively generating new real-world problems. This propels the learning cycle forward, ultimately achieving the systematic development of musical literacy.

To clearly demonstrate the practical feasibility of the five-dimensional framework, we use the song "The Rice-Pounding Song" from the "Songs of Labor" unit in the first semester of the third-grade "Renyin" edition as an example. By reflecting on the real-world labor problem of "how to efficiently transport hollow stools," the objective is elevated to solving a real-life collective task using the rhythmic logic of "The Rice-Pounding Song." The corresponding task shifts from a classroom game to the real-world labor activity of "transporting hollow stools." In practice, Phase One lays the groundwork for embodied cognition based on "The Rice-Pounding Song," linking it to the motion of pounding rice. A song excerpt is played, and the teacher demonstrates the rice-pounding motion using a simulated pestle-striking down forcefully (on the beat) and lifting lightly (off the beat). Students imitate the movements, gaining an initial sense of the connection between the beat and the force of the downward strike, while relating this to the rhythmic pattern x xx|x 0. Next, students work in groups to pound playdough with small toy pestles. By comparing two methods-pounding randomly versus following the accents-students independently discover that the latter requires less effort and results in more uniform movements, thereby understanding that rhythmic accents serve to make labor more efficient. In Phase Two, students are divided into groups and assigned tasks centered on the objective of transporting hollow stools from the adjacent music classroom to their own classroom. The transport group followed the song's strong-weak rhythm, synchronizing the lifting of the stools (applying force on the strong beats) with stepping forward (cushioning on the weak beats); every four steps corresponded to one musical phrase, with pauses to avoid crowding. The three-person organizing group worked in time with the rhythm to receive and position the stools (on the strong beats) and adjust the spacing (on the weak beats), arranging them in a U-shape. In Phase Three, the class tracked the time taken, inspected the condition of the stools, and held a class discussion. Students clearly understood the principle that synchronized lifting on the strong beats enhances stability and genuinely experienced the value of rhythmic collaboration in solving real-world labor challenges. Authentic assessment refers to the general term for qualitative assessments conducted by students as they engage in real-world scenarios and tackle real-world problems. It moves away from diagnostic assessments centered on paper-and-pencil tests and shifts toward a developmental assessment approach centered on problem-solving. The intrinsic essence of authentic assessment lies in "connecting to real-world contexts, focusing on real problems, and aiming for genuine understanding."[12] An integrated assessment design that is multidimensional, multilevel, and multi-channel not only embodies the intrinsic essence of authentic assessment but also serves as a crucial pathway for moving assessment from the classroom to real life and from a narrow focus to a comprehensive one. More importantly, it can fully capture the continuously evolving state of students across various aspects within authentic learning contexts.

Authentic assessment must cover multiple dimensions of objective entities within real-world contexts and problems, aligning not only with tangible objects in real life but also with quasi-real or virtual entities within the context. [13]In the practice of authentic assessment, real-world contexts must serve as the primary premise. For example, in teaching "Forest Rhapsody," the teacher first plays audio recordings of birdsong, flowing water, and insects to help students grasp the key elements of the song. Next, the teacher uses the real-world context of "animals in the forest holding a concert" to engage students' sense of hearing. Following this, videos of forests and animals are shown to provide visual guidance; As the lesson progresses, through the design of separate vocal parts, when a particular part appears, some students use body movements to indicate its entry and exit, or incorporate appropriate small instruments-this constitutes physical participation. Students gradually perceive the elements through auditory, visual, and tactile senses, gaining a firsthand, multidimensional understanding of the objects in the scenario-including their colors, shapes, and structures.

Multilevel assessment aligns with the dynamic, generative nature of authentic assessment. Authentic assessment targets the various dimensions and levels of individual cognition, which encompasses multiple dimensions such as perception, judgment, beliefs, values, and attitudes.[14] Authentic assessment "is not a static, one-time judgment, but a dynamic, multi-agent interactive process".[15] Multi-level assessment is based precisely on this logic, establishing tiered criteria according to differences in students' cognitive development to accommodate the growth needs of students at different developmental levels. First, students begin their learning exploration based on their existing cognitive level, and teachers must conduct an initial assessment of this baseline.

Second, guided by newly introduced knowledge, students integrate and construct their existing cognition with new knowledge. Finally, students complete tasks using their reconstructed cognition, and teachers conduct a comprehensive evaluation covering emotional style, logical thinking, and skills. To delve even deeper, interactive exchanges among diverse groups can be facilitated to enable comprehensive evaluation from a higher-order perspective. For example, in the previously mentioned teaching process of "Ode to the Yellow River," students independently researched the historical background of the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, using their self-awareness to conceptualize multifaceted research preparations. Subsequently, the teacher posed authentic questions to guide improvements and integrate more specialized knowledge; students' subsequent self-construction after absorbing this information represented a further cognitive upgrade. The final presentation of their work not only demonstrated students' ability to solve real-world problems but also showcased their comprehensive competencies. In summary, students' competency levels-including emotional, cognitive, and critical thinking aspects-as well as their progress over time, must be assessed from multiple levels.

Multi-channel assessment provides a contextual foundation for multidimensional and multilevel evaluation, breaking away from the traditional model where the teacher is the sole evaluator and forming a three-dimensional structure that combines teacher evaluation, student self-assessment and peer assessment, and diverse external evaluations. Teachers focus on evaluating the logical coherence of knowledge and the depth of thinking from a professional perspective; students engage in self-reflection and peer support through self- and peer assessment; while external channels-such as online platforms and competition judges-introduce practical feedback on public aesthetic preferences and real-world applicability. The evaluative perspectives from these different channels complement one another, enabling multidimensional and multilevel assessment standards to be implemented in real-world contexts, thereby further enhancing the authenticity and relevance of the evaluation. For example, the short-video blogger "Ya Ya Jie" has repeatedly shared content online featuring her singing pop songs in duets with students. The format of teacher-student duets also serves as a manifestation of embodied interaction between teachers and students. Music teachers like this share their teaching content online, inviting diverse groups to participate in the evaluation. By offering commentary from a relatable and engaging perspective, they ensure that evaluation dimensions better align with students' actual cognitive development and life experiences, thereby addressing the blind spots in traditional evaluation approaches.

4. Recommendations for Optimizing Empowerment-Based Contextual Teaching from the Perspective of Authentic Learning

Authentic learning can establish the strongest possible connection with the real world and provides a practical pathway for implementing empowerment-based contextual teaching. At the same time, it places higher demands on various aspects; therefore, there are still some shortcomings in the implementation process that require further optimization. In light of this, targeted and actionable optimization recommendations can be proposed by addressing three key areas-identifying authentic problems, leveraging digital technology, and expanding resource availability-with the aim of providing practical guidance for enhancing the quality and effectiveness of elementary school music scenario-based instruction.

4.1. Grounding in the Real World: Strengthening the Ability to Identify Authentic Problems

Authentic problems serve as a vital link between music learning and real life, and they are the core means of implementing the concept of authenticity in scenario-based instruction. To overcome the challenges of unrealistic scenarios, vague problems, and a disconnect from real life, elementary school music classrooms must be grounded in real-life contexts that students can perceive, participate in, and explore. Only by using the real world as a foundation to identify authentic problems with room for inquiry can students transition from passive listening and appreciation to active knowledge construction.

First, draw on life experiences to awaken a sense of inquiry. Authentic learning is a learning approach rooted in real life, generating real-world problems, and oriented toward real-life applications. Music originates from and serves life; primary school students' musical perception does not start from scratch. Everyday scenarios such as games, chores, festive activities, local culture, and school ceremonies all contain rich musical elements-including rhythm, melody, timbre, and emotional expression. As Guo Yuanxiang emphasizes, authentic contexts rooted in the real world make learning possible; the specific environments, real-life situations, and complex problems found in the real world stimulate genuine learning. [16]This requires teachers to be adept at extracting musical problems from life scenarios familiar to students, transforming abstract musical knowledge into tangible, exploratory tasks. By doing so, students can actively discover, understand, and apply music within familiar contexts, thereby naturally awakening their intrinsic motivation to learn and their interest in inquiry.

Second, problems and cognition mutually drive one another and develop continuously. Real-world problems and cognition are interconnected and inseparable. Real-world problems activate problem-related knowledge, skills, and methods within an individual's existing cognitive framework, bringing together knowledge and information that were previously scattered across the individual's cognitive domain to form problem-centered, interrelated clusters of knowledge. [17]Authentic cognition also continuously expands as problems are solved, breaking down existing cognitive structures and constantly reorganizing and renewing one's knowledge system. In addition to changes within one's own knowledge system, other factors-such as shifts in real-world contexts-also prompt individuals to generate new authentic problems. The close connection between authentic problems and cognition enables individuals to grow as they solve various complex problems; this constitutes a dynamically evolving cognitive cluster. In actual teaching, students' cognitive levels, life experiences, and thinking characteristics dictate that the design of music-related problems must align with their age-specific traits and receptivity. These problems should incorporate both students' intuitive understanding of real-life scenarios and their preliminary perception of

professional musical elements. Problems should possess both a sense of real-life context and disciplinary attributes, guiding students to achieve simultaneous enhancement of cognition and experience while solving authentic problems.

Third, emphasize the balance between pre-set and generative thinking. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, children in the concrete operational stage necessarily rely on concrete objects and practical activities for their logical thinking, rather than abstract thinking.[18] This suggests that entirely pre-set questions may restrict children's natural inclination to explore, but this does not mean that generative thinking should be left unchecked; otherwise, it would be difficult to ensure the learning of music itself. Observations show that most music classrooms in China remain teacher-centered, with students rarely raising questions on their own. This is not because students are unwilling to ask questions or afraid to express themselves, but rather due to structural issues in the domestic classroom teaching system-namely, the concentration of the right to ask questions in the hands of the teacher, the compression of inquiry-based learning, and the disconnect between assignments and real life. As a result, even when students have doubts, these often remain confined to superficial knowledge such as music theory and singing, making it difficult for them to formulate authentic questions that integrate both disciplinary knowledge and real-world relevance.

Adopting a balanced model-where teacher-designed frameworks serve as scaffolding and student-driven generation takes center stage-is the key to overcoming this dilemma. "Pre-design" does not mean rigidly locking in teaching content and answers; rather, it involves building an open, flexible, and evolving teaching framework based on curriculum standards, centered on the essence of music, and grounded in students' life experiences. Student-generated inquiry is not about disorderly laissez-faire; rather, it involves capturing the confusion and curiosity that naturally arise from students' authentic experiences and embodied practices, transforming scattered questions into genuine problems that connect musical knowledge with real-world contexts. We oppose excessive teacher-centered pre-planning; what we need is careful, student-centered pre-planning. [19]Teachers must shift from being the posers of predetermined questions to the catalysts of authentic questions, appropriately returning the right to speak in the classroom to students.

At the same time, in practice, by drawing on real-life contexts such as campus labor, class activities, and festive ceremonies, we enable students to naturally generate questions-such as "Why does labor require rhythm?"-that possess both disciplinary value and practical significance as they apply music to solve practical problems involving collaboration, expression, and presentation. Furthermore, teaching mechanisms should include flexible inquiry periods and establish fixed classroom procedures for collecting questions, group discussion, and whole-class clarification, making the raising of authentic questions a routine part of music learning. Only by using pre-planning to ensure direction and generating questions to stimulate vitality-while returning the right to ask questions to students-can we truly cultivate students' awareness of authentic questions.[22]

4.2. Leveraging Digital Technology to Empower an Authentic Assessment System

The development of digital technology in the new era has undoubtedly brought new opportunities to the field of education. The state has repeatedly emphasized that "the digitization of education is a crucial breakthrough for China in opening up new avenues for educational development and forging new competitive advantages."[20] By harnessing the unique strengths of technology, education can shift from large-scale standardization to personalization and intelligence, enabling every student to have an educational plan tailored to their individual needs and achieve free and comprehensive development.[21] Under the philosophy of authentic learning, assessment is no longer a simple judgment of learning outcomes but rather a crucial component that runs through the entire learning process, linking real-world contexts to student development. With its dynamism, integration, and scalability, digital technology can make assessment more closely aligned with students' actual learning patterns and more comprehensively document their growth trajectories in contextual experiences, embodied practices, and collaborative inquiry, thereby enhancing the scientific rigor, comprehensiveness, and effectiveness of assessment.

First, through diverse and collaborative participation, online assessment is implemented. Traditional music classroom assessment is often teacher-centered, with a relatively limited perspective that struggles to systematically incorporate student self-assessment, peer observation, and authentic performance during the learning process. Digital platforms and online tools can break through the constraints of time, space, and single-subject evaluation, driving a shift from single-subject to multi-stakeholder, collaborative assessment and establishing an online assessment mechanism that combines teacher evaluation, student self-assessment, and peer assessment. Through digital platforms, it is possible to record and present students' participation, practical performance, and collaborative behavior in real-world contexts, providing intuitive evidence for diverse forms of assessment and making the evaluation process more open and interactive. The participation of multiple stakeholders not only enriches the sources of assessment information but also shifts students from passively receiving evaluations to actively participating in them. Through reflection and dialogue, students deepen their music learning experiences, making the assessment process more aligned with the agency and contextuality emphasized in authentic learning.

Second, leverage precise data to implement comprehensive assessments. Music learning is skill-based, emotional, and practical; many key dimensions of development are implicit and process-oriented, making it difficult to achieve a comprehensive and continuous understanding through empirical observation alone. Digital technology enables the concurrent collection of multimodal process data on students' performance in real-world tasks, embodied activities, and contextual inquiry. Through dynamic analysis, it forms a relatively complete learning profile that takes into account both explicit performance and implicit competencies, as well as stage-specific progress and sustained development. At the same time, data-driven approaches do not simply prioritize quantification above all else, nor do they serve as a standard in and of themselves. Their role is to supplement the limitations of experiential judgment with objective information, helping teachers more accurately grasp students' actual states in areas such as emotional expression, collaborative performance, and problem-based inquiry. This enables a comprehensive assessment that balances process and outcomes, considers skills and competencies equally, and

combines general guidance with individualized attention. On this basis, assessment feedback can more promptly inform instructional adjustments, driving teaching activities to continuously align with students' genuine needs and growth pace, and promoting the effective implementation of authentic learning in music classrooms. The integration of digital technology and authentic assessment does not mean replacing educational judgment with technology, but rather using technology to empower the transformation of assessment concepts and practices, making assessment better suited to the authenticity, contextuality, and developmental needs of elementary school music classrooms.

4.3. Improving Resource Provision and Expanding Integration with Authentic Contexts

High-quality, abundant teaching resources that are closely aligned with real life are a crucial foundation for driving elementary music context-based instruction toward greater depth and effectiveness. Only by breaking through the spatial limitations of the classroom and integrating diverse resources from both within and outside the school can music learning move beyond textbooks and classrooms to truly achieve authentic contexts and profound experiences. By combining the essence of authentic learning, the practice of bringing high-quality off-campus resources into schools, and research on off-campus arts education, we can provide stable support for music context-based teaching from the perspective of authentic learning through two approaches: integrating online and offline resources to expand all-encompassing learning spaces, and establishing multi-party collaboration mechanisms to strengthen teacher training and resource guarantees.

First, integrate in and out, online and offline, to broaden the learning space. The key to bringing music learning back to the heart of daily life lies in properly managing the two closely interrelated pairs: online versus offline, and bringing resources in versus going out. Online resources transcend time and space, offer rich content, and provide intuitive presentation; they can introduce high-quality live contexts-such as concerts, traditional opera performances, folk song fieldwork, and instrumental performances-into the classroom, effectively compensating for the immersion and authenticity that offline teaching struggles to achieve. By leveraging public resources such as digital arts education platforms, digital music libraries, online concert halls, and intangible cultural heritage video archives, stage performances, live choral performances, and folk music performances can be transformed into classroom learning scenarios, allowing students to gain a more intuitive understanding of musical expression, emotional conveyance, and cultural significance through immersive audiovisual experiences. At the same time, tools such as interactive music software, audio recording and editing, and virtual presentations can further enhance student engagement and the sense of experience, transforming online resources into a vital extension of real-world settings.

The expansion of offline settings focuses on promoting two-way interaction through "bringing in" and "going out." "Bringing in" refers to systematically introducing high-quality off-campus music resources, folk music materials, intangible cultural heritage projects, professional instructors, and cultural venue resources into the school campus, bringing local folk songs, regional opera, folk instrumental music, and folk music into the classroom-which in turn involves the development of school-based curricula. "Going out" refers to taking students out of the classroom and into real-world settings such as cultural centers, intangible cultural heritage transmission bases, theaters, and community cultural spaces; here, schools can draw inspiration from Germany's "School@Museum"project.

Second, we must rely on support from multiple sources to strengthen faculty support. The continuous expansion of authentic learning environments and the regular supply of resources cannot be achieved without a stable and efficient support system. Whether it involves the integration of online and offline resources or two-way interaction through "bringing in" and "going out," professional expertise, coordinated resource allocation, and institutional support are essential foundations. Relying solely on on-campus faculty and standard resources makes it difficult to sustain diverse, dynamic, and in-depth authentic learning environments over the long term; therefore, it is imperative to establish a support mechanism that fosters multi-stakeholder collaboration and internal-external coordination. Within established guidelines, schools can strengthen cooperation with cultural and tourism departments, cultural venues, intangible cultural heritage centers, community organizations, and arts groups to establish stable channels for resource supply, providing solid support for the integration of online and offline resources and the expansion of learning environments both on and off campus.

In terms of faculty development, collaborative mechanisms help enhance teachers' abilities to integrate resources, design learning environments, and organize practical activities. Through teaching and research collaboration, expert guidance, and school-community partnerships, teachers can become more proficient in utilizing online resources, designing interactive activities, and coordinating authentic context-based instruction, thereby continuously improving their professional competence in implementing authentic learning. At the same time, internal coordination and institutional safeguards are equally critical; ensuring seamless integration in areas such as curriculum planning, activity organization, safety management, and resource allocation can guarantee the smooth implementation of resources and the orderly operation of learning contexts. Teachers must also cultivate a mindset of interdisciplinary and cross-specialty collaboration and strengthen communication across disciplines. Through multi-party collaboration, internal and external coordination, standardized operations, and continuous optimization, we can provide long-term support for resource provision and the expansion of learning contexts, enabling deeper integration of online and offline learning, smoother interaction between the two, and the continuous refinement of authentic learning contexts alongside the sustained strengthening of resource provision.

5. Conclusion.

The optimization of situational music instruction in elementary schools from the perspective of authenticity-based learning hinges on constructing an integrated model where tasks are driven by real-world problems, experiences are deepened through embodied practice, and the dilemma of superficial learning outcomes is addressed through authenticity-based assessment-thereby propelling instruction from superficial forms toward the actual development of competencies. Due to limitations in the research setting and sample size, the generalizability of these conclusions remains

to be further verified. Future research could be expanded to diverse teaching contexts and, by combining long-term tracking with digital assessment tools, continue to deepen the exploration of the long-term effectiveness of teaching. The essence of music education ultimately lies in guiding students to learn to perceive, understand, and express beauty through authentic experiences and creativity-which is precisely the core value that situational teaching has always sought to achieve.

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