Student-Centered Exploration of Diverse Teaching Strategies for Music Listening

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Abstract: The "Compulsory Education Art Curriculum Standards" (2022 Edition) emphasizes the fundamental role of listening in music education, asserting it as an indispensable avenue for nurturing students' core musical literacy. Listening serves as a direct conduit to musical perception, profoundly impacting students by enriching their emotional engagement, fostering a depth of auditory experiences, enhancing appreciation for musical aesthetics, and promoting holistic well-being. Thus, this paper delves into an analysis of the current situation of music listening education, conducting theoretical analysis and strategy exploration on the relationship between listening and music teaching. Through reflective optimization of teaching instances, the paper culminates in summarizing effective pathways for music listening, aimed at helping students listen effectively and advance their auditory acumen.

Keywords: Music listening; primary school music; teaching strategies.

1. The Current Situation of Music Listening Education

The "Compulsory Education Art Curriculum Standards" (2022 Edition) underscores: "Listening is the foundation of music learning and an important avenue for cultivating students' core literacy. Good music auditory and appreciation abilities are of great significance for students to enrich emotional experiences, accumulate musical auditory experiences, appreciate the beauty of music, and promote physical and mental health growth[1]." Thus, exploring and implementing effective listening teaching strategies in music pedagogy carry profound significance. Through a repertoire of diverse teaching strategies, tailored to different auditory modalities, the goal is to refine students' musical acumen and elevate their appreciation levels. This pedagogical approach not only aligns with the evolving trends in music education but also responds to national mandates, fostering a comprehensive development ethos among students. Consequently, delving into the application of varied listening teaching strategies not only propels the evolution of music education but also cultivates a cohort of highly skilled and well-rounded musical talents.

In current conventional music classrooms, the form of listening activities often appears to be monotonous and dull. Teachers typically require students to listen quietly through methods such as playing recordings or live performances, followed by simple explanations of some musical characteristics and feelings. This traditional teaching method not only fails to fully stimulate students' interest in learning but also makes it difficult for them to truly engage with the music, let alone cultivate their musical perception and appreciation.

Recognizing the limitations of this method, many educators are experimenting with innovative approaches. Some introduce diverse musical contexts and materials, while others design interactive listening activities to capture students' attention and foster engagement. However, due to a lack of systematic guidance and practical experience, these efforts often fall short of expectations. The need for exploring diverse listening teaching strategies is increasingly evident. Through such strategies, students not only experience music through various mediums but also become more engaged and proactive, nurturing their appreciation and creativity. These methods can also better cater to students' diverse needs, fostering holistic development. Thus, this study aims to investigate the practical application and impact of diverse listening teaching strategies in music education, providing valuable insights for practitioners and propelling the field's evolution and enhancement.

2. The Relationship between Listening and Music Education

2.1. Listening and Aesthetic Education

Music, as a discipline rooted in auditory perception, underscores the primacy of listening in its pedagogy. Moreover, the humanistic and egalitarian dimensions inherent in music listening are indispensable. Positioned as a vital branch of humanities and an expression of unique intelligence[2], music education holds profound implications for nurturing children's adaptability to the future, encompassing aesthetic acumen, creativity, imagination, memory, critical thinking, interpersonal skills, and confidence, thus embodying significant aesthetic education value. However, this must stem from attentive listening to children's voices. Listening serves as a testament to respect and democracy. When founded upon this principle, children are empowered to vocalize and express their aesthetic sensibilities and imaginative faculties, fostering active engagement in critical inquiry. Gradually, children will build their confidence, becoming a new generation of young people who dare to express themselves, know how to express themselves, desire to express themselves, and are willing to express themselves. In listening, we can also teach students to communicate, as practical listening skills are acquired through the influence of role models. When children observe someone listening and paying attention to them, they understand the value of listening and the importance of reciprocating this attentive behaviour in interactions with others. Therefore, in music teaching, it is essential to listen more to children's voices and serve as good role models for
Listening to children's voices can ignite their musical creativity. In Cao Li's book "Music Learning and Teaching Psychology," an intriguing case is recounted: "At the age of 4, the composer Liang Lei, while learning the piano, often played randomly instead of focusing. Occasionally, he would produce decent melodies. Whenever Liang Lei composed a piece, his father, Liang Mooshun, would assist in recording it. Over the years, they accumulated several boxes of tapes." Such encouragement profoundly fueled Liang Lei's passion for composition[3]. If teachers consistently foster an environment where students are encouraged to create and explore during music classes, a simple word from a teacher might sow the seeds of creativity in children's hearts, blossoming into beautiful expressions in due time. Professor Liang Baohua conducted a research project on composition in five primary schools in Hong Kong, suggesting: "The secret to motivating students to compose lies in teachers actively inspiring them to engage in creative activities, rather than passively waiting[4]." Similar enchanting experiences have unfolded in my own music class. Before each session, I often sing a greeting song with the children. Initially, I rushed through it, fearing it might consume too much time and impede lesson progress. Consequently, I resorted to executing a multitude of creative actions on my own. However, one day, I noticed the eager anticipation in the children's eyes, prompted by their enthusiasm, I inquired if they had better ideas. This simple question sparked a cascade of creativity. Children suggested greetings using their noses, foreheads, adopting Iron Man poses, imitating lucky cat gestures, and a myriad of other imaginative approaches, resembling a colourful downpour enriching every corner of the music room. This delightful experience prompted introspection: What did I do differently to facilitate such engagement? The answer lay in truly listening to and seeing the children.

Observing the Chaos in "Concert Halls" through Listening, listening can enhance children's understanding and communication with others, and play a crucial role in developing self-regulation skills and behaviours. Attending music concerts in Chinese concert halls often reveals a discordant note: despite reminders to silence phones, ringing tones persist during performances. In the hallowed halls of music, silence is revered, directing one's attention to the musicians' artistry; yet, murmurs persist. Instructions advise against applause between movements, urging audiences to wait until the entire piece concludes; nevertheless, applause punctuates transitions. This societal phenomenon underscores the paramount importance of cultivating children's listening prowess in school music education, a cornerstone in nurturing social refinement and decorum.

### 2.2. Listening and Core Musical Literacy

Listening serves as a cornerstone for nurturing core musical literacy, empowering students to refine their musical acumen and performance prowess. It profoundly contributes to the cultivation of aesthetic perception, artistic expression, creative practice, and cultural understanding, all vital facets of core musical literacy. Each listening activity in music classrooms should be purposeful, aimed at honing students' foundational skills.

Firstly, listening is pivotal in refining aesthetic perception. As an auditory art form, music directly communicates its beauty through the act of listening. Students encounter diverse musical elements such as styles, timbres, melodies, and rhythms, fostering sensitivity and discernment. For instance, when exploring Beethoven's "Symphony No. 5," teachers can prompt students to close their eyes and immerse themselves in the music's dynamic shifts and tension-filled ambiance, guiding subsequent analysis of its structure and expressive techniques. This approach deepens students' understanding and appreciation of musical works.

Furthermore, listening is a prerequisite for artistic expression. In music performance, students need to perceive the rhythm, melody, and harmonic changes of music through listening, thus accurately expressing the essence of musical works. Through repeated listening and imitation, students can gradually master the techniques of musical performance, enhancing their musical expression abilities. For example, when learning to sing a song, teachers can first have students listen to the original singer's timbre and emotional expression, then guide them to imitate and incorporate their own interpretation, ultimately forming a personalized singing style.

Moreover, listening fuels creative exploration. In music composition, students need to accumulate musical materials and inspiration through listening, and then engage in music creation and adaptation. Exposure to diverse musical genres broadens students' creative horizons, spurring imaginative insights. For example, when crafting a song inspired by nature, teachers may prompt students to immerse themselves in the sounds of the natural world—wind, birdsong, trickling streams—extracting musical elements to weave into their compositions, thereby imbuing their creations with distinctive charm.

Lastly, listening is an important pathway to cultural understanding. Music is a significant component of human culture, and by listening to music from different countries and regions, students can gain insights into the historical backgrounds, customs, and values of diverse cultures. For example, when exploring traditional Chinese folk music, teachers can first have students listen to the music and experience its charm and emotional expression, then introduce relevant cultural and historical backgrounds, thereby aiding students in better understanding the cultural connotations inherent in the music.

It is evident that every listening design should aim towards the ultimate goal of cultivating core literacy. Teachers should focus on nurturing students' listening experiences and practical skills, guiding them to actively engage in diverse musical activities, inquire autonomously, and innovate in practice, thereby comprehensively enhancing students' core musical literacy.

**Listening and Music Classroom Teaching**

Listening serves as the cornerstone of music classroom instruction, thus, music pedagogy should embark from the act of listening, nurturing students' "musical ears." But how do we cultivate these "musical ears"? Chen Xiaoyu highlights: the crux of effective listening instruction resides in fostering aesthetic experiences. Here, musical experience encompasses familiarity with music pieces and students' musical backgrounds. During a lecture, [5]Professor Liang Honglai from the Basic Education Teaching Research Center of the Beijing Institute of Education Sciences emphasized that music learning should follow the fundamental principle of 'new songs becoming familiar songs, and familiar songs being learned thoroughly,' which necessitates teachers' understanding of students' previous experiences in learning songs and listening to music. When introducing new pieces, it is essential to lay a foundation beforehand, enabling
children to actively engage with music through a variety of enriching activities such as music games, creative rhythmic movements, musical scenarios, role-playing, and imaginative creation. Through these diverse experiences, new songs gradually transition into familiar territory. Within familiar works, efforts should be made to enhance students' core musical abilities, such as learning pitch, rhythm, melody, key signatures, harmony, musical form analysis, musical expression, and song composition. In teaching, attempting to utilize the same material to teach multiple core musical skills requires teachers to conduct thorough musical analysis of both the musical text and audio content. For instance, with the children's song "Two Tigers," from a multicultural perspective, singing it in French transforms it into the French folk song "Frère Jacques," while in English, it becomes "Are You Sleeping?" Singing the same piece in different languages aids children in becoming acquainted with the melody more rapidly. Structurally, this piece comprises eight measures, each repeated once, totaling four musical phrases. Melodically, the first phrase follows a descending pattern, the second ascends, the third rises then falls, and the fourth takes on a U-shaped form. Regarding melodic composition techniques, these four phrases exhibit a sense of "exposition, development, transition, and conclusion," allowing for the use of various props like scarves, rainbow umbrellas, and balls to help students collectively experience the melody's variations. Moreover, students can employ musical tools within given scenarios to exercise their imaginative capacities, engaging in "dynamic sculpting" based on this melody. Additionally, students can be tasked with creating songs based on the shapes of these musical phrases. From the perspective of lyrics, students can be invited to create lyrics during the third phrase. They can also be prompted to create lyrics from the perspective of animals. Furthermore, students can be asked to fill in the lyrics for this song in different contexts, offering various ways to help them quickly become familiar with the song. In terms of singing style, teachers can lead students to sing using different techniques such as legato and staccato, strong and weak, fast and slow, high and low, or even unusual tones (such as robots, frogs, puppies, kittens, etc.) to help them become familiar with the melody of the song. From a rhythm teaching perspective, "Two Tigers" uses rhythms such as half notes, quarter notes, and 2/8 rhythms in a four-beat song. Teachers can use diverse methods to guide students in perceiving rhythm with their bodies, clapping rhythms, drawing rhythms, silently singing rhythms, imagining rhythms, distinguishing rhythms, etc., to master the rhythm of learning "Two Tigers." From a beat perspective, this song is in a four-beat pattern, but students can also try singing it in a two-beat or three-beat pattern to see how changes in beat affect the music. From a pitch teaching perspective, "Two Tigers" uses the C major scale (without the use of B) and employs seconds and thirds in the melody, with a fourth interval appearing at the end. Teachers can also conduct various forms of musical activities, such as body scales, spatial progression, finger-reading scales, silent singing melodies, etc., to assist children in learning pitch. Regarding harmony, "Two Tigers" relies mainly on the tonic chord (I) and concludes with a classic I-V-I progression. For instrumental accompaniment, percussion instruments like drums for rhythm and sticks for accents can add texture. Transitioning from a single melody to a two-part or even three-part harmony, incorporating echo effects, can transform the song into polyphony. Additionally, pitched instruments like xylophones, sound blocks, or tone bars can provide accompaniment. From a choral perspective, the song can be sung in rounds. One method involves staggering voices by one bar, where the melodies align every other bar, simplifying the arrangement. The song's structure offers ample opportunities for students to practice intervals and chord progressions. Another method involves staggering voices by two bars, fostering practice in harmonizing. Of course, the "ground bass" technique can be applied, using the "C-G-C" pattern from the fourth phrase of the song or singing sustained C notes for four beats as accompaniment. Besides two-part choral singing, round singing can also be expanded to three or four parts, depending on the students' abilities. In terms of tonality, "Two Tigers" is in a major key, but composer Mahler used a minor key version of the song in the third movement of his Symphony No. 1. Teachers can use this piece to help students recognize the distinct styles of major and minor keys, analyze the characteristics of major and minor scales, and encourage them to experiment with changing other nursery rhymes between major and minor keys. With movable do solfege, students can practice transposing the song by starting on different pitches. Regarding composition, students can begin by modifying rhythm, pitch, embellishing melodies, or transposing the song. Later, they can explore different harmonic possibilities to give the song new nuances. After studying variation form, students can try creating variations using this simple melodic motif.

From the above analysis, it's clear that teaching a song can open up endless possibilities for music listening and learning. A single piece of music has educational potential from kindergarten to university. The key is for teachers to understand students' listening experiences to establish clear and achievable teaching goals and content plans.

3. Diverse Teaching Strategies for Music Listening

3.1. Prioritizing Listening Habits to Cultivate Effective Auditory Skills

In music education, it's crucial for teachers to foster students' listening habits to lay a strong foundation in auditory skills. To achieve this, teachers should establish clear objectives and expectations for listening sessions.

Firstly, emphasize quiet listening. Quiet listening emphasizes the listening atmosphere rather than listening to music in complete silence. It pursues a state of attentive listening[6]. Teachers should guide students to engage with the music critically, encouraging them to listen actively and reflect on what they hear. Effective listening doesn't just mean being silent; it involves actively discerning the nuances of the music. Some teachers may overlook this by not prompting students with relevant questions, resulting in passive listening. Others may inadvertently disrupt students' listening experiences by imposing their own interpretations.

Secondly, promote comparative listening. Students' comprehension of musical elements often relies on comparison. They need to compare different aspects of music to understand concepts like pitch, tempo, and dynamics. [7]Teachers should not only focus on students' understanding of musical theory but also help them develop their listening skills to discern various sounds. This involves not just memorization but also discrimination and recognition, which can be more challenging. Therefore, teachers should aim to cultivate consistent listening habits that involve active
engagement and critical reflection.

Furthermore, diverse teaching approaches should be employed to encourage students' active engagement in listening activities. For instance, teachers may integrate music stories, games, and performances into their lessons to naturally foster good listening habits in students within a relaxed and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. At the same time, teachers should emphasize nurturing students' musical attention and memory, aiding them in better understanding and appreciating musical compositions. To heighten students' interest in listening, teachers might opt for captivating music selections, whether it be elegant classical pieces, upbeat pop tunes, or culturally rich folk melodies, allowing students to feel the allure and significance of music during their listening experiences. Moreover, teachers can spark students' enthusiasm and involvement in listening through the creation of entertaining listening tasks and challenges, such as music trivia games and auditory discrimination contests.

3.2. Connecting Perceptual Experiences to Cultivate Aesthetic Listening

Listening serves as a gateway to understanding the emotions and imagery embedded within musical compositions. Therefore, actively encouraging students to draw from their perceptual experiences is a potent strategy for fostering aesthetic listening skills. In the realm of teaching, it's essential to explore the experiential significance inherent in students' musical learning journeys. Given that musical content often intersects with students' daily experiences, teaching methodologies ought to reflect this experiential dimension of music listening. Many musical elements emulate or evoke real-life scenarios or emotions—consider the roar of a lion in "Lion King March" or the chirping of frogs in "Frog Concert," illustrating how music experience and comprehension stem from lived experiences. Consequently, when students engage in music listening, they naturally fuse the sounds they hear with their personal interpretations and feelings about the depicted phenomena, thereby creating a musical experience. Cultivating individuality, nurturing emotional intelligence, and fostering imaginative depth form the bedrock for enhancing students' individuality, nurturing emotional intelligence, and fostering interpretations and feelings about the depicted phenomena, naturally fuse the sounds they hear with their personal

3.3. Emphasizing Musical Elements and Effective Listening Techniques

Music elements serve as the cornerstone of music education, comprising nuances like tone quality, dynamics, duration, pitch, and more. When combined, they form the foundation of formal elements, such as tempo, mood, rhythm, and form. In music pedagogy, educators should center their focus on these essential elements and leverage listening techniques to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of musical compositions. For instance, teachers can guide students to pay attention to elements like melody, rhythm, timbre, and harmony, aiding them in a deeper understanding of the structure and significance of musical works.

Furthermore, educators can employ specific music methodologies and tools like Kodály, Orff, and Dalcroze to enhance students' listening skills. For instance, Kodály's approach underscores the significance of singing in music education, offering students a more intuitive grasp of melody and rhythm variations. Meanwhile, the Orff method prioritizes rhythm and physical engagement. Teachers can guide students in rhythm perception and movement using various bodily gestures and percussion instruments. Simple rhythm exercises, involving clapping, stomping, or percussion, not only refine students' rhythmic sensibilities but also improve their physical coordination and musical expression. Dalcroze's method emphasizes the fusion of music and bodily movements, enabling students to interpret the dynamics and emotions of music through physical expression. Teachers can guide students to perform some simple body movements, such as swaying, jumping, or dancing, to help them better understand and express the emotions and mood conveyed in musical works.

4. Diverse Listening Music Teaching Design Case Analysis

To illustrate how student-centered diverse listening strategies can be practically applied in music classroom teaching, this article focuses on the specific implementation of the classic elementary music teaching example "DOREMI". Aligned with the core teaching concept of diverse listening, this case emphasizes four main teaching objectives: at the level of aesthetic perception, guiding students to immerse themselves in the joyful musical style of "DOREMI" through active listening, and appreciating the unique beauty of lead and chorus singing forms. For artistic expression, the goal is for students to accurately discern and sing the seven pitches of the scale using Curwen hand signs, achieving a complete, precise, and fluent performance of the song. Regarding creative practice, students are encouraged to apply their shared perceptual experiences stands as a profoundly significant endeavour. As teachers, it's crucial for us to consistently explore and innovate teaching methodologies for listening, enabling students to traverse the realms of music freely and perceive its beauty and influence. Ultimately, in music education, educators should prioritize nurturing students' listening habits and aesthetic sensibilities, guiding them to engage actively in listening activities through shared perceptual experiences. This, in turn, facilitates students' deeper comprehension and appreciation of musical compositions, thereby elevating their musical literacy and aesthetic discernment.
knowledge of pitch to create three-note compositions and engage in pitch recognition games in group settings. Lastly, from a cultural understanding perspective, students are introduced to the background and cultural significance of "DOREMI", fostering an appreciation for the musical style of American nursery rhymes and nurturing respect and understanding for multiculturalism.

Considering the teaching objectives outlined above, the teaching process unfolds as follows: The initial phase of the teaching practice revolves tightly around the core concept of listening. We start with a listening activity, immersing students in the beauty of music. By guiding them to close their eyes and listen quietly and attentively, we encourage them to imagine themselves within the joyful scenes depicted by the song. Guiding them with questions like, "Where do we hear the solo, and where does the chorus come in?" During this initial listening phase, students not only experience the lively rhythm of the music but also begin to appreciate the unique beauty of solo and chorus singing forms. Then, we move on to learning and performing the song. Using Curwen hand signs, we help students accurately discern and sing the seven pitches of the scale. With these gestures, students can more intuitively grasp the melody's nuances. Once students can sing the song proficiently, we engage them in a fun singing game, chaining sentences together. This activity not only showcases their singing abilities but also nurtures their listening focus, responsiveness, and discernment skills. Furthermore, teachers can lead students in engaging "Me and My Friends Sing Along" and other themed scenario games to introduce the fun practice of Curwen hand signs. In this activity, Group A students showcase Curwen hand signs for each note at the beginning of solo sections, while Group B takes on the chorus. They collaborate to deliver the American nursery rhyme in its cheerful style. Students enthusiastically participate, showcasing not only their artistic expression but also their spirit of teamwork.

To cater to students' evolving needs in creative expression, the lesson proceeds with group activities in music listening. Students are grouped to create three-note musical phrases, followed by a "listen and guess" game within and between groups. In this process, students not only consolidate their knowledge but also fully unleash their imagination and creativity. Then, a chosen group's musical phrase is integrated as a second voice accompaniment in the song, utilizing Orff instruments like xylophones, enriching the musical harmony with singing and instrumental collaboration. Finally, excerpts from the movie "The Sound of Music," featuring the rendition of "DOREMI," deepen students' understanding of American nursery rhyme styles through audiovisual immersion. This approach not only expands students' knowledge but also fosters their appreciation and respect for diverse cultures.

5. Reflection and Analysis of the Practice

In the student-centric, diverse music listening teaching approach, the practical application of the "DOREMI" lesson offers invaluable insights and experiences. Primarily, this lesson exemplifies the essence of student-centered teaching. From setting teaching objectives to executing teaching procedures, it orbits closely around the fundamental principle of listening instruction, encompassing aesthetic perception, artistic expression, creative practice, and cultural understanding. Notably, throughout the teaching process, a variety of instructional tools and strategies were employed across multiple phases, like listening introductions, learning new songs, artistic performances, creative practices, and cultural contextualization. These methods progressively guided students towards deeper comprehension through diverse auditory experiences. They not only absorbed the vibrant rhythms of music but also attained precision in singing the seven-note scale, fostering their imagination and creativity in practical applications. Such a student-centered approach not only sparks students' enthusiasm for learning but also nurtures their self-directed learning abilities and collaborative spirit.

Furthermore, this lesson example underscores the practical application of diversified listening teaching strategies. From the outset, students are encouraged to close their eyes and engage in focused listening, tapping into their auditory imagination to preliminarily grasp the singing dynamics of lead and chorus. During the phase of learning new songs, Curwen hand signs are employed to facilitate teaching, allowing students to perceive pitch changes more vividly. In the creative practice segment, collaborative music listening activities are devised, enabling students to solidify their knowledge through listening games and unleash their creativity. Such diversified listening teaching strategies not only elevate students' foundational music literacy but also nurture their aesthetic sensibilities and innovative thinking. Moreover, it effectively stimulates students' proactive engagement, subtly fostering communication and collaboration while nurturing their teamwork spirit and creativity.

Nevertheless, this lesson example still has some areas that could be improved. For instance, while it employs diverse listening teaching strategies, there's a need for more nuanced approaches in certain aspects. For example, when using Curwen hand signs to assist teaching, providing individualized guidance tailored to each student's needs could ensure they all accurately grasp the singing technique of the seven pitches in the scale. Moreover, some students showed imprecise pitch recognition during the guided pitch discrimination game, possibly due to insufficient groundwork in earlier music learning stages. Hence, in future teaching endeavours, we need to emphasize a gradual and systematic approach to pitch training. Additionally, we must acknowledge the individual differences in students' musical learning journeys. For those with weaker musical foundations, we should offer more support and guidance to help them enhance their musical skills through diverse listening methods. Simultaneously, for students with greater musical aptitude, we should provide them with more challenging tasks and opportunities for growth, tailoring activities to leverage and further develop their musical talents.

6. Conclusion

As we look to the future, we are committed to furthering our research and practice of student-centered, diversified listening music education. We aim to continuously explore more effective teaching methods and approaches to foster students with enhanced musical literacy and innovative spirit. Listening serves as a pivotal aspect of music education. In the classroom setting, listening to students enables us to establish a "dialogue-oriented" and "inquiry-oriented" teaching environment, fostering closer teacher-student relationships and nurturing a harmonious classroom atmosphere. By encouraging students to voice their thoughts and questions,
we empower them to learn and explore together, igniting their passion for learning and creativity. Through tailored music curriculum design and diversified learning activities, we ensure that students' abilities are matched with appropriate challenges. Moreover, within the broader context of aesthetic education, we strive to cultivate confident, inquisitive, and forward-thinking individuals who are committed to lifelong learning. Ultimately, it all begins with music listening in every class.

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Music Education Research.

**References**


