

The Embodiment of Aesthetic Perception in the Compulsory Education Curriculum Standards: A Case Study of Auld Lang Syne in the Grade 7 (Vol. 1) Edition by People's Music Publishing House

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Abstract: This paper explores the embodiment of aesthetic perception in music instruction as outlined in the 2022 Compulsory Education Curriculum Standards, using the Grade 7 (Volume 1) textbook edition of Auld Lang Syne published by the People's Music Publishing House as a case study. From the perspectives of curriculum design and implementation, evaluation of instructional outcomes, and reflective practice, this study examines how to effectively cultivate students' aesthetic perception in music education. The findings indicate that through carefully designed instructional processes and diverse teaching methods, students demonstrated significant improvement in their aesthetic perception abilities, generally meeting the requirements of the curriculum standards. At the same time, the study also identified certain issues present in instructional practice and proposed corresponding improvement strategies, providing valuable insights and references for future music education.

Keywords: Compulsory Education Curriculum Standards, Aesthetic Perception, Music Instruction, Core Competencies

1. Background analysis of the compulsory education arts curriculum standards

1.1. The formulation and development of the curriculum standards

As a key dimension of China's basic education reform, the construction of the arts curriculum standards has consistently aligned with the evolving demands of social development and the transformation of educational philosophies. Its developmental trajectory clearly reflects a paradigm shift from the mere transmission of knowledge and skills to the cultivation of core competencies, highlighting the increasingly strategic role of arts education in the national quality education framework. Tracing the historical evolution, the transformation of guiding documents for music education in China can be broadly divided into three landmark stages: At the end of the 20th century, the promulgation of the Revised Syllabus for Music Teaching in Compulsory Education focused on the initial stage of universal basic education, aiming to establish foundational musical literacy and

laying the institutional groundwork for the standardized development of the discipline. Entering the 21st century, the Experimental Edition of the Music Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education emerged amid the wave of quality-oriented education and integration with international educational concepts. It established a student-centered core philosophy and elevated aesthetic experience and creative ability to the core objectives of the curriculum. The 2011 revised edition, building upon feedback from earlier implementation practices and drawing extensively from global educational insights, further refined the curriculum objectives through a tiered framework. Guided by the development of the socialist core value system, it optimized the structure of teaching content and reinforced the universal accessibility of arts education.

1.2. New requirements for arts education under the revised curriculum standards

Grounded in the context of national educational policy reform, the 2022 Edition of the Compulsory Education Arts Curriculum Standards places systematic reform demands on arts education from the broader perspective of reconstructing the educational ecosystem. Its core breakthroughs are embodied in three key dimensions: In terms of value orientation, arts education is redefined from mere skills training to the primary channel for aesthetic cultivation, aligning comprehensively with the aims of the "Double Reduction" policy. By optimizing the curriculum structure and strengthening the cultivation of core competencies, the standards establish the strategic position of arts education within the overarching mission of fostering moral character and personal development (lide shuren). In terms of curricular content, the standards construct an educational framework supported by four core competencies—*aesthetic perception, artistic expression, creative practice, and cultural understanding*. This framework not only preserves the distinct qualities of the music discipline but also enables organic integration with other art forms such as visual arts, dance, drama, and film. As a result, it fosters an open curriculum ecosystem that encourages dialogue between traditional culture and modern media, and mutual learning between indigenous arts and global civilizations. In terms of implementation pathways, the standards break through the conventional boundaries of the classroom, emphasizing a practice-oriented approach to “learning by doing.” They advocate for life-oriented, project-based, and interdisciplinary instructional design, guiding students to experience artistic creation in authentic contexts and to develop value identification through cultural inheritance.

1.3. Continuity and innovation between the new and previous curriculum standards

The 2011 Compulsory Education Music Curriculum Standards, issued as a guideline for an independent discipline, and the 2022 Compulsory Education Arts Curriculum Standards together mark China’s systemic reconstruction of arts education from a single-subject framework toward an integrated, comprehensive system [1]. In terms of curriculum structure, the 2022 standards break through traditional disciplinary boundaries to establish a comprehensive arts curriculum system encompassing five major fields: music, visual arts, dance, drama (including traditional Chinese opera), and film (including digital media). They implement differentiated design across educational stages: Grades 1 and 2 offer integrated courses such as “Singing and Playing · Music,” Grades 3 to 7 emphasize music and visual arts as core subjects while incorporating other art forms, and Grades 8 and 9 require students to select at least two art disciplines for systematic study, thus forming a vertically connected and horizontally integrated training chain.

The curriculum objectives system has undergone a fundamental transformation, evolving from the 2011 edition’s three-dimensional framework of “knowledge and skills, processes and methods,

emotional attitudes and values” to a higher-level focus on the essence of the arts discipline, encapsulated in four core competencies: aesthetic perception, artistic expression, creative practice, and cultural understanding. This shift not only inherits the 2011 standards’ emphasis on “diverse practice and interest cultivation” but also represents a targeted reform addressing shortcomings revealed during implementation. Confronting practical challenges such as the previous standards’ singular curriculum content, fragmented interdisciplinary integration, weak connections to real life, and vague competency development, the new standards enact systematic innovation: Breaking disciplinary barriers through a “task cluster” structure and achieving interdisciplinary integration via thematic learning; Restructuring the content system into three levels—foundation, expansion, and inquiry—to strengthen progressive cultivation of knowledge and skills; Clarifying teaching objectives oriented by core competencies, supplemented by detailed evaluation criteria and case guidelines, aimed at resolving practical issues concerning “what to teach, how to teach, and to what extent.”

2. Theoretical explanation of core competencies in the revised curriculum standards

2.1. Concept of core competencies

The core competencies in the revised curriculum standards encompass aesthetic perception, artistic expression, cultural understanding, and creative practice [2]. Aesthetic perception focuses on students’ sensitivity to and grasp of musical auditory characteristics, formal elements, and the sense of beauty; artistic expression emphasizes conveying musical emotions through methods such as singing and instrumental performance; cultural understanding centers on recognizing the characteristics and connotations of music within diverse cultural contexts, clarifying the connection between music and social culture; creative practice primarily stimulates students to utilize musical elements for composition and innovation. These four core competencies are interrelated and progressively structured, assisting students in enhancing musical aesthetic ability and artistic expressiveness, deepening cultural cognition, cultivating innovative thinking, and achieving comprehensive development in musical literacy and overall competencies. They facilitate the integration of aesthetic experience, artistic practice, and cultural inheritance within music learning.

2.2. Goals and significance of aesthetic perception in the revised arts curriculum standards

In the 2022 edition of the Compulsory Education Arts Curriculum Standards, aesthetic perception is identified as one of the core competency goals of arts education. The revised curriculum standards require students, through learning, to enhance their ability to perceive beauty, and to cultivate aesthetic taste and aesthetic judgment. The goals of aesthetic perception can be broadly summarized as the following aspects:

2.2.1. Perception and experience

Cultivate students’ ability to perceive musical beauty, enabling them to experience and appreciate various types of musical works and to feel the charm of music. This fosters students’ aesthetic perception abilities, helping them to recognize artistic beauty, the beauty of life, and the beauty of nature.

2.2.2. Understanding and evaluation

Through classroom instruction and extracurricular artistic performance practice, students acquire foundational musical knowledge and basic skills, nurturing a comprehensive experience, perception, and evaluative ability of musical sounds [3]. This helps students learn to analyze and assess artworks and develop a correct aesthetic perspective.

2.2.3. Culture and emotion

Guide students to understand the cultural background of musical works during their learning process, encourage them to express their emotions, strengthen cultural confidence, and cultivate the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty.

Aesthetic perception holds significant importance in music education. It serves as the foundation for cultivating students' musical literacy and is the first ability that students acquire in their music learning process. It enhances students' capacity to perceive and understand musical beauty. Through the cultivation of aesthetic perception, students can improve their aesthetic abilities and deepen their aesthetic emotions in music learning, thereby achieving the comprehensive educational goal of holistic development [4]. Aesthetic perception not only helps students attain emotional fulfillment in music learning but also promotes their learning and development in other disciplines, enabling them to better adapt to society and life.

2.3. Perspectives of experts and frontline teachers on the understanding and practice of aesthetic perception

Based on extensive reviews of research by experts, scholars, and frontline teachers regarding the role of aesthetic perception in music education, both experts and teachers agree that aesthetic perception is the key to unlocking musical aesthetics and an important pathway for cultivating students' core musical competencies. Experts recommend creating rich aesthetic contexts in music teaching, guiding students to engage multiple senses in musical experiences, and deepening the process of aesthetic perception through methods such as comparison and analysis. Frontline teachers actively explore strategies for cultivating aesthetic perception in their teaching practice. Tailoring their approaches to students' age characteristics and learning needs, they employ diverse instructional methods, including music appreciation, singing, instrumental performance, and creative composition activities. Through these practices, students continually enhance their aesthetic perception abilities. Teachers have also shared numerous successful cases and practical experiences, providing empirical evidence and references for the effective implementation of aesthetic perception cultivation in music education.

3. Specific case analysis

3.1. Case selection and course background

Auld Lang Syne, included in the Grade 7 (Volume 1) textbook published by the People's Music Publishing House, is an important music topic. This classic song enjoys widespread recognition and profound cultural influence. Its melody is graceful and its emotions sincere, expressing a deep appreciation for friendship and heartfelt wishes, and it is widely sung around the world [5]. The choice of this topic as the research subject is not only due to its intrinsic artistic value but also because of its unique instructional advantages and abundant teaching resources in cultivating

students' aesthetic perception. It serves as a typical example for in-depth exploration of how aesthetic perception is embodied within specific teaching units.

3.2. Analysis of grade level and student learning situation

Seventh-grade students are in the early stage of adolescence, experiencing ongoing physiological and psychological development. In terms of music learning, they have acquired a certain foundation of musical knowledge and skills, and possess some degree of musical perception and interest. However, their aesthetic perception remains in a developmental phase. Their understanding of musical works tends to be relatively superficial, often focusing more on the pleasantness of melodies rather than the music's deeper connotations, emotional expression, or formal aesthetic qualities. Therefore, teaching must fully consider students' cognitive levels and learning characteristics, employing appropriate guidance and inspiration methods to assist them in enhancing their aesthetic perception abilities.

3.3. Curriculum standards' requirements for aesthetic perception of students at this grade level

According to the 2022 Compulsory Education Music Curriculum Standards, seventh-grade students should be able to focus on fundamental musical elements such as rhythm, melody, harmony, dynamics, and tempo during music appreciation. They are expected to initially perceive the moods and emotions conveyed by musical works and to perform basic comparisons and analyses of pieces from different styles and genres [6]. At the same time, students are encouraged to actively participate in music practice activities, such as singing and instrumental performance, to deepen their aesthetic experience of musical works and cultivate their sensitivity, appreciation, and creativity regarding musical beauty.

4. Curriculum design and implementation

4.1. Setting of teaching objectives

Based on the curriculum standards, analysis of student learning conditions, and characteristics of the teaching topic, the following teaching objectives are established.

4.1.1. Emotional attitudes and values objective

Through the appreciation and singing of Auld Lang Syne, students will feel the sincere friendship conveyed by the song, cultivate an awareness of cherishing friendship, inspire a love for classic musical works, and enhance their musical aesthetic taste.

4.1.2. Process and methods objective

By employing various teaching methods such as listening, singing, analysis, and discussion, students will be guided to actively participate in music learning activities, experience musical elements such as melody, rhythm, and harmony through practice, improve their aesthetic perception abilities, and develop autonomous learning, collaborative inquiry, and creative thinking skills.

4.1.3. Knowledge and skills objective

Students will learn about the song's compositional background, musical style characteristics, and related musical knowledge. They will master singing techniques for the song, perform it with harmonious and beautiful vocals, and attempt simple creative arrangements and interpretations.

4.2. Design of teaching content and methods

4.2.1. Teaching content

Begin by introducing the compositional background of Auld Lang Syne, the biography of its author, and the song's dissemination and influence worldwide, providing students with a preliminary understanding and recognition of the piece. Subsequently, conduct an in-depth analysis of the song's musical structure, including melody progression, rhythmic patterns, and harmonic arrangements, guiding students to appreciate its musical aesthetics and characteristics. At the same time, organize choral and solo singing practices, focusing on cultivating students' vocal techniques and expressive abilities [7]. Additionally, encourage students to create new lyrics or make simple melodic adaptations to the song, thereby expanding their musical thinking and creativity.

4.2.2. Teaching methods

The lecture method is used to impart knowledge about the song and its cultural background to students. The appreciation method involves having students listen multiple times to different versions of Auld Lang Syne, guiding them to compare and analyze aspects such as melody, rhythm, and emotional expression, thereby cultivating their musical aesthetic perception. Through the singing method, students participate in choral and solo singing practices to experience the musical charm of the song in practice, enhancing their vocal skills and musical expressiveness. The group cooperative inquiry method is employed by dividing students into groups to discuss ideas for creative adaptations of the song, fostering teamwork skills and innovative thinking.

4.3. Implementation steps of the teaching process

4.3.1. Introduction (5 minutes)

Play an audio segment containing excerpts from various classic musical works, interspersed with the melody of Auld Lang Syne. Guide students to listen attentively and reflect on any familiar melodies, stimulating their interest and curiosity. This serves as a lead-in to the lesson's theme—Auld Lang Syne.

4.3.2. Knowledge explanation segment (10 minutes)

Using multimedia presentations with integrated text and images, introduce the song's compositional background, the author's biography, and its global dissemination. This provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the song, laying a foundation for subsequent learning.

4.3.3. Appreciation and analysis segment (15 minutes)

Play the original version of Auld Lang Syne to allow students to initially experience the song's emotion and melody. Subsequently, guide students to analyze the piece from aspects such as melody,

rhythm, and harmony—for example, the rise and fall of the melodic line, the stability and dynamism of rhythmic patterns, and the harmony’s richness and consonance. Through the teacher’s explanation and demonstration, students gain a deeper understanding of the song’s musical structure and artistic characteristics.

4.3.4. Singing practice segment (20 minutes)

Divide students into groups for choral and solo singing practice. During the practice, the teacher circulates to provide guidance, focusing on correcting students’ singing posture, vocal techniques, pitch accuracy, and rhythm. Students are encouraged to sincerely feel the emotions conveyed by the song and to perform it with harmonious and beautiful vocals.

4.3.5. Creation and presentation segment (10 minutes)

Each group creates new lyrics or makes simple melodic adaptations based on the theme and emotion of the song. Then, each group selects a representative to present their work, while other students provide evaluations and feedback. This process cultivates students’ creative thinking and aesthetic evaluation abilities.

4.3.6. Class summary segment (5 minutes)

The teacher summarizes the lesson content, reviews the musical characteristics and emotional connotations of Auld Lang Syne, emphasizes the importance of aesthetic perception in music learning, and encourages students to be attentive to discovering, appreciating, and creating beauty in their daily lives.

5. Evaluation and reflection on teaching effectiveness

5.1. Indicators and methods for evaluating teaching effectiveness

5.1.1. Evaluation indicators

Based on the teaching objectives, the following indicators for evaluating teaching effectiveness are established.

Students’ ability to understand and express the emotions of the song, assessed through observation and evaluation of their singing emotions, facial expressions, and related behaviors.

Students’ mastery of the song’s musical structure, including cognition and analytical abilities regarding melody, rhythm, and harmony, evaluated through classroom questioning and participation in discussions.

Students’ singing skills and expressiveness, including pitch accuracy, rhythm, vocal techniques, and timbre control, assessed through practical singing performances.

Students’ participation and creativity in the creation activities, judged by the quality and originality of their creative works as well as the group collaboration process.

5.1.2. Evaluation methods

A combination of teacher assessment, student self-assessment, and peer assessment is employed. Teachers evaluate students’ overall performance through classroom observations, questioning, and

presentations, providing timely feedback and guidance. Meanwhile, students are guided to conduct self-evaluations and group peer assessments, encouraging reflection on their learning process and shortcomings, learning from others' strengths, and promoting autonomous learning and self-improvement.

5.2. Improvement in students' aesthetic perception abilities

Through the teaching practice of this lesson, students have made noticeable progress in their aesthetic perception abilities. During the music appreciation segment, students gradually began to focus on musical elements such as melody, rhythm, and harmony, and were able to describe their characteristics and emotional expressions in simple terms. In singing practice, students paid greater attention to emotional investment and vocal expressiveness, better interpreting the song's connotations through performance. In the creative adaptation activities, some students boldly exercised their imagination and made innovative adaptations of the song, reflecting their unique understanding of musical beauty and creativity. However, some students still exhibit limitations in the depth and breadth of their aesthetic perception, indicating a need for further guidance and cultivation in future teaching.

5.3. Problems encountered in teaching practice and improvement measures

Some problems were identified during the teaching practice. For example, in the group cooperative creation segment, some groups did not engage in sufficiently thorough discussions, and their creative ideas lacked breadth, resulting in varying quality of creative works. Additionally, the time allocation for certain segments was not well controlled, causing the teaching schedule to be somewhat tight. To address these issues, the following improvement measures are proposed: during the group cooperative creation segment, teachers can provide preliminary creative ideas and methods in advance to guide students in thinking and creating from different perspectives; during the teaching process, teachers should pay greater attention to reasonable time allocation and flexibly adjust the teaching pace according to the content and students' actual conditions, ensuring that the teaching objectives of each segment are effectively achieved.

6. Conclusion

This paper systematically explored how to effectively cultivate students' aesthetic perception abilities in music teaching by combining the theoretical elaboration of aesthetic perception in the 2022 Compulsory Education Curriculum Standards with the specific case study of Auld Lang Syne from the People's Music Publishing House Grade 7 (Volume 1) textbook. The study examined dimensions including curriculum design and implementation, as well as evaluation and reflection on teaching effectiveness. The research results indicate that through carefully designed teaching processes and diversified instructional methods, students achieved significant improvement in their aesthetic perception abilities, basically meeting the curriculum standards' requirements. Meanwhile, some issues identified in teaching practice were addressed with corresponding improvement measures, providing valuable references and insights for future music education.

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