



Exploring Integrated Curriculum for Music Education in China During the Covid 19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

With the development of technology, the whole world has become more connected, not only in terms of geographical location, but also intellectual material. Intellectual connections have included the scholarly world of education in general, as well as music education in particular. These connections lead to collaborations by people in different countries and different fields. In the same way finding connections between music education and other educational subjects would encourage collaborations among teachers in schools, it could also promote an integrated model of music teaching.

During the global pandemic, things have gone in a different situation identified that there are so many ways to look at the world—the music world has changed which leads us to discover the connections between music and the students. Barrett described connections for music by saying: “because music is inextricably linked with artistic expression, history, and culture, other disciplines within the curriculum that are also concerned with these broad concepts—such as language, art, dance, theater, and social studies—may be the most logical areas with which to forge interdisciplinary connections” (Barrett, McCoy & Veblen, 1997, p. ix).

Keywords: China Music Education, Connectivity Collaboration

I. INTRODUCTION

With interdisciplinary connections between music education and other curriculum areas, the integrated curriculum in music education will enhance students’ learning experiences, improve their abilities of creativity, understanding, imagination, and more importantly, it will bring students lots of fun in the music class.

As we move on to the new normal in 2021 and beyond, administrators, and educators have been interested in interdisciplinary or integrated curriculum for at least the past three decades as part of the educational reform movement in the United States (Youm, 2007). Ongoing efforts by researchers from other 2 countries have also approached the investigation of interdisciplinary curriculum (Brown, 1999; Na, 2003; Wang, 2000). Overland (2013) claimed that “integrated, interdisciplinary, blended, or collaborative teaching, combines ideas, terminology, or examples from multiple, unrelated subjects in ways that encourage a deeper understanding of the material—more than could be accomplished by presenting them separately” (p. 32).

II. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Observation Techniques and Interview Methods

The data gathered from a study where the author reviewed research that has addressed an integrated curriculum model in music with a particular focus on children’s literature and the visual arts. Analysis of these methods outlined the point of view of the authors, the meaning of these works for integrated curriculum and the methods utilized.

2.2 Framework:

1. The framework used Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligences the framework of this paper was based on the integrated music curriculum model that added other disciplines into the music curriculum as a way to enrich the teaching of music.

2. In this integrated curriculum, on the music lesson as the key discipline, to which children's literature and visual arts were added.
3. The integration of children's literature into the music educator *Zoltán Kodály*, believed in the coexistence of all the arts in schools saying, "All the arts for all the children!" (Karpati, 1984. p. 14).
4. Also, according to Barrett, McCoy and Veblen (1997), teachers are encouraged to share a responsibility and cooperate to work on the integration of subjects. Interdisciplinary curriculum requires quality connections to be made among the areas of curriculum that will be addressed. In many circumstances, integration and interdisciplinary share similar meanings, but looking deeper, the concepts of "integration" and "interdisciplinary" are slightly different in development and outcome.

2.3 Analysis of Data

When talking about integration in music curriculum, music is the main element to which is added other ideas that enrich the curriculum and help to create curriculum integration. "Interdisciplinary", on the other hand, happens when all the areas of curriculum have the same weight in planning and presentation as music.

1. The curriculum integration was the prevailing term used to mean that the music curriculum plays the main role in the process of material development. The concept of integrated curriculum is not always easy to achieve across interdisciplinary goals.
2. The Challenges identified in creating integrated curriculum are the following:
 - a. Music teachers find it difficult to collaborate with teachers from other courses, because ideally the collaboration team should include teachers with expertise from various areas who need to collaborate, design, and execute as a team. This involves finding colleague experts who are willing to collaborate.
 - b. This process of collaboration takes extra time for planning and preparation of integrated lessons, which may not be available in a teacher's schedule. Finally, it is important to maintain the requirements of core learning material within all subject areas being addressed. At the same time, there are ideas that have been generated to assist teachers in addressing these problems.

2.4 What are the Current Practices in China Music?

China Music as an element of integrated curriculum in China, is still new, needing more time and space to be able to develop. As I began my teaching career in my hometown, and communicated with music teachers in others, I found the following:

1. Most schools in my city included only learning about music by singing, listening, and choir in music classes. In the textbook materials, there were some activities, such as composing a phrase of music, playing singing games, rhythm and note reading games or using instruments to accompany music activities.
2. Music classes are held once each week (approximately 30-40 minutes), and the teaching syllabus required that one unit be taught during each class period in primary school, or one unit across two classes in middle or high school based on substantially more content.
3. Each unit (5-6 pages in primary school textbooks, and 10 pages in middle & high school textbooks) is based on a theme, including related knowledge and background of either history or culture, one or more songs which were used both for singing and appreciation, related instrumental or musical knowledge, suggested class activities, and questions.
4. Based on the experiences of teachers, balancing this variety of content in one unit often forced teachers to value the music (song or listening experience) more highly than enrichment activities in the units, which may offer additional practice or understanding to students beyond the music itself.
5. In regard to the Children's literature, unless depicting the songs themselves as a poem, or a classic story would rarely be used intentionally in a music lesson.

Finally, the surveys showed that the music classes offered in elementary schools were insufficient at the time of his research. The average class time allotment of 55-60 minutes each week is less than four percent of the weekly school time. Approximately one half of the middle schools in the U.S. offered music classes, and even fewer of the secondary schools offered music lessons in their programs, even though the band, orchestra, or chorus were offered as electives.

III. DISCUSSION

Based on the study the following results were obtained:

1. For music educators, integrated curriculum should not be a burden, but rather it could be considered as a two-way street through which music teachers and other teachers share the responsibilities for creating integrated lesson material (Berke, 2000).

2. May (2013) stated that music is often used superficially to enhance the teaching of other subject areas. Music teachers should not feel compelled to integrate other subjects in each lesson that is planned, but rather look for connections that will strengthen musical concepts.
3. Casual conversations with coworkers can sometimes provide inspiring ideas for lessons. Communication is an important element to facilitate collaborative relationships with other teachers, which could result in ideas for curriculum integration.

IV. CONCLUSION

4.1 Recommendations

The author recommended that an integrated lesson does not always have to involve what the students are learning in their regular classroom to make it worthwhile. Ideas related to children's daily life could provide additional options for interdisciplinary lessons.

1. The National Standards for Music Education in China requires teachers to provide experiences in singing, musical movements, instruments, appreciation, and music scores through music class (Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China, 2000). But there are no restrictions on applying pedagogical teaching methods, providing the opportunity for music teachers to explore new methods.
2. Apply ideas from the body of research that developed an integrated teaching method could strengthen options for teaching pedagogy in Chinese music education. The purpose of a music integrated curriculum is to facilitate ideas from other disciplines, such as children's literature and visual arts, to enrich music classes by enhancing learning experiences, improving students' abilities for thinking, understanding, and creativity. In addition, it may allow children to master the music knowledge in an easy, relaxed environment.

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