

# Paradigm Construction in Targeted Support for Rural Music Education

## -- Exploration and Practice of University Art Groups in Promoting Rural Art Education

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### Abstract

The State Council of China issued the Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era, which states the principles of "comprehensive development", "for all students", and "using aesthetic education as a vehicle for moral education. They highlight the need to develop aesthetic education in rural areas. Based on the current situation of rural music education, and under the guidance of national education policies, this paper conducts research, analysis and practice from multiple dimensions such as students' music literacy and social concerns. The paradigm is based on cultivating students' core musical literacy, the three-step approach to helping rural students, rural teachers and music groups, and the innovative integration of local characteristics. While replicable, this paradigm can give rural primary and secondary schools the potential for self-generation and continuous development, effectively bridging the gap between urban and rural arts education and helping to revitalise the countryside.

### Keywords

Rural arts education; Music education; Targeted support.

## 1. Current Situation of Music Education in Rural China

### 1.1. Lack of Concept of Aesthetic Education in Primary and Secondary Schools

The main reason for the lack of a concept of aesthetic education in primary and secondary schools is the lack of attention from school authorities and parents. The majority of school leaders have made the promotion rate the only goal for the development of students in their schools, even at the expense of art education classes. This has led to a dull and monotonous arts curriculum and a lack of access to the deeper values of the arts. At the parental level, there is a deep-rooted misunderstanding of the arts, which leads to a lack of input from the family into the concept of aesthetic education. Especially in our countryside, such prejudices are widespread, with schools and parents expecting their children to pass theoretical exams to get out of the countryside, believing that art class study is a waste of time and energy, and lacking a proper understanding of aesthetic education, not to mention the importance of it.

### 1.2. Lack of Hardware and Software in Rural Schools

Compared to urban schools, rural schools are relatively lacking in both hardware and software. In terms of school teaching hardware: firstly, in terms of the choice of teaching materials, many rural schools only use one textbook, which is also relatively backward; secondly, in terms of

school construction, many schools do not have independent art classrooms, and teachers of art classes can only use board books to teach knowledge and skills; thirdly, in terms of teaching and learning facilities, most rural primary and secondary schools lack teaching equipment. This greatly reduces the quality of the curriculum, as students have little access to the different instruments and have only a vague outline impression of music and instruments. In terms of teaching software in schools, the small number of teachers and their low professionalism are an obstacle to the implementation of the aesthetic education curriculum. In addition, many art teachers in primary and secondary schools lack professional and systematic training experience.

### **1.3. Weak Teacher Resources and Uneven Teacher Quality**

Dedicated music teachers are rarely found in rural primary and secondary schools. Many rural music teachers are not systematically trained in music theory and skills and have no professional knowledge of so-called music theory, composition, etc. They teach songs by simple demonstration and do not teach vocal styles. Under the influence of such a school atmosphere, even professional music teachers are unable to improve their teaching as they do not attend regular professional training or have professional exchanges with other schools.

### **1.4. Detachment from Social Practice**

As China's basic education curriculum reform continues to advance in-depth, quality education has become an increasingly important part of basic education, and music education is an important way to continuously promote the in-depth implementation of quality education. However, in China's rural areas, because of historical and geographical factors, there is a huge economic and cultural gap between the countryside and the cities, and most schools lack music classes, professionals are scarce and the artistic atmosphere is thin. Although policy guidelines at the top are constantly promoting the development of arts education, it is difficult to implement and enforce them in relatively backward rural areas. The lag in rural music education makes it difficult to implement music curriculum standards in rural schools, and there is a disconnect between the policy being handed down and the social practice being carried out.

## **2. The Significance of Developing Music Education in Rural Areas**

### **2.1. National Level: Implementation of National Education Policy**

The development of music education in rural areas is in line with the general requirements of "comprehensive development", "using aesthetic education as a vehicle to establish moral education" and "insisting on facing all people" as stated in the *Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era*. The Ministry of Education expects to include music in the scope of the examination to guide students to build a good foundation.

### **2.2. Social Level: Regulating Unbalanced and Inadequate Development**

#### **2.2.1. Building Bridges Between Social Isolation**

The network of obligations linked by friendship, as proposed in The Street Corner Society, is more common in the countryside. As Chen Jiaoying puts it: "The insightful and discerning part of the schoolchildren in the countryside gain social mobility by playing less with their peers, which is a form of self-segregation. But improving the quality of music education in the countryside can make up for the lack of 'vision'. According to Yan Chunlei, music therapy can "build musical bridges and strengthen children's connections".

### **2.2.2. Balancing the Transmission of Cultural Capital**

The musical anthropology Sieg's *Why do the Sua sing?* suggests that the Suas sing first and foremost for their cultural heritage. Because of the generally low level of musical education of rural parents, many rural families face a lack of 'cultural capital' to pass on their music. Where this musical 'cultural capital' is scarce in the villages, it is better passed on through the education of teachers. In *Pedagogy and Ethics*, Peters argues that the importance of education is to 'introduce the child to the public world'. The development that music education can bring to the child is a pathway to the 'public world' for rural children.

### **2.2.3. Promoting the National Strategy of Rural Revitalisation**

Music has always had a strong influence on folklore. The development of music education in the countryside will indirectly contribute to the realisation of "rural civilisation" in the rural revitalisation strategy. At the same time, it will help inspire the next generation to consciously pass on and save music culture.

## **2.3. Individual Level: Promoting "Holistic Development" and Physical and Mental Development**

### **2.3.1. Significance at The Level of Holistic Development**

Guan Jianhua points out that music education has a more positive impact on the 'development of creativity and individuality'. As Wang Hongchao notes, 'music is not only an art of sound but also a form of art with healing functions'. Sheng Peili points out that 'the main objective of music education is the holistic development of the human being and the harmony of physical and mental health, which has similar attributes to music therapy'. Music education is inherently part of the role of music therapy.

### **2.3.2. Significance on A Physiological and Psychological Level**

Traditional music education and music therapy can enhance the motor function of the body and can easily evoke happy emotional experiences. In addition, students' self-efficacy can be effectively enhanced after completing more difficult tracks. This is even more significant in the case of special needs children: it can significantly improve their interpersonal skills, enhance group cohesion; improve their psychological quality and have a positive impact on academic achievement. Psychological literacy is low in rural areas. In this context, music education takes on a more unique significance.

## **3. Constructive Model of The Helping Paradigm**

### **3.1. Core Points - Enhancing Students' Core Music Literacy**

Core literacy in music refers to the key elements of the competencies related to the subject of music that influence the development of students' musical abilities and the level of knowledge and skills they acquire. Rural music education needs development and should start by enhancing the musical core literacy of the students taught, thereby laying the foundation for students to develop their musical talents and grow in the field of music. In school music education, students' development should not only be reflected in the mastery of new music theory and skills knowledge but more importantly, to promote students to better feel the charm of music and develop individual skills through the accumulation of their own music learning experience, thus helping students to form a sound personality and achieve all-round development.

To promote rural arts education, the focus of building a rural music curriculum should be on developing the various aspects of students' competencies and qualities that grow around the core of musical literacy, thus guiding individuals towards a better area of development.

## **3.2. Three Steps - Promoting the Effective Implementation of Targeted Support**

### **3.2.1. For Rural Students: Implementing the Student-Centred Concept and Integrating Music Micro-lessons.**

The main focus of targeted support for music education in rural primary and secondary schools is the front-line music curriculum. This is why the concept of 'student-centred' education should always be upheld in targeted support. In music lessons in rural schools, the student's role as the main subject and central focus should be consciously reinforced, with the teacher playing a guiding role. The student-centred approach of the university team is based on the regularity of students' physical and mental development, and the demands placed on teachers. Every student is a developing individual, and under a 'student-centred' perspective, teachers should look at their students through a developmental lens and let their teaching behaviour contribute to their development.

In addition, with the reform and development of the new information-based education, micro-lessons have gradually become popular, and it has developed characteristics such as prominent theme, clear focus, concise content and novel form, which meet the actual needs of music teaching in rural areas nowadays. Because of their relatively rich hardware resources and software support, university support teams, when providing targeted support to rural primary and secondary schools, can design micro-lesson courses and produce relevant teaching videos according to local conditions. By deeply combining the local cultural background and the actual level of education, they can produce a series of courses with a complete structure, correct orientation and strong operability. This initiative blends cloud-based micro-lesson resources with local characteristics, allowing micro-lessons to be truly used in the daily learning of local students and effectively improving teaching efficiency and quality.

Based on the current situation of the development of rural music education, the university teaching team should give full play to the advantages of micro-lessons in their teaching practice, reconstructing music lessons and devoting themselves to integrating modern educational technology into the whole process of achieving teaching objectives. In the introduction of lessons, micro-lessons create a good atmosphere for teaching with the visual and aural stimuli they can create, stimulating students' interest in learning; in the teaching of music theory and skills training, micro-lessons visualise abstract knowledge, greatly deepening students' understanding and application of knowledge; in music appreciation, micro-lessons break the time and space constraints, bringing in excellent songs from various countries and regions, creating a thematic appreciation environment, allowing students to immerse themselves in the music and experience its meaning. The micro-lessons are designed to allow students to experience the meaning of the music.

Therefore, to promote the development of rural music education, it is necessary to introduce modern and excellent teaching methods into rural music lessons. The application of micro-lessons not only solves problems such as the lack of software and hardware resources in schools but is also an important initiative to effectively promote teaching interaction and strengthen positive emotions among teachers and students, which is conducive to promoting the steady improvement of student's artistic and aesthetic qualities.

### **3.2.2. For Rural Music Teachers: Online and Offline Help for Local Teacher Development**

In view of the contradiction between the urgent need to develop rural music education and the lack of music teachers in rural schools, rural schools usually try to alleviate the current situation by taking in university students for summer teaching activities or encouraging them to come for internships. Initiatives such as voluntary teaching activities and apprenticeship activities have a positive short-term effect, but do not lead to a systematic, long-term support system.

This is why the industry believes that teaching or practicum has a shortcoming in the sustainable development of rural music education.

A prerequisite for the sustainable development of rural music education is the availability of a sufficient number of professional music teachers. The infusion of new talent into the teaching force will enhance the ability of rural music education to generate its own blood, so that the short-term results of the support can have a long-term effect. The university arts organisations can coordinate their resources to invite rural music teachers for offline training and design periodic thematic courses to help them refine their professional skills, deepen their knowledge and theories, and update their teaching concepts. As the teachers who have undertaken the training return to their schools to spread the knowledge they have acquired, the capacity for independent development in rural schools is gradually enhanced.

The internet has made communication more convenient, and university art groups can also use the internet to communicate and discuss with teachers in support schools at any time. By forming online course exchange groups, they can provide online guidance to rural music teachers on issues such as teaching, music group development and music event organisation at any time, helping them to refine their quality in their daily teaching activities.

### **3.2.3. For Music Groups: Guiding The Building and Development of Music Groups**

The ultimate goal of targeted support for music education in rural schools is to equip them with the capacity for self-generation and independent development. With this goal in mind, and taking into account the strong desire of rural primary and secondary school leaders to build their own music groups, university arts organisations can explore the value of assisting schools to form their own music groups to promote the continuity of rural music education.

Taking the formation of a choir as an example, the first two steps of the paradigm systematically enhance the student's musical foundation and learning ability, as well as the teachers' teaching quality and professionalism, which gives the rural music teachers the initial ability to take over the choir and start regular activities. The difficulty in developing a music group lies in its team maintenance and the continuation of subsequent members. Therefore, university arts groups should take specific sustainability measures: make the choir's activities interest-oriented, emotionally linked and institutionally regulated.

### **3.3. Innovative Integration: Incorporating Regional Characteristics Into the Curriculum**

After determining that the core of support is to enhance students' musical literacy, the orderly development of hierarchical support cannot be carried out without the actual local situation as the basis for all activities. Therefore, in the process of constructing the targeted support paradigm, based on the scientific design of support ideas, the construction of the rural music curriculum also needs to be deeply integrated and closely focused on the local reality, which is reflected in the teaching objectives should be in line with the overall subject matter literacy of local music education students; teaching content should be organically integrated with local characteristics, and the efficient use of local teaching resources; teaching methods should be combined with regional natural and humanistic characteristics, so that The teaching methods should be integrated with the natural and humanistic characteristics of the region, so that students can "awaken the local sound" through the perception of nature or the understanding of humanistic ideas, and continuously develop the teaching possibilities.

The construction of a rural music curriculum should not only inherit the regional culture and protect the original vernacular culture, but also adapt to the national education policy of the new era to create and nourish the revitalisation of the countryside with the spiritual connotations of the regional culture. Therefore, in the process of promoting this paradigm of targeted support, it has provided, in a certain sense, room for localities to integrate their own



culture into the paradigm and to develop and design it creatively, depending on their geographical situation, as well as proving its strong replicability.

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