

Discussion on Primary School Music Teaching: How to Increase Students' Enthusiasm for Learning Music

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Abstract

This article analyzes how to inspire primary students to learn music actively. To improve the enthusiasm of learning music among primary students plays an important role in the development of music education in our country, but most primary school students are not interested in music class. The core of music education is aesthetics. A good music education can stimulate the rapid development of the pupils' brain, and improve their ability of music appreciation. Music educators should enhance primary students' interest in music class in order to mobilize them to learn music actively. Therefore, music educators should constantly improve their own musicianship, explore the rules of teaching, and improve teaching methods, help create a good ambiance in the class, make the students learn music relaxed and cheerfully, which multiplies the efficiency of class teaching, so that the goal of cultivation will be achieved.

Key words: Music class; Enthusiasm; Cultivation; Teaching contents; Teaching methods

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INTRODUCTION

Music quality-oriented education has become a hot topic in the society. In order to achieve development in music quality-oriented education, we should improve

primary students' enthusiasm for learning music, and help build a good foundation for music appreciation and studying music. I discovered that even though many of the primary school students like music, they fail to enjoy music classes. I think the primary cause of this situation is lacking of initiative to learn music, thus the quality of teaching and classroom performance cannot be guaranteed. The reason why most people like music is that it is the auditory art, which expresses human emotions and reflects the realities of life through organized sounds. It can not only bring mental pleasure, but also help improve the quality of life. The purpose of establishing music courses is to improve students' perception of music.

1. THE PURPOSE OF MUSIC EDUCATION

Music gives people aesthetic enjoyments. Bai Juyi, a Tang poet, describes the beauty of music in his poetry *Pipa Xing*: "The bold strings rattled like splatters of sudden rain, the fine strings hummed like lovers' whispers. Chattering and pattering, pattering and chattering, as pearls, large and small, on a jade plate fall." Music is a universal language, which is not influenced by how much knowledge one person has. It can express emotions as well as feelings, and becomes a necessary part of daily life. Beautiful music brings most beautiful enjoyment to the spirit, it makes people relaxed and pleasant, and gives people enlightenment. For children who are at a sensitive age, the purpose of inspiring them to learn music actively is not trying to make them great musicians, but trying to stimulate the potential and urging the rapid development of the brain.

2. INTEREST IS THE KEY TO FOSTER ENTHUSIASM

Einstein once said, "The interest is the best teacher". The pupils would lose their vitality and even get bored

with music. Besides, at the schooling stage, it is more important to learn how to learn than to master what they have learned. As the saying goes, “give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime”. Teachers should return the initiative of learning music to the students, let them discover what to learn rather than passive acceptance what is taught, so that they would learn music more actively.

3. MOTIVATING STUDENTS TO LEARN MUSIC WITH MANY FACETS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF MUSIC TEACHING

3.1 Foster Interest Among the Students, Motivate Them to Learn, and Develop Their Intellectual Curiosity

3.1.1 Emphasize How to Start a New Course, Capture the Students' Heart

The beginning of each class is very important to the students. An effective start can keep them engaged in the class, which will double the teaching quality.

3.1.1.1 Start With Stories

Since most children like stories, teachers can tell the background story of the song that the students are trying to learn. They would become more desire to learn after the story is told, and they would learn the song intently. I have done this during my internship: using metaphor or personification to introduce the theme and content of a song to the students, so that their attention can be drawn and become interested in this song. For example, when I was doing the introduction of the song *Little Red Riding Hood* from the textbooks of grade two, volume three, I invited one of the students to walk onstage and told the story of Little Red Riding Hood to the whole class. After the story was told, I summarize the story for them, tell them the brave hunter saved the Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother. We must appreciate the hunter, and everyone should have a heart of gratitude. Meanwhile, we should watch out for being deceived by evil people. Then I played the song, and found the students were listening carefully and thinking seriously. Start a lecture with this method can guide the students to the music scene, which encourages their intellectual curiosity.

3.1.1.2 Start With Games

Most primary school students are active. Introduce a new course with an interesting game also appeals to the students. Not only they are enthusiastic about learning this new song, but also they can feel the emotion of the music, the atmosphere of joy lasts till the end of this class. A lively atmosphere at class helps enhance the classroom performance.

3.1.1.3 Start With Questions

Primary school students usually think dynamically, their mind are not restricted by any fixed pattern. Ask them interesting questions when doing the introduction of a new course, can also increase their interest in the class. When I was teaching *Little Kangaroo* to the second grade students, I asked them, “Have you ever been to the zoo?” “What animals have you seen in the zoo?” When kangaroo was raised by someone, I asked them to outline the image of a kangaroo in their mind, and tried to imagine the way a kangaroo jumps. Then I started teaching the song *Little Kangaroo*, and made the students perform the song with the movement of a kangaroo afterwards. This made the class very active, a very good learning effect was achieved.

3.1.2 Use Audio-Visual Media to the Students' Interest to Learn Music

Teachers can use live videos that go with the music to increase students' interest in learning music. For example, in music appreciation of *A Dragon Boat Race*, the fourth lesson of grade 4, I designed the courseware in this way: a video is showing the scene of a dragon boat race, men and women, old and young are getting together by the riverside cheerfully, some are knocking gongs, some are beating drums, and the song *A Dragon Boat Race* is used as background music throughout this video. When the courseware was playing in the class, I told the background story of this song to help them appreciate it. Students became more interested in the scene after they learned that it is a tradition to hold dragon boat races on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, for the purpose of commemorating the patriotic poet Qu Yuan. Because their interest in the dragon boat race scene were increased, the students learned very absorbedly at this class. Thanks to the increased enthusiasm, the students were engaged throughout the whole class, they understood the song better and experienced the beauty of music in the process of music appreciation.

3.1.3 Emphasize the Function of Music Appreciation to Improve the Students' Understanding of Music

Music has become a necessary part of people's intellectual life. Music appreciation course plays a key role in fostering primary students' enthusiasm for learning music. The prerequisite of a good music appreciation class is to develop the students' interest in listening to the music, and get involved proactively. The lectures of most music teacher are consisted of what to sing and how to sing. Though teaching students music theories before they start to listen to the song can also get a good result in teaching, it makes a difference if the class starts with music appreciation itself. Taking one class during my internship as an example: The purpose of appreciation of symphonic fairy tale *Peter and the Wolf* is to tell the different timbres of different musical instruments, a usual approach to teaching is to make the students listen to the sounds of

different musical instruments before appreciating *Peter and the Wolf*. However, this piece lasts more than 20 minutes, students are more likely to be inattentive or distracted when listen to the song after they spend some time to tell the different timbres. So I started the class playing *Peter and the Wolf*. This is a classic musical story that tells the fairy tale of how Peter, a clever boy, defeated the wolf with the help of other animals. I told the students to pay attention to the sound effect that each musical instrument had: the flute had a clear, sharp tone, sounds like a bird; the oboe has a thick tone, just like a dull duck; the clarinet had a hollow sound, just like an agile cat; the sound of timpani drums were similar to the sound of a hunting rifle. This approach helped draw students' attention to the musical work and increased their initiative to learn, they gained a primary perception of the timbres of different musical instruments, and developed insights of this work. Thus, the goal of this course was achieved.

3.1.4 Hold Extracurricular Activities to Inspire Students to Learn Actively

Extracurricular activities is a main approach to develop students' learning initiative and to improve the quality of teaching. The purpose of any approach is to foster students' enthusiasm for learning music. Therefore, holding competitions on music reading and rhythm beating, organizing dance team, chorus, and orchestra, as well as solo performances can enrich the students' life in their spare time, broaden their horizon, and help develop a talent for music. Music educators can organize interesting extracurricular activities regularly, which provide opportunity to demonstrate themselves and show their musical talents, make the students participate in these activities rather than passive learning. Students are more likely to become active in music classes, and even love music more. For example, the coming Children's Day will be a good time for children's talent shows. Music teachers should organize events that allow students to celebrate their own festival in singing and enjoy the pleasure of music.

3.2 Music Teachers Should Improve Their Own Level of Aesthetic Knowledge of Music and Overall Quality

The beautiful singing, expressive performing and lively lecture of music teachers give the students aesthetic enjoyment and drive them to learn music actively. This requires music teachers to have a wealth of musical knowledge, discover the pattern of music education, and keep improving their teaching approach.

3.2.1 Using Exclusive Organizational Teaching Strategies

Exclusive organizational teaching strategies should be applied for music classes. Taking my teaching practice as an example, instead of using traditional greetings, such as "class starts", "stand up", "hello, teacher", I played the same melody on the piano to start each class, which made the students develop a habit of getting back to order

after they heard the music. When the class ended, I also played a melody on the piano and singing "goodbye, students", the pupils replied "bye-bye, teacher" that go with the melody. Students would be able to find the appeal of music throughout the whole class by practicing this strategy, and experience the joy of music.

3.2.2 Using Flexible Expressions

3.2.2.1 Literary Language

Music teachers need to pay attention to the art of literary language, the language of the lecture should not only be vivid and fluent, but also interesting. Experience has proved that jocular talks at class usually can make the atmosphere exciting, promote the relationship between teacher and students, and improve the teaching quality. For example, I took the term "Papa" as an example when giving lecture of dotted note, I told them that the first syllable last three times longer than the second. Using daily terms as teaching material not only helps students to master this type of rhythm easily, but also understands how it works in daily life.

When giving a lecture, teachers should be vigorous. Especially the first ten minutes of a class, teachers should try their best to draw students' attention with either literary language or moves, foster their interest in the class, and develop an enthusiasm for learning music. The using of vivid analogy and interesting language can not only catch students' attention, but also enhance their memory of what they have learned. For example, an accent sign looks like the greater than symbol, a fermata looks like an eye, a slur symbol is similar to an arch bridge, etc.. This kind of lectures helps draw students' attention and help them grasp the theories easily.

3.2.2.2 Body Language

Since the primary students cannot pay attention to a single thing for long, it is not easy to keep to them concentrate on the lecture at a class. Therefore, body languages like nod the head, clap the hands, stamp the feet and move the body are very useful for a music class. Students tend to express their emotions with body language before they can learn more literary skills, using abundant body language can help teachers present the lecture much better. Such as the song *Clapping Hands* from volume 8 of grade 4 textbook, I let them clap their hands to wordless phases. The whole class was divided into two teams by sex, and they accompany each other in turn. By doing this way, I kept the students concentrating on me throughout the class and learned the song well. Thus, an appropriate teaching approach that fit primary school students' characteristics of active, playful, curious, and competitive, using abundant body language can draw students' attention effectively, and inspire them to learn actively.

3.2.3 Choose Teaching Approach Based on Students' Psychological and Physiological Characteristics

The mind and body of a primary school students are growing at this stage, their characteristics include active,

brisk, curious, and mimic. Emotional musical activity plays an important role in their mental and physical development, therefore, music teaching for primary school students should be vivid and lively. Teachers not only need to create a relaxed and pleasant learning atmosphere to learn, and make them to participate in various musical activities, to experience the emotions music bring, so that the students' emotion is enriched, help them understand love and hate, to pursue truth, virtue and beauty, and develop a strong sense of teamwork. In a word, a guide, encouragement, and praise oriented approach is more appropriate for primary school students.

3.2.4 Establish an Equal Consciousness Between Teacher and the Students at a Class

Teachers can never vent their feelings on the students. The students are dignified though young, they would wish teachers can be as warm as their parents, while do not like the teachers to speak in an imperative tone. So we should use the language like "can you...", "will you..." and "let's think about it...". In this way, teachers not only show their respect to what students have on their mind, but also encourage them to think and learn actively. All in all, teachers should develop a relationship like family or friend, create an equal, democratic, interactive classroom atmosphere, and show their care and smile to the students, make them feel the warmth of the class, so that the students would become more active to learn from the teacher.

CONCLUSION

One ancient Chinese educator concluded that, "If an instructor fails to make the pupil enjoy the process of learning, then this pupil would not like to learn at all." Therefore, whether the pupils' learning initiative can be aroused is vital to a successful teaching session. Only when the pupils become curious about what they are going to learn, and their learning initiative is aroused by it, they would like to learn and think actively, and pleasingly. It

is a hard job to develop sustainable enthusiasm of music among students. All music educators should make every effort to prepare every lecture, create a better environment for music teaching, and bring different kinds of music to the pupils.

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