

# Research on the Content of Orff Teaching in China

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## Abstract

Orff teaching method (Orff-Schulwerk) is a music education method founded by German musicians Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman in the early 20th century. It is a comprehensive music teaching system with children as the main teaching target, aiming to develop children's musical perception, expression and creativity through music, singing, movement, dance and creative activities. The core concept of the Orff Method is to closely integrate music education with children's natural development, making music a natural tool for expression and learning. It emphasises the development of students' subjectivity, perception, creativity and co-operation, and allows students to learn music in a fun way.

**Keywords:** Research; Content; Orff Teaching; China

## Introduction

In Ding Xudong's "Introduction to the Concept of Orff Music Education System - Interview with Professor Dana Li, President of China Orff Professional Committee", it is recorded that the Orff music education system, which has absorbed the latest results of anthropological development and has been successfully practised for half a century, is an important representative of the world's music education system. The most feasible means of operation for teachers can be broadly divided into two methods: the original educational method and the open, comprehensive, and expansive educational method. The original education method starts from four starting points: rhythm, language, hearing and body sense, and does not emphasise theory, focusing the perspective of music education on people's most basic feelings and experiences of music, and returning music to human life (Ding, 2007).

Zhang Yinyao elaborated in "Orff's Thoughts on Children's Music Education and Revelations" that: "Originality", Latin "elementarius", which means primitive, original, basic, elemental, elementary, close to the soil, and full of life, is the basic core of Orff's pedagogical method. Original music education is the closest to the natural human state of instantaneous externalisation of psychological activities without any modification. When language, culture, musical emotion, musical elements, musical performance and playing become the heartfelt needs of children in music learning, children will quickly master the relevant musical vocabulary in a relaxed, natural and stress-free situation, and use their bodies, language and instruments to freely interpret and express their inner world in a unique way. In the open, comprehensive and expansive education method, openness refers to the Orff teaching method itself, which is an inclusive and eclectic system. Teachers can independently delve into all kinds of natural and scientific knowledge in the music classroom, and through the key of music, open up the "coordinated development of IQ and EQ" and "all-round progress of physical personality". Through the key of music, it opens the door to "harmonious development of IQ and EQ" and "all-round progress of body and personality". Comprehensive means that students

must complete their self-learning through singing, playing, acting, dancing and other comprehensive forms of music practice in the music programme (Zhang, 1999).

## **Research on the Content of Orff Teaching in China**

### **Singing teaching**

What should be the important content of children's singing teaching? What kind of singing learning method can most stimulate children's interest in learning music teaching methods, the author believes that can make young children in music learning interpersonal communication, character, wisdom and other aspects of the overall development of the majority of our music teachers should be most concerned about the issue. Pleasant music learning atmosphere, happy learning singing is an important means to improve learning efficiency. Only mobilise the children's enthusiasm for learning actively to learn, singing out of the music is wonderful and pleasant. The musicality of the song can only be expressed when the child is fully engaged in it. The third primary school in Kunyang Town, Pingyang County, Zhejiang Province, Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, Zhang Sisi teacher published "Orff music teaching method in primary school singing in the application of" mentioned that Orff singing teaching is an important part of the Orff teaching method (Orff-Schulwerk). It is to develop students' musical perception, expression and creativity through singing activities. Orff-Schulwerk emphasises the importance of letting students feel the rhythm, melody, timbre and emotion of music through singing, while encouraging students to actively participate in singing and creating their own songs. Compared with the traditional music teaching method, applying Orff music teaching method to primary school singing teaching is conducive to a more active classroom atmosphere, which also helps students to stimulate their interest in learning and master music knowledge faster. Orff music teaching method enables every student to participate in music learning, especially its "improvisation" can improve students' enthusiasm and initiative, and directly show the music emotion. Singing is taught through co-operative games, which helps to cultivate students' ability of solidarity and collaboration compared with traditional teaching methods. In the face of the challenges and opportunities of education reform, primary school singing teaching needs to be fully integrated with the reality of the teaching situation, constantly absorbing advanced teaching concepts, and absorbing the essence of the Orff music teaching method to be used in primary school singing teaching (Zhang, 2017).

### **Rhythmic movement**

In 1924, Orff and Dorothee Günther established the Günther School, which combined "group exercise, music and dance". Orff regarded this school as an ideal place for experimentation, trying to use rhythm as the basis for combining dance and language to form a complete form of musical expression. In Orff's concept of music education, focusing on "improvisation", he emphasised the use of various postures and movements of the body, such as: twirling the fingers, stomping the feet, clapping the hands, patting the legs, etc., so as to promote the students' understanding of rhythm, enhance the students' inner experience, and cultivate the co-ordination of the body's movements, which is the "sound" or "body's movement". " or "body percussion" (Niu, 2019).

The so-called sound gesture teaching is the action of using the body as a musical instrument and making sounds by clapping the body. It can visually reflect human emotions and has a long, long history and is widely used in life. The most representative movements are clapping hands, clapping legs and so on. Rhythm runs through our lives. Orff believes that "music comes from people themselves", the foetus is not born to feel the rhythm of the mother's heartbeat, breathing. Rhythm is all around us, such as daily running and walking. The most important aspect of music learning is rhythmic training. Although rhythm can be expressed in many forms, none of them can be separated from the body rhythm. During the teaching process, the teaching content should be from easy to difficult, to provide students with enough space for development Lin Qianxian in the journal "Orff "sound gesture" teaching method in the lower primary school music classroom practice" journal mentioned that the core structure of the sound gesture is - tone - rhythm - the rhythm of the body, the rhythm of the body, the rhythm of the body, the rhythm of the body, the rhythm of the body, the rhythm of the body, the rhythm of the body. Body-body sound teaching is based on the body, and body percussion is indispensable to sound teaching, and the two are complementary to each other. Body percussion not only outputs through the body, but also relies on the sense of hearing and vision, in addition to the musical elements and rhythm. Teachers teach by focusing on the coordination of rhythm, timbre and body. There are various ways to produce timbre, by tapping on other parts of the body such as the arms and chest to produce different timbres, and data analysis has revealed that tapping on different parts of the body with different force can produce different sound effects. Rhythm and timbre are inseparable, and the combination of the two forms the most representative part of music. Body percussion has a high demand for rhythm and timbre, so the combination of the two affects the auditory effect, which shows that body percussion does not exist in music as a dance part. Body percussion is not a dance, it expresses music with the body, therefore, the visual effect is especially important, and body coordination is an important way to achieve visual beauty. To sum up, vocal teaching is a teaching method that relies on timbre, rhythm and body production. We can draw on the rhythm, timbre and body coordination mentioned by Lin Qianxian (2020) to achieve better teaching research results in our teaching practice research activities. Lin Qianxian conducted a return survey after teaching, and this teaching practice is based on the use of Orff sound gesture teaching in XX primary school music classroom, with the purpose of observing students' interest in music classroom, and changes in the process of participation and other aspects of the characteristics of the change. In order to the effect of Orff sound teaching in primary school music classroom. The authors took a class of fifth grade as the object of practice and conducted a return survey on the classroom effect. This return survey provides us with the basis of practice for this topic. The content of the return visit is summarised as follows: (1) the effect of Orff's vocal teaching activities in music class is still very obvious, the students like to take music class more and more, which makes the students feel that the music class now is more interesting than the previous music class, and also makes them have a new understanding of the music class; (2) since the integration of Orff's vocal teaching into the primary school music classroom, students are very much looking forward to the music class, and in the classroom participation and learning, the class is very much looking forward to the music class. Moreover, their participation and motivation in the classroom were somewhat higher than before. From the above interviews, it can be seen that primary school teachers and students are very supportive of the use of sound teaching in the primary school music classroom, and the results are also relatively good,

including: (1) Because the use of rising potential teaching in the primary school music classroom, it stimulates the students' interest in learning music, and improves their participation in the classroom and enthusiasm for learning. It makes the music classroom more lively; (2) it improves students' creativity, makes them actively participate in the classroom, and effectively enhances their performance ability. Cultivate their creative ability, so that they are in the middle of music learning. Enhance the sense of self-existence; (3) Enhance the students' sense of rhythm.

### **Orff Vocal Signs**

Rhythm is everywhere in our lives. Contemporary world-famous German music educator Orff once thought that "music begins with the human being himself", and the foetus can perceive "rhythm" when it is conceived in the mother's body. In the world of the foetus, the mother's heartbeat, uniform breathing, is their rhythm. Rhythm has always been with us, take the most simple, such as our daily running, walking is a kind of rhythm. Rhythm training is the foundation for learning music. Although the rhythm can be given in many forms of performance, but it is the most basic form of expression - the body's rhythm. In teaching, in order to enable students to better establish a sense of rhythm, we should adopt a simple to difficult way to carry out, which is conducive to better student absorption (Niu, 2019).

This part focuses on the experience and expression of rhythm and groove. Students perceive and understand the rhythmic structure of music through experiencing and performing rhythms and rhythms, such as percussion instruments, clapping, stepping and other activities.

Characteristics of Orff Rhythmic Rhythms include: Physical Participation: Students perceive rhythms and rhythms through physical participation in Orff Rhythmic Rhythms. For example, students can clap their hands to the rhythm and step with their feet to express the rhythm, experiencing and expressing the rhythmic structure of the music through their body movements. Percussion Instruments: Percussion instruments are an important teaching tool in Orff Rhythm and Rhythm. Students play simple percussion instruments such as tambourines, xylophones, bells, etc. to experience rhythmic and rhythmic changes. Rhythm combinations: Orff Rhythm encourages students to combine and arrange rhythms, combining simple rhythms into interesting rhythmic patterns. This develops creativity and arranging skills. Rotation and Counterpoint: Students may engage in rotation and counterpoint activities in Orff Rhythmic Movements to increase their musical perception and co-ordination by playing different rhythms or rhythms at the same time. The purpose of Orff Rhythmic Rhythms is to enable students to feel the rhythm and groove of music in a pleasant and active atmosphere, and to cultivate students' sensitivity to music and their ability to express themselves. This teaching method focuses on students' active participation and creative play, and allows students to discover the fun and charm of music in instrumental and rhythmic performances. Janice M. Thresher, in her journal *The Contributions of Carl Orff to Elementary Music Education*, mentions that the Dalcroze Method was originally developed to improve the musical ability of musicians. The Dalcroze Method was originally designed to improve the rhythmic sense of musically gifted children, but has since evolved to include a form of self-expression and general training in music theory for children of average musical ability. As stated by the founder of the Dalcroze Method, the main goal of the Dalcroze Method is "to establish a rapid and regular current of communication between the brain and the body by means of rhythm, and to make rhythmic sense a physical exercise." The Dalcroze method "develops the student's attention and concentration by eliminating all but the most elementary

muscular movements, thus bringing into play an automatic technique (the arms beat the beat, the lower limbs indicate the value of the notes); the whole body system is almost unconsciously controlled by the brain as a command of the rhythm of the music. After this training, which allows the pupil to respond quickly and physically to the rhythmic changes improvised by the teacher on the piano, the whole musical work is translated into a language of gestures and body movements at a later stage. He believes that children should be allowed to discover music for themselves from a simple, almost primitive level. By encouraging original creative expression and starting at a basic level of musical expression, the child will not be immediately indoctrinated into the complexities of classical music, nor will he be "expected to master difficult instruments, such as the piano or the violin, before he can experience the music, or be taught that "before he can have anything to express, he must first understand the modes of expression and technique." Instead, he gradually moves from natural speech patterns to rhythmic activities; from the melodies that arise from these rhythmic patterns; to simple harmonies. "Rhythm precedes (and is stronger than) melody; melody precedes (and is stronger than) harmony. If you take a child, if you sit him down at the piano, show him where alto C is, and then proceed to teach him the minuet. You introduce him to rhythm, melody, and harmony (and instrumental technique) at the same time. Sure, he may survive; but most likely he will learn the piece mechanically, with no sense of rhythm and no enthusiasm for it. very polite (and most unchildlike) melody, with no appreciation of functional harmony." For the child (and for the primitive), speaking and singing are intimately connected; a connection that naturally and unconsciously leads from speech patterns to rhythms, and from rhythmic patterns to melodies. Speech patterns make it easy for the child to master all types of beats, to master strong beats, even and irregular bars. Begin by speaking or reciting, reproduce rhythmic formulas by clapping and stomping, and finally, instruments. Through Janice M. Thresher's periodicals the author draws from it the importance of rhythm in Orff teaching, and that in the teaching process emphasis should be placed on rhythm, both basic and creative, so that students can understand the basic rhythms in the process of learning, and gradually develop inner rhythms, which is the goal of the author's research on the teaching of rhythm.

### **Orff musical instruments**

Orff percussion instruments include (1) Leather: tambourine, snare drum, drum set, timpani, and so on. (2) Wooden instruments: single drums, double drums, clappers, wooden fish, and so on. (3) Metal: triangles, bells, gongs, cymbals, and so on. (4) Loose rattles: stringed bells, sistrums, etc. The percussion instruments also include sand hammers made of various materials. Percussion instruments can be used not only for rhythmic training, but also as a tool for learning the elements of music, as well as for accompaniment and improvisation. There are three types of instruments used in Orff teaching: (1) Bells: made up of a dozen or so metal bars, with a clear, bright sound. (2) Metallic piano: steel sheet piano, aluminium sheet piano, iron piano and so on. (3) Xylophone: a sound bar instrument made of hardwood with a resonance box. These tone bar instruments are freely removable and replaceable. They can be disassembled and reassembled according to the student's situation, minimising the student's technical difficulty. These bars are easy to play, have a good sound, and are very popular with students. After familiarising themselves with these instruments, they can be used to accompany recitations and songs, as well as for ensemble playing and improvisation. The author's study is about students in the lower section

of primary school grades 1-2, who are relatively young and have insufficient self-control and concentration, making it difficult for them to pay attention to one thing for a long period of time. Therefore, exploring sound and music in the creative realm of classroom teaching plays a crucial role in establishing initial concepts and interest in music learning. The rational and skilful use of Orff percussion instruments can bring out the non-semantic character of music more vividly and help students to explore nature and the world independently. The harmonious relationship between self-music and life can be established, thus achieving the educative effect of music on the building of a complete personality, and at the same time paving the way for future music courses. Primary school students in grades 3-6 are in a transitional period in their psychological development, where emotional regulation is beginning to be linked to a moral code. After at least two years of schooling and a thorough understanding of the basic requirements of the classroom, they have developed a certain degree of self-discipline. At the same time, they are more aware of collective activities, begin to understand the social significance of learning activities, show a tendency to be interested in certain subjects or classroom modes, and have the subconscious intention to selectively engage in the classroom based on psychological factors such as hobbies. They also have at least two years of music-related knowledge, and can basically think independently about the melody, rhythm, emotion and other elements of a song or piece of music. Therefore, in the music classroom teaching of Grade 3 and above, the application of Orff percussion instruments is not only limited to small percussion instruments with no pitch, but also gradually adds pitch percussion instruments such as xylophones, so as to enrich the use of Orff percussion instruments and make the classroom atmosphere more joyful. The use of Orff percussion instruments is not only limited to small percussion instruments with no pitch, but also gradually adding pitch percussion instruments such as xylophone, so that the use of Orff percussion instruments can be enriched to make the classroom atmosphere more joyful and harmonious, so that the students can feel the beauty and fun of the music and at the same time, can also exercise their ability to collaborate with each other as well as the ability to create. The use of Orff percussion instruments not only enables students to interact with teachers and classmates, but also enables students to truly interact with music, enter into music, feel the charm of music, and thus establish a desire for lifelong learning.

### **Orff improvisation**

Zhang Lu (2004) from the Music Department of Huaiyin Normal College in Jiangsu Province emphasised in "The New Field of Music Curriculum - Creation" that: in specific teaching, the relationship between imitation and creation should be correctly handled; the differences and similarities between improvisation and creation should be clearly distinguished; improvisation in the "field of creation" is fundamentally different from that in the field of professional music education; "composition" is fundamentally different. In the "creation field", improvisation is essentially different from "composition" in the field of professional music education. Teachers should cultivate students' inner sense of hearing in the teaching process, mainly highlighting the word "improvisation", and do not need to make mental constructions and preparations in advance, but describe the creation effect in their own imagination first, and then play the sound through the actual performance. In contrast, simulation and verbal creation are the main forms, and should be practised repeatedly. Teachers should establish an equal relationship with students and create a harmonious, relaxed interpersonal environment and classroom atmosphere for students to learn music creation.

Gao Chuying (2015), in his article "Lighting up the Starry Flame of Musical Creativity - A Brief Discussion on the Teaching Strategies of Secondary School Music's "Creative" Field", briefly describes the significance and status of music's "creative field" in music teaching, and then discusses the meaning and status of music's "creative field" in secondary school music teaching. After briefly describing the significance and status of the "creative field" of music in music teaching, the teaching strategies of the "creative field" of secondary school music, namely improvisation, music composition, creative performance and exploring music, are explained in a more systematic way. At the level of creative practice, it is proposed that the teaching process should focus on students' works, pay attention to the creative process, and not look at students' works with an adult mindset; set up guiding questions, create problematic situations, and stimulate students' creativity according to the local conditions; build up students' habits of independent learning, and encourage students to set up their own doubts and then inspire them to "solve" their own doubts. "solving doubts"; improve teaching and communication methods with the new era of student thinking.

## Conclusion

In summary, although the theory of creative teaching in music is a hot research topic at present, the research on the "creative field" in the Compulsory Education Music Curriculum Standard has not yet been exhaustive, and there is little literature to be found. According to the author's research, the teaching strategy of "creative field" and the role and significance of "creative field" in music teaching are summarised and analysed by the researcher in the "creative field". The researchers summarised and analysed the three specific teaching contents of the "creation field" (exploring sound and music, improvisation and creation, and creative practice), among which the teaching research on improvisation and creation is the most scarce.

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