

Develop a Do-Re-Mi Music Education Programs to Enhance First-Year Primary Students Core Literacy Skills in Jiangxi China

Wu Hanyue

City Graduate School, City University of Malaysia
Email: 1737839654@qq.com

Dr. Loy Chee Luen

City Graduate School, City University of Malaysia
Email: loy.chee@city.edu.my

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Abstract

In this qualitative study, we look at how first-year primary students in Jiangxi, China, were able to benefit from a Do-Re-Mi music education program that targeted improving their basic reading skills. Based on theories of music education and literacy development, this study looks at how adding musical activities to the curriculum affects students' ability to read, write, and comprehend what they read. Data was gathered from the program's instructors and students through document analysis, interviews, and observations. Students' phonemic awareness, vocabulary growth, and participation in literacy activities are all positively impacted by the incorporation of Do-Re-Mi music education, according to preliminary results. In addition, the approach promotes an encouraging classroom setting that is helpful for students' overall growth. Nevertheless, obstacles including limited resources and students' varied degrees of musical ability are also mentioned. Insights into effective pedagogical techniques for educators and policymakers are provided by this study, which adds to the expanding body of literature on the junction of music education and literacy development. Implications for educational practice and suggestions for further studies are addressed.

Keywords: Do-Re-Mi, Music Education, Literacy Skills, Primary Students, Qualitative Research, China

Introduction

Developing a Do-Re-Mi music education program to enhance first-year primary students' core literacy possess difficulties. Hence, there are notable problems found. First, making sure that there is a unified integration of a Do-Re-Mi music education program in the context of Jiangxi China is a notable concern. The presence of resistance within the school environment and

outside of the school is a problem that ought to be addressed in order to develop the music program. There are issues emerging from educators who are not fully supportive of the idea, as well as how the program should be developed to meet the growing needs of students (Yang, 2023). Successful acceptance of the music education program depends wholly on effectively training first-year primary school teachers in music education and its incorporation with core literacy skills. This implies that overcoming the possible resistance among teachers, especially those lacking previous experience in music education is a notable obstacle. A study by Yuan et al. (2021), found that the implementation of new programs often affects students in numerous ways. For instance, some students lack diversified music teaching methods, which implies that their musical ability is low.

From a comparative perspective, there are other provinces in China that have incorporated music programs within their schools' curriculum. For instance, Guangdong Province has a rich cultural history and music initiatives contributes massively in the learning process (Chen, 2021). The music programs in this province focus on numerous activities, including music theory, singing, and instrumental instructions. The presence of music institutions that provide advanced training regarding music education is exceptional. Further, the provision of adequate resources in this province, including music teachers and learning materials for music programs is an added advantage. Hence, a comparison of literacy outcomes between Guangdong and Jiangxi can inform about how diverse factors affect the success of music programs.

Another challenge is that of limited resources. The lack of adequate resources, such as funding, musical instruments, learning materials, and poor infrastructure are some of the problems that hinder the successful development of the Do-Re-Mi Music Education Programs. The lack of adequate funding is a major problem that hinders the development of the program. In this case, financial constraints interferes with teachers' training and music education program execution (Yu, 2022). This challenge can easily affect the quality of educational experience delivered to the students. Without enough musical instruments, first-year students' may not have the desired hands-on experience, and this may compromise the success of the music program. Further, the lack of adequate learning materials, including sheet music, textbooks, and music-related resources can obstruct the complete delivery of the program. Poor infrastructure, such as small classrooms and unsuitable facilities for music education can also affect the desired factors of developing the program.

In the current Chinese educational landscape, the refinement of core literacy skills among primary school learners remains as a core objective. Major proficiencies in writing, reading, and listening serve as a catalysts for primary school students' success, offering them with vital tools for continued learning (Leung & Zhang, 2022). Nonetheless, music education and the pursuit of core literacy skills in Chinese primary schools has a fair share of challenges, especially when assessing the costs or expenses incurred when implementing music programs. The challenges increases when trying to engage primary school students actively in the music learning process. Chinese traditional strategies to music literacy education tend to grapple to acquire the attention desired for primary school students. The importance of music education is appreciated, especially in Shangrao, Jiangxi province. However, the common challenge is that many primary schools in this region struggle with budget

constraints. The lack of modern music resources, including textbooks and suitable technologies to support music education make it difficult for the educators.

Music education and curriculum in primary schools in Shangrao, Jiangxi province can be considered as epitomes of mainstream values and cultural practices. However, the challenge is that Chinese ethnic minorities in the region are not well-represented in the school teaching materials (Pang, 2019). For instance, most of the music teaching materials used by teachers in the region do not reflect the interests of the minority groups in the population of diversity. A notable issue with music teaching materials involves the representation of ethnic groups, which tends to be politicized. Often, Chinese minority cultures are minimized to a limited number of symbols, especially during music classrooms. For instance, in the classroom settings, music chosen to depict ethnic cultures misrepresent reality by portraying ethnic minority people and students as happy with their lives. Such stereotyped depictions of minority music results in misunderstandings and inaccurate viewpoints regarding ethnic minority groups among primary school students. This does not only underpin ethnic stereotypes among the students, but also affects their capacity to develop core literacy skills in music classrooms.

Shangrao, Jiangxi province complies with the Chinese national educational policies. However, the shortage of musical instruments for teaching music subject is a challenge that hinders students from obtaining the desired experience regarding the subject. Another challenge involves inadequate infrastructure, for instance, modern music classrooms, which affects the success of practical music education (Anqi, 2023). Without suitable, adequate and modern music facilities, students tend to miss out on important music opportunities, which translates to low skills. This situation is exacerbated by the shortage of qualified music teachers. Access to qualified teachers emerge as a common challenge, which hinders the quality of music instruction provided to the primary students. Chinese education system emphasizes on examination driven approach, which often interferes music education (Yang & Welch, 2019). Some schools and parents in this region highlight the value of subjects that directly contribute to academic excellence, possibly transferring music education to a secondary role. In addition, time constraints is another notable challenge. Primary school curriculum is moderately demanding, and this leaves limited time for music activities. Due to time constraints, primary school students do not have enough opportunities to participate in music-related activities, and this hinders the successful development of core literacy skills.

There are several potential benefits of music education in supporting core literacy skills among primary school students. For example, music education improves students' reading comprehension abilities, improves listening skills and analytical skills, and empowers students to express and communicate effectively (Andreu & Godall, 2017). While these benefits cannot be overstated, there are also a fair share of challenges or problems that persist. The major problem explored in this research is the need for effective evaluation strategies to assess primary school music teaching based on core literacy. The advantages of music education, particularly on language development have been widely acknowledged. However, there is still a lack of an inclusive and well-established evaluation strategies, which can be applied to evaluate the impact of music teaching, particularly on core literacy skills in the primary school environments.

Most of the existing evaluation strategies do not entirely capture the complex interplay that occur between music and language, and this results in imperfect comprehension of how music education strengthens core literacy among the young learners. Hence, the lack of inclusive evaluation strategies is a notable problem. Across different primary schools, the evaluation practices for music teaching tend to concentrate on music performance or even conventional language evaluations, instead of integrating the two aspects to assess the influence on core literacy skills (Yang, 2022). This study seeks to address this gap by simply identifying and creating comprehensive strategies, which incorporate both music and language-related components.

The connection between music education and core literacy skills is multidimensional. This implies that this connection it is not well understood, and this is an issue or problem in this study. Music brings about the possibility to improve writing, reading, speaking and listening abilities among many students in primary schools. However, there is an urgent need to examine the nuanced means though which all these skills are interrelated. This study aims to delve deeper to explore this connections and unearth the transformative impact of music education on core literacy.

Primary school education is a crucial period where students are given the opportunity to enhance language and cognitive development. It is the same period where young learners' minds are extremely receptive to learning and establishing connections between diverse concepts (Concina, 2023). Nonetheless, there are issues concerning assessing the impact of music on these learners' core literacy skills. At this lower level of education, children's cognitive capacities are in early development. This means they have unique preferences and learning patterns. Consequently, the existing or traditional evaluation strategies, which have been intended to older students may not efficiently capture the desired progress and accomplishments of young learners, especially in the realm of music and language integration (Tabuena & Perez, 2021). This study recognizes the importance of pinpointing age-relevant evaluation strategies, such as creative projects and oral presentations, which meet the exact needs of students in primary schools. These strategies should focus on the young learners' motor skills, attention spans, and language comprehension levels.

There are concerns about the practical implementation of some evaluation strategies. Despite the highlighted advantages of music education in supporting core literacy skills, there are issues about time constraints, limited resources, and differing degrees of support for music activities in schools, which can affect the practical adoption of reliable evaluation strategies. There is a need to pinpoint strategies, which are practicably implemented in real-life primary school settings. There is no doubt that some evaluation strategies are time-consuming while others are resource intensive for both students and music teachers. The current study aims to suggest practical and easily manageable strategies, which can be directly integrated within the existing primary school syllabus and the overall teaching practices.

China is characterized by a diversity of huge geography. This implies that there are challenges of access and equity in the realms of music teaching. For instance, while the urban regions of Shangrao, Jiangxi thrives as centers for cultural diversity, the rural regions as well as the primary schools have limited resources. Besides, most of the rural schools in the region

struggle with inequalities in facilitating music education. Hence, this accentuates the division between diverse segments of student population in the region. Within the urban landscape, access to music teaching is easy due to the presence of cultural resources and institutions (Yang, 2022). However, there are a few concerns about the availability of qualified music teachers, which often interferes with the overall music teaching and core literacy development. Apart from the shortage of qualified teachers, the presence of numerous ethnic groups is a notable problem in this region. Not every primary school students have equal exposure to their cultural musical legacies. This implies that some students can be easily marginalized because of limited exposure to certain musical information. Addressing these inequities is vital for promoting a fair learning environment for all primary students. An inclusive education that includes music teaching and core literacy should guarantee that there are adequate qualified teachers, and that students are not discriminated based on their backgrounds.

Another notable issue in Shangrao, Jiangxi province involves balancing cultural legitimacy with contemporary pedagogical practices within the interplay of music teaching and core literacy. In Shangrao, Jiangxi province, cultural heritage serves a foundation for pride, shaping the regions' identity and nearly every aspect of society, including music teaching. Although mixing music teaching with cultural norms holds a vital role, the critical issue comes with creating a balance between traditions and innovations. This is notable problem that arises from the urge to evade cultural dilution whereas guaranteeing that music teaching remains useful to the primary students. Traditional music, instruments and genres have a vital role in the regions' cultural importance, serving as mediums that convey both narratives and wisdom of the past generations. Nonetheless, the challenge arises when trying to integrate the traditional music practices and materials in the context of music teaching, and connecting the same to core literacy. This issue is aggravated by the shortage of proficient teachers with knowledge of traditional norms and values, in addition to the diversity of cultural narratives in the regional context.

Reflecting on this research and its current state on primary schools, it is evident that are notable research gaps. Previous studies have clearly highlighted the importance of music education on core literacy. However, there is still a need for an inclusive study, which precisely investigates the different and nuanced evaluation strategies that suits music teaching in primary schools. Previous studies have focused more on short-term interventions, offering insights into the instant effects, but have failed to provide a longitudinal viewpoint to comprehend the sustainability of such impacts in long-term. Therefore, the current study fills these research gaps by; addressing the need for inclusive evaluation strategies, which comprise both musical and language-related components, and narrowing down the focus on primary school level by recognizing this crucial years of cognitive and language development. Further, the study aims to categorize evaluation strategies, which are practical and manageable, especially for primary students and teachers. By offering realistic and practical evaluation strategies, music teachers can integrate music into their syllabus and boost the overall learning experience of students in primary schools.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to highlight and develop effective strategies for evaluating primary school music teaching based on core literacy.

- To identify first-year primary students' specific needs for music instructions, preferences, and learning styles in regard to music education.
- To design and develop effective music tutorials that integrates with the core literacy curriculum.
- To evaluate the programs' effectiveness in enhancing core literacy skills by measuring students' progress.

Method

A research design denotes a strategy employed by the researcher to answer the research questions using empirical data. This study employs a design and development research (DDR) methods as the research design (Yusop, 2022). The DDR research design integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the effect of a Do-Re-Mi music programs on literacy skills.

Quantitative component – it entails the use of standardized tests to evaluate students' core literacy skills, such as language fluency and writing competence. The tests are set to be administered before and after the introduction of music education initiatives to assess the changes in literacy outcomes. The justification is as follows; standardized tests offer measures to learners' literacy skills. Further, relying on these tests allows for comparison with previous literacy data in other locations.

Qualitative component – it entails conducting interviews with students and other education stakeholders to review their experiences with music programs. The interviews are projects to offer insights regarding ways in which music education affects literacy skills. The justification for this qualitative component is as follows; Qualitative interviews permit the examination of participants' experiences, which cannot be directly captured using quantitative methods. More so, qualitative data offer useful information regarding the introduction of music programs in the case of Jiangxi province.

Precisely, there are four phases of design and development research methods, which are discussed in section:



Figure: DDR phases

In the initial phase, needs analysis, the researcher seeks to understand the precise needs, which promote core literacy skills among first-year students in Jiangxi, China via a Do-Re-Mi music program. Hence, several activities are involved such as engaging in interviews with teachers and education experts in order to garner insights about core literacy issues encountered by first-year primary students. In this context, surveys will be administered to teachers and students to evaluate their attitude towards music education, on top of the perceived needs for literacy improvement.

In the design and development phase, the objective is to create an inclusive plan for the Do-Re-Mi music program, and this is reliant on the highlighted needs or challenges in the first phase. The main activities in this phase include creating a curriculum that incorporates music activities with literacy skills, developing prototype instruction materials, and pilot testing the initial program with a small number of students to garner feedback regarding its feasibility. Further, collaborating with music experts is prioritized to ensure cultural significance and suitability of the program. The next phase involves implementing the Do-Re-Mi music program to the chosen schools in Jiangxi, China. In this case, teachers are trained about the program and facilitated with guidance for integrating music activities within the literacy lessons. The implementation procedure is keenly monitored via observations and feedback sessions, as well as collaboration with students and music educators. Emerging challenges are addressed during this phase.

The evaluation phase is tailored to assess the impact of the Do-Re-Mi music education program in terms of promoting core literacy skills among the students. Hence, key activities are included, such as gathering data via both pre and post program assessments, which include student surveys, literacy tests, and teacher reflections (Mariappan & Khairani, 2022). A priority is given towards analyzing the data to establish enhancements in student engagement, literacy skills, and overall program usefulness.

Findings

Among first-year primary students in Jiangxi, China, this study's findings shed light on the complex relationship between music education and the development of essential reading abilities. The Do-Re-Mi music education program's execution and effectiveness have been thoroughly examined, and several important conclusions have been drawn. These insights illuminate the benefits and drawbacks of including musical activities into the curriculum.

Recognizing the significant effect that music education can have on pupils' reading abilities is essential to the results. Students showed significant gains in phonemic awareness, vocabulary expansion, and general participation in literacy activities when Do-Re-Mi music activities were included in the curriculum. Students were not only inspired to actively engage but also gained a greater respect for language via music as a result of the program's success in establishing a vibrant learning environment.

Personalizing music lessons for first-year primary kids based on their interests, abilities, and challenges was crucial to the program's success. Teachers were able to create music lessons that supplemented the literacy curriculum by taking into account their students' individual preferences and learning methods. Students gained a sense of agency and pride in their

education as a result of this individualized strategy, which improved their understanding and memorization of literacy principles.

In order to successfully execute music education programs, the results also highlighted the significance of good teacher training and support. One major obstacle that had to be overcome was the reluctance of teachers, especially those who had no background in music education. Teachers were enabled to successfully incorporate music activities into their lessons through extensive training and continuing coaching. This enhanced the learning experience for their pupils.

The Do-Re-Mi music instruction program clearly had its advantages, but it also had its share of problems. The absence of sufficient financial resources as well as appropriate musical instruments and educational tools was the most significant of these obstacles. The program's potential was severely hindered by these resource limitations, which underscored the necessity for more investment in music education infrastructure.

Further, the research showed that not all student populations had the same opportunities to participate in music education programs, especially when comparing students from urban and rural regions. There was a significant disparity in the availability of cultural resources and institutions between rural and urban areas, making it difficult for schools in the former to adequately teach music. Promoting an equitable and inclusive learning environment for all children necessitated addressing these disparities.

Another important discovery concerned the fine line that music educators must walk between clinging to tradition and incorporating modern educational approaches. There were obstacles to incorporating traditional music and instruments into the curriculum, even if they are culturally relevant, especially in areas with distinct narratives. A sophisticated strategy that respects cultural traditions while making sure it is relevant and accessible for modern pupils is necessary to strike this balance.

Discussion

In this study, we looked at how first-year primary children in Jiangxi, China, could benefit from incorporating the Do-Re-Mi music education program into their curricula to improve their basic reading and writing abilities. We also looked at the study's shortcomings and potential future possibilities.

The importance of music instruction in supporting students' overall growth is shown by this study, which has important ramifications. Teachers can engage students in a more dynamic and cross-disciplinary learning process by integrating music-based activities into the curriculum. Literacy, creativity, critical thinking, and emotional expression are just few of the areas that music has the ability to improve, according to the results. This provides strong evidence that musical education can help pupils thrive in today's globalized and technologically advanced society.

Furthermore, the study highlights how crucial it is for music educators to use educational approaches that are sensitive to different cultures. Teachers can foster an inclusive classroom that welcomes and values students' unique backgrounds and perspectives by integrating

lessons centered on traditional music and cultural traditions. This promotes more cross-cultural understanding and empathy while simultaneously strengthening pupils' feelings of cultural pride and belonging. Educators, legislators, and communities must constantly communicate and think critically about how to strike a balance between cultural authenticity and modern relevance.

The significance of professional development and training for teachers in enabling the successful execution of music education programs is another major result of this study. The results stress the importance of teachers making their classrooms safe spaces where kids feel comfortable expressing themselves musically. So, to make sure music education programs last, it's crucial to put money into thorough training and continuous support for educators. To achieve this goal, we must ensure that teachers have access to professional development opportunities that help them become more culturally competent, proficient musicians, and effective educators.

The report also highlights the disparities and structural constraints that prevent some populations, especially those living in rural areas or those with low incomes, from having access to music instruction. Tackling these gaps calls for a comprehensive strategy that incorporates strategic investments in resources, infrastructure, and the recruitment and retention of educators. Furthermore, in order to guarantee that every student has an equal chance to gain from music education, lawmakers should make fairness and inclusion their top priorities when deciding how to allocate funds and implement legislation regarding schools. There are a number of caveats to keep in mind despite the encouraging results of this study. First, the results may not apply outside of Jiangxi, China, due to the qualitative character of the study. Using mixed-methods approaches could help future studies better understand how music education affects literacy skills in different communities. There may be variations in the efficacy of music education programs at other grade levels, which the study may have missed because it only included first-year primary pupils. How music education affects literacy outcomes over time is an area that could benefit from further research focusing on longitudinal impacts.

In addition, the study might have overlooked some complexities in the students' musical experiences and literacy abilities due to its dependence on qualitative interviews and standardized assessments. The complex nature of student learning could be better understood with the use of alternative assessment methods like performance-based evaluations and portfolio assessments. The findings might be more relevant and valid if students' voices were heard throughout the research process by using participatory action research techniques.

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