

Exploration Methods and Approaches for the Integration of Vocational Music Education and Curriculum Ideology and Politics

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Abstract

Music education plays a crucial role in fostering students' patriotism, collectivism, and innovative thinking. However, vocational colleges face challenges in integrating music education with ideological and political education due to insufficient emphasis on music education, varying levels of students' musical literacy, and inadequate teaching facilities. To better utilize the ideological and political education function of music education, schools should strengthen top-level design, enhance teachers' ideological and political education capabilities, enrich teaching methods, and invigorate the classroom atmosphere. Through innovative methods such as inquiry-based teaching, teachers can organically integrate ideological and political education content into music courses, thereby improving students' aesthetic abilities and political awareness, and achieving deep integration of music education and ideological and political education. This study provides theoretical support and practical guidance for the reform and development of music education in vocational colleges.

Keywords

Music Education; Curriculum Ideology and Politics; Vocational Colleges; Teaching Methods.

1. Introduction

As an essential component of quality education, music education has unique advantages in cultivating students' emotions, personalities, and values. However, the integration of music education and ideological and political education in vocational colleges is still in the exploratory stage. Music is not only a way of expressing emotions but also a significant carrier of thoughts. Integrating curriculum ideology and politics into music education can enhance students' patriotism and collectivism and stimulate their innovative thinking. However, vocational colleges face multiple challenges in implementing music education, such as insufficient emphasis on music education, varying levels of students' music foundations, and inadequate teaching facilities. Therefore, this study aims to explore how to effectively promote the integration of music education and ideological and political education through improving top-level design, enhancing teachers' capabilities, and enriching teaching methods, thereby providing strong support for students' comprehensive development.

2. The Importance of Integrating Curriculum Ideology and Politics into Music Education

2.1. Conducive to Cultivating Students' Patriotism

Patriotism is the core of the Chinese national spirit and an important manifestation of national cohesion. Throughout human history, music works have always been an important carrier of patriotic emotions, carrying powerful spiritual strength. During the Old Democratic Revolution,

many songs such as "Revolution Song of 1911" and "Boxer Rebellion Song" expressed the strong desire of the people for national independence and rejuvenation. Especially the "Revolution Song of 1911", with its lyrics "Expel the Tartars, Restore China", strongly stimulated the people's patriotic enthusiasm and spirit of resistance. During the National Revolution, songs like "National Revolution Song" reflected the revolutionary spirit of the people opposing the Beiyang warlord regime and pursuing democracy and freedom. The background and lyrics of these songs deeply reflected the main contradictions in society at the time, greatly inspiring the people's revolutionary will. During the Anti-Japanese War, with the intensification of the national crisis, songs like "March of the Volunteers" and "Defend the Yellow River" with their high-pitched melodies and concise lyrics became important tools to unite and motivate the people to resist the enemy. These songs not only conveyed hatred for the enemy and unyielding fighting spirit but also deeply expressed the patriotic feelings of ordinary people. During the Liberation War, songs like "The Sky of the Liberated Zone" reflected the people's longing for peace and liberation and praised the great contributions of the Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army. After the founding of New China, songs like "Ode to the Motherland" became the main melody of the times, showcasing the vibrant vitality of New China and the pride of the people. By reviewing representative songs from various historical periods, we can see that music works have played a unique educational role in every era. In contemporary times, music education is not just the transmission of art, but also an important way of ideological and political education. Through songs, students are guided to understand history and stimulate patriotic feelings, which is an important means of cultivating students' patriotism[1-2].

2.2. Helpful in Cultivating Students' Collectivism Spirit

Collectivism, as an important social spirit, emphasizes the subordination of individual interests to collective interests and the achievement of common goals through mutual cooperation and support. In music education, the spirit of collectivism is fully reflected and cultivated. The form of musical expression often requires the cooperation of multiple roles, such as collective singing, helping voices, supporting voices, etc., which all require participants to maintain a high degree of teamwork while achieving overall harmony and beauty. Therefore, music education has subtly become an important carrier of collectivism education. In many music performances, even if it is a solo, there are many behind-the-scenes staff silently contributing to the final effect, and forms such as chorus, small group singing, and a cappella are even more examples of collective collaboration. In these processes, every participant must clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and integrate their thoughts and creativity into the team to ensure the overall quality of the music work. This process of team cooperation not only reflects the strength of the collective but also embodies the core principles of socialist morality. Many schools strengthen class culture construction through organizing chorus activities because chorus itself is the best interpretation of collectivism spirit. Students participating in the chorus first belong to their respective voice parts, each voice part coordinates with each other, supports each other, and completes the performance task together. In the chorus, personal characteristics gradually integrate into the whole, showing both the tension of the music and the overall harmony of the work. Such collective activities not only cultivate students' sense of the overall situation and collective honor but also enhance their communication, organizational coordination, and adaptability, effectively promoting the cultivation of collectivism spirit and helping students establish correct values in future study, work, and life, thereby promoting their overall growth and success.

2.3. Stimulating Innovative Thinking in Vocational College Students

Innovation is the source of human and social progress. In the music education of ordinary students, due to the lack of many restrictions of professional music education, teachers can more flexibly integrate creative elements into the curriculum. First, teachers can guide students

to adapt existing songs, such as singing old songs in new ways or performing in new styles. This not only stimulates students' interest and livens up the classroom atmosphere but also prompts them to think deeply and cultivate innovative thinking. Secondly, for students with certain musical abilities, teachers can encourage them to create original works and present and guide them in the classroom. Although some works still need improvement, these attempts undoubtedly expand students' thinking space and stimulate their potential, which is a concrete manifestation of innovative thinking ability[3].

3. Current Dilemmas in Integrating Curriculum Ideology and Politics into Music Education

3.1. Insufficient Recognition of Music Education in Vocational Colleges

Music education plays an important role in cultivating students' noble sentiments and shaping healthy personalities. However, vocational colleges still do not pay enough attention to music education. First, there are deviations in the understanding and positioning of music. There is a widespread pragmatic idea in society that "mastering mathematics, physics, and chemistry means fearing nothing," which leads to music education often being regarded as secondary, merely simple singing and playing activities. Especially in vocational colleges, where the focus is on high-skilled professional courses, music courses are often neglected or even equated with entertainment activities, failing to effectively exert their aesthetic education function, let alone organically integrating them with ideological and political education. Secondly, influenced by exam-oriented education, the importance of quality education has not received sufficient attention. Although the college entrance examination system has been adjusted in recent years, since the college entrance examination does not involve music subjects, students and parents often ignore music education. In the exam-oriented education environment, students' music foundation in high school is relatively weak, and after entering university, they spend a lot of energy on professional courses, leading to the gradual absence of music education in the entire education process[4].

3.2. Varied Levels of Students' Musical Literacy

Due to the long-term influence of national education policies and exam-oriented education, students' musical foundation levels vary significantly before enrollment. Only a small number of students have a certain music foundation, which mainly benefits from two aspects: one is receiving musical instrument training from an early age, such as piano, guitar, guzheng, etc.; the other is rich educational resources in schools with well-established music courses. In contrast, most students have relatively weak musical foundations, which are closely related to family environment, educational resources, and teacher levels. After entering university, some students hope to improve their musical literacy through elective courses, but due to their own foundational differences, they lack interest and understanding in elegant music such as symphony and national music, leading to poor learning effects. Meanwhile, the popularization of popular music further weakens students' acceptance of other forms of music. Teachers face the dilemma of balancing elegant music education and student interests in the classroom. The marginalization of music education in vocational colleges makes it difficult to effectively combine ideological and political education with music education. Therefore, music educators need to teach students according to their abilities, strengthen curriculum settings and teaching staff, and fully exert the unique role of music education in ideological and political education.

3.3. Inadequate Music Teaching Facilities in Vocational Colleges

Music education, as a unique subject, has its special teaching needs and cannot do without the support of pianos, sound systems, and rich music resources. If teaching facilities are insufficient, music courses will be forced to simplify to mere multimedia music appreciation, seriously

affecting teaching effectiveness and student participation, ultimately leading to the marginalization of the course. Therefore, perfect teaching facilities are the key to the smooth implementation and expected results of music education. However, vocational colleges often have insufficient investment in this aspect.

First, there is a significant lack of funding for teaching facilities. Although vocational colleges have an annual budget for equipment procurement, the budget for teaching equipment required by music education is often rejected. Due to the marginal status of music courses in vocational colleges and the relatively high cost of equipment, schools often prioritize budgets for mainstream disciplines such as engineering and liberal arts. Even if some schools are equipped with some equipment for music education, due to the preciousness of the equipment, the usage frequency is strictly limited and requires multiple approvals, making these devices virtually useless and unable to truly serve daily teaching.

Secondly, the limitations of teaching venues further restrict the development of music education. Music courses have high requirements for teaching venues, such as spacious classroom space, good sound insulation effects, and equipped pianos. However, ordinary classrooms cannot meet these conditions, and it is difficult to renovate classrooms specifically for music classes in vocational colleges. Even if some schools have special music classrooms, these classrooms are often restricted in use and only open for specific activities or rehearsals. As a result, most music classes can only be conducted in ordinary classrooms, lacking necessary equipment and activity space, significantly reducing the course's effectiveness and making it challenging to achieve the expected teaching goals.

4. Reform Measures and Approaches for Integrating Curriculum Ideology and Politics into Music Education

4.1. Strengthening Top-Level Design of Music Education at the School Level

The emphasis on music education at the school level is closely related to the implementation of national policies. To truly exert the ideological and political education function of music education, top-level design at the school level is crucial. First, school leaders need to fully recognize the importance of music education in their thoughts and understand its unique role in ideological and political education. In the survey process, some vocational college leaders have fully recognized the importance of music education, especially during the centenary of the founding of the Communist Party, where online media widely used music for propaganda, fully showcasing the ideological and political education function of music. However, schools face some practical difficulties in specific operations. Schools must balance the development of professional construction, student employment, teaching quality, and other aspects within limited funds and time. For vocational colleges, students' time in school is only three years, with the third year mainly for internships, and actual study time is less than two years. Therefore, how to reasonably arrange more music education courses within the relatively rich professional course system becomes a significant challenge for the school. In this case, schools often prioritize other development needs, delaying the investment in music education. This reflects the key role of top-level design in school music education, and only when the school includes music education in the core development strategy in its overall planning can the deep integration of music education and ideological and political education be truly realized.

4.2. Enhancing Ideological and Political Education Capabilities of Music Teachers in Vocational Colleges

Music teachers are not only mentors who impart music knowledge but also guides who shape students' souls. Through the unique medium of music, teachers must accurately grasp the rhythm, melody, and emotional expression of music works, and deeply understand the cultural

connotations and ethical values contained in the works to guide students in purifying and sublimating their minds through experiencing and appreciating the beauty of music. At the same time, teachers should guide students to reject the influence of vulgar music and cultivate their appreciation ability for elegant arts.

Firstly, music teachers should continuously enhance their cultural literacy, widely read and learn, and comprehensively improve their overall capabilities. Traditional concepts often consider the cultural literacy of music teachers relatively weak, and this prejudice needs to be broken. Modern society needs talents with multi-field abilities, and music teachers should expand their cultural knowledge fields while improving their professional skills. Music teachers should also learn from these versatile role models to enhance their cultural literacy. Secondly, music teachers need to regularly participate in training related to ideological and political education, understanding national policies and current political events. Changing the traditional concept of considering ideological and political training exclusive to political theory teachers and counselors, in reality, all teachers, including music, art, and physical education teachers, should participate in such training. By integrating national development guidelines into teaching content, music teachers can better incorporate ideological and political education elements into the classroom, enhancing the ability to "educate through entertainment and teach through entertainment" and truly exert the ideological and political education function of music education.

4.3. Enriching Teaching Methods and Deepening Emotional Experience

Rich teaching methods are crucial in music courses for invigorating classroom atmosphere and enhancing student participation. Integrating ideological and political education elements into music teaching, inquiry-based teaching methods are considered effective ways to stimulate students' thinking. This method typically includes steps such as scenario creation, thought stimulation, independent inquiry, collaborative exchange, and summary enhancement.

Teachers stimulate students' inquiry desires through scenario creation. For example, in teaching "Defend the Yellow River," the teacher first plays the song, allowing students to feel its melody and emotions, then guides them to further explore the historical background behind the song through questions. The subsequent task arrangement aims to guide students to explore their potential by independently searching for materials to understand the creation background of "Defend the Yellow River" and sharing their findings in the classroom. This kind of independent learning can stimulate students' thinking and participation enthusiasm more than mere teacher explanation[5].

Through group cooperation, students use their music knowledge to deeply analyze songs, discussing elements such as modality and emotional changes, which not only enhances their music appreciation ability but also deepens their understanding of the emotional expression of works. The collaborative exchange session further deepens students' comprehensive understanding of the work and its creator. Finally, the teacher guides students to summarize and refine the learning content, analyze similar works, consolidate learning outcomes, ensuring they can understand and appreciate music works more professionally. The inquiry-based teaching method not only effectively combines ideological and political education content with music background analysis but also fully reflects the integration and innovation of education by integrating ideological and political education into music creation and appreciation.

5. Summary

The integration of music education and ideological and political education can not only cultivate students' patriotism and collectivism but also stimulate their innovative thinking. However, in vocational colleges, the emphasis on music education, the level of students' foundation, and the

limitations of teaching facilities pose challenges to this integration process. To address these difficulties, the school level needs to strengthen top-level design, clarify the important status of music education in ideological and political education; enhance teachers' ideological and political education capabilities to ensure they can effectively integrate ideological and political elements into teaching; enrich teaching methods through innovative methods such as inquiry-based teaching to enhance students' participation and learning effects. Through these measures, music education in vocational colleges will more effectively exert its unique function of ideological and political education, laying a solid foundation for students' comprehensive development.

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