

Teaching Strategies of Classical Opera in Middle School Music Appreciation Classes under the Perspective of Disciplinary Integration

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Abstract: The integration of disciplines has been a hot topic in the education field in recent years. Based on the perspective of disciplinary integration, this paper points out the feasibility of integrating opera with other disciplines in music appreciation teaching, and discusses the ideas and methods of integrating opera with literature, opera with history, opera with art and other disciplines, aiming to provide strategies for relevant music educators to further enhance students' aesthetic perception ability.

Keywords: Disciplinary integration; Opera; Junior high school music

Disciplinary integration means constantly breaking down disciplinary boundaries, promoting interdisciplinary penetration and integration, and acknowledging interdisciplinary differences. Such integration is not simply a pile of differentiated disciplinary knowledge, but requires building on the main subject taught, i.e., taking the main subject taught as the leading subject, organically integrating multidisciplinary knowledge, exploring characteristic teaching modes, and breaking down interdisciplinary barriers, so as to improve students' overall cognitive ability.

The 2022 Compulsory Education Art Curriculum Standards have been recently released, in which the concept of disciplinary integration is prominent: "Emphasize the connection between art and other disciplines, and give full play to the function of synergistic education". The teaching tips in the new curriculum standards in the fourth section of the curriculum content section (grades 8-9) indicate: "Appreciate artworks such as dance, drama (including opera), film and television (including digital media art). Integrating music with history, geography, and customs allows students to better understand the cultural connotations and stylistic implications of music in specific cultural contexts." In this paper, we will explore the teaching significance of classical opera in middle school music classroom and related implementation ideas from the perspective of disciplinary integration.^[1]

1. The significance of opera appreciation in subject integration teaching

Opera is an art form that builds dramatic development on the basis of independent musical structure. Although it is classified as a musical art category, it has certain characteristics of various arts, and can be said to be a comprehensive art form with a high degree of inclusion. The fusion of history and opera has emerged as a result of the interdisciplinary nature of this art form, which can be captured from the perspective of opera forms such as literature and opera, fine arts and opera, and from the subject matter of its creation, which has been adapted from real historical events.

1.1 Multi-sensory synergistic knowledge learning to enhance students' overall perception ability

Multisensory teaching has been a direction that teachers have been exploring in recent years, shifting from a single-sensory teaching mode to a multisensory teaching mode, which includes advances in teaching theory and practical research. First, multisensory stimulation in the classroom not only helps students to gain more sensory experiences, but also enables students to develop their full potential in physical, recognition, sensory, musical, linguistic, personality and social aspects. Music is an auditory art, and opera adds visual participation to it. The huge and gorgeous stage set, the gorgeous lighting design, the costumes that fit the characters and the excellent singing skills of the opera singers make everything in opera performance natural, and at the same time, as a non-major music learner, it is easier to accept this art form.^[2]

The author here selects several common junior high school music textbooks for study, mainly including the Renyin edition (Editor-in-Chief: Wu Bin), Renyin edition (Editor-in-Chief: Jing Pu), Renjiao edition, Xiang Wenyi edition, Yuejiao Huacheng edition, and Ji Shao edition. In the process of finishing, I found that most of the opera sections are taught in thematic form, with Chinese opera works based on classical revolutionary and historical themes, and foreign opera works are selected from classical cantatas that have a wide circulation. However, due to the special nature of the textbook, it is impossible to supplement the excellent opera works in recent years. Therefore, in the teaching process, teachers should constantly update their knowledge base, keep in touch with the outstanding works at the forefront of music art development, and appropriately input fresh and excellent music works in the teaching process, so

that students' aesthetics can keep up with the times under the inculcation of classical art at the same time.^[3]

1.2 Multidisciplinary integration of knowledge content, improve students' global grasp ability

First, the integration of disciplines breaks the boundaries between disciplines, which is conducive to cultivating students' overall understanding of things; second, from the actual life and society, it has strong practicality, which is conducive to cultivating students' hands-on ability; third, from multiple perspectives and multiple dimensions to face, analyze and solve problems, so that students can obtain three-dimensional learning effect; fourth, it is conducive to changing the personality. Fourth, it is conducive to changing the fragmented generation of personality to the complete and harmonious development of personality. Then weaken the boundaries between disciplines, from the beginning of the teaching steps for students to improve their abilities, facing the knowledge from this to the other, can really achieve the integration of the subjects studied.^[4]

2. Implementation strategies of opera appreciation in subject integration teaching

2.1 Emotional progression, the integration of classical opera and language subjects

Wagner had declared that "music in opera is the means of expression, drama is the end", and literature is the medium to carry drama, so opera is also literature, but the literature of opera is often not enough to compare with literature, and this also provides inspiration for the use of contrastive teaching methods of subject integration.

The first step in teaching this section is to select works based on the students' existing cognitive level, as well as classical works that have a high degree of literary integration and that most students have encountered. Second, the teaching is done in a comparative way. From the point of view of the length of works, the length of literary works is generally related to the genre; literary works in the genre of poetry tend to be short and profound, while literary works in the genre of fiction have different lengths, in short, the length of the texts can be roughly determined according to the genre. On the contrary, the length of an opera libretto adapted from a literary work often requires the omission of a large amount of content, and the re-integration of content by the librettist to fit the stage of the opera, so the content of the text presented in the opera is much more abbreviated compared to the content of the original literary work.^[5]

2.2 Parallelism in time and space, integration of classical opera with historical subjects

All aspects of the same historical period are developing in parallel, thus giving rise to special historical categories such as music history and art history. There are many excellent operas with historical subjects in Chinese and foreign operas, such as the Chinese historical subject opera *Farewell My Concubine* and the revolutionary historical subject opera *White Maiden*. However, it is important to understand that historical opera is not a copy of historical truth, but a dialectical relationship between historical truth, artistic truth and emotional expression (i.e. history, drama and emotion), which the librettist has to deal with from the macro background of real history. The problem arises when the above problems are clarified. The above-mentioned problems should be clarified in order to avoid cognitive errors when teaching the integration of opera and history.

2.3 Artistic overview, the integration of classical opera and art disciplines

Introduction to art is a course familiar to every individual who has received higher art education, in which the types of art are divided into practical art (including architecture, arts and crafts and modern design, etc.), plastic art (including painting and sculpture, etc.), expressive art (including music and dance, etc.), comprehensive art (including theater art, television art and opera art, etc.), and language art (i.e. literature). This shows the depth of the connection between music and art. The choreography of opera mainly involves the art of architecture and costume art, for example, the gorgeous stage set in the recording version of "The Lovers" starring Pavarotti, which includes the costume design style of the Renaissance and the architectural art style of the period.

In the process of integration with art disciplines, the first consideration is to determine whether the work has value for appreciation, and how to define its value. In addition to following the latest developments in the music industry, teachers can also consider whether the excellent opera works have the characteristics of integration with art disciplines, and such works are the most suitable materials for opera appreciation. Afterwards, teachers should also consciously guide their students to discover the fine arts elements of the opera stage. Contemporary operas are full of beautifully realistic productions that use details to suggest the direction of the plot or use a particular element as a metaphor for the development of the plot.

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