

Fostering Pedagogical Excellence: Theoretical Foundations for Designing a Teaching Module on Chinese Ancient Poetry Art Songs for Undergraduate Students in China

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Abstract

This paper explored the fundamental theoretical aspects involved in creating a comprehensive teaching module tailored for undergraduate students in China, with a specific emphasis on Chinese ancient poetry art songs. The process of constructing an effective teaching module was intricate, demanding a thorough exploration of various models and educational theories that laid the foundation for its development. The paper offered an overview of the theoretical framework employed in this undertaking, incorporating the ADDIE Model and key educational theories such as Jean Piaget's Constructivist Theory, Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, and Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. The ADDIE Model provided a structured approach to module development, guiding the systematic design, implementation, and evaluation phases to ensure that teaching materials were well-organized, efficient, and adaptable to diverse learning environments. Furthermore, the paper delved into the educational theories influencing the design of the teaching module. Piaget's Constructivist Theory emphasized active learning through hands-on experiences, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory underscored the role of social interaction and cultural context in learning, emphasizing collaborative learning experiences, and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory recognized the diversity of students' cognitive strengths, emphasizing the need for varied instructional strategies to cater to different learning styles. Through the integration of these theoretical foundations, this research aimed to develop a comprehensive, engaging, and effective educational resource tailored to the unique needs and learning preferences of students. The anticipated outcome of the teaching module was to enable educators to cultivate a greater understanding and appreciation of Chinese ancient poetry art songs among students.



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INTRODUCTION

In China, there has been consistent government support for the preservation and advancement of traditional music and culture. The Guideline for Enhancing the Education of Excellent Chinese Traditional Culture, as outlined in the third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, emphasizes the importance of bolstering education in Chinese traditional culture. This is seen as a crucial step in fostering socialist core values and prioritizing moral education. Chinese ancient poetry art songs, which represent a quintessential form of Chinese music, encapsulate the essence of traditional culture, blending traditional poetry with Western artistic expression. These songs carry profound cultural significance. Exploring the educational essence of Chinese ancient poetry art songs and integrating them effectively into teaching practices is essential for non-music majors to enrich their humanistic values, aesthetic appreciation, and sense of national identity.

RESEARCH METHODS

Incorporating ancient Chinese poetry art songs into the curriculum for non-music college students not only promotes the dissemination of outstanding traditional Chinese culture but also cultivates cultural self-assurance among students. This integration enhances the essence of traditional Chinese culture and ensures its continuity. However, historical factors have led Chinese higher education institutions to primarily focus on Western music education concepts and models, often neglecting traditional ancient poetry art songs and music culture. Consequently, there is a pressing need to develop innovative learning frameworks that integrate ancient Chinese poetry and art songs into the classroom teaching of non-music majors. Such an approach enhances students' singing abilities and elevates their overall quality while instilling cultural and national confidence through a deeper understanding of ancient poetry, literature, and history.

College students, especially those in music education, often exhibit limited interest in traditional music culture, preferring popular and contemporary genres. Despite this preference, China continues to support the preservation of traditional music and culture through national development plans and party directives. One strategy for fostering appreciation for traditional culture involves integrating Chinese ancient poetry into art songs, utilizing music to promote cultural aesthetics. This pedagogical approach plays a vital role in advancing traditional Chinese music culture.

Research on incorporating Chinese ancient poetry art songs into college curricula is relatively limited compared to studies in primary and secondary education. The distinct learning needs of college students necessitate tailored approaches for higher education settings. Challenges include the scarcity of diverse learning resources, interdisciplinary integration, and the need for innovative teaching strategies. Conventional lecture-based methods often fail to effectively engage students, resulting in a cultural gap in music education. Preserving traditional music is crucial as it reflects societal history and identity. Addressing these challenges requires interdisciplinary collaboration, pedagogical innovation, and adaptation to modern educational methods. This research aims to bridge these gaps by offering insights to enhance music education and preserve cultural heritage in China's academic landscape.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Models of Teaching Module Development

Teaching modules are prevalent in various training programs, often grouping interconnected topics for focused learning (Ries, 2016). Compared to traditional topic-based teaching, they offer several benefits, including conveying broader knowledge, deeper content, and better integration among topics, leading to more comprehensive improvements in trainees' knowledge, skills, and qualities (Creemers et al., 2012). It's evident that developing teaching modules requires more than just compiling relevant content; it involves following a specific procedure to enhance effectiveness.

Zhang Yibin (2011) proposed a model for teaching module development, dividing the process into three stages: preliminary, development, and implementation. The preliminary stage focuses on identifying the need for module development and clarifying its necessity and feasibility. The development stage begins once these needs are determined, involving three steps: preliminary design, content matching, and conducting trial lectures. The implementation stage requires understanding the training subjects, needs, and plan, formulating strategies, and implementing each module topic according to the plan. Zhang Yibin emphasized monitoring throughout the development process, measuring deviations between objectives, plans, and implementation results, and taking necessary preventive or remedial measures to enhance effectiveness.

While few scholars have proposed models outside their specific discipline, most have developed various teaching module models based on their teaching experiences and disciplines. For instance, Zhao Jiajia (2018) developed a model for environmental art design, dividing the teaching system into seven large modules and designing related submodules based on modularization theory. Shi Yujian & Xu Ying (2020) proposed a model for junior high English teaching, focusing on independence and collaboration, while Wang Honglei (2022) suggested a model for a "live-streaming marketing course," aiming to cultivate skilled laborers based on corporate demands.

Research into teaching module development models has attracted researchers from various disciplinary backgrounds, resulting in valuable theoretical and practical models. Scholars emphasize the process and systematic nature of module development, stressing the importance of continuous monitoring and evaluation. However, there are limitations, including a focus on specific disciplines and practical

environments, insufficient research on generic and adaptive models, and reliance on personal experiences rather than empirical research.

Different instructional models, such as the Dick and Carey Model of Instructional Design, offer systematic approaches to instructional design. While some focus on content delivery, others, like the Systems Approach Model, emphasize developing the teaching plan. Both models provide depth and structure, but the Dick and Carey Model places more emphasis on design and incorporates iterative development for continuous improvement.

For a study involving a teaching module on Chinese ancient poetry art songs, the ADDIE model would be preferred. This choice is primarily because of the detailed analysis and development steps that this model offers. The nature of this subject matter - Chinese ancient poetry art songs - may require a more detailed instructional analysis to fully understand the complex concepts involved and to accurately identify the instructional goals.

The detailed steps in the ADDIE model will help in constructing a comprehensive instructional strategy that considers the complexity and richness of the subject matter. Also, its emphasis on formative evaluation and revising instruction aligns well with this type of study. Such a subject may necessitate continuous refinement based on ongoing assessments and learner feedback to ensure that learners grasp and appreciate the nuances of this art form.

Educational Theories Consideration

There are many educational theories that can be utilized in this research. However only the most suitable and related theories will be discussed here. Jean Piaget's Constructivist theory emphasizes the role of the learner as an active constructor of knowledge, based on their experiences and interactions with the environment (Piaget, 1954). It suggests that students learn best when they actively engage with learning materials, thereby forming their understanding of the world.

Jean Piaget's Constructivist theory revolutionized our understanding of how knowledge is acquired, emphasizing the active role of learners in constructing their own understanding. According to Piaget (1954), this construction of knowledge is not a passive process, but an active one wherein learner assimilate new information and accommodate it within their existing cognitive frameworks.

A central component of Piaget's theory is the idea of schemas, mental models that humans use to organize and interpret information. When we encounter new information, we attempt to fit it into our existing schemas through a process known as assimilation. If the new information cannot be assimilated, it prompts us to adjust our schemas to accommodate the new information.

This process of assimilation and accommodation, according to Piaget, is integral to cognitive development and learning. Piaget proposed four stages of cognitive development: the sensorimotor stage (birth to 2 years), the preoperational stage (2 to 7 years), the concrete operational stage (7 to 11 years), and the formal operational stage (12 years and beyond). Each stage represents a distinct way in which learners interact with the world and construct their understanding.

Piaget's Constructivist theory has several implications for education, including the teaching of Chinese ancient poetry art songs. Piaget's theory emphasizes the importance of active learning. In the context of Chinese ancient poetry art songs, this could mean encouraging students to actively engage with the text and music, such as by performing, analyzing, and creating their own songs. This active engagement would help students construct their own understanding of the art form. Piaget suggested three main aspects that need to be considered;

- i. **Prior Knowledge:** According to Piaget, new learning builds on prior knowledge. Thus, in teaching Chinese ancient poetry art songs, educators should consider students' prior knowledge and experiences, such as their understanding of Chinese history, culture, and language.
- ii. **Concrete to Abstract:** Piaget suggested that learning progresses from concrete to abstract. In the case of Chinese ancient poetry art songs, this could imply starting with concrete experiences, like listening to and performing the songs, before moving onto abstract concepts such as the historical and cultural contexts or the artistic techniques involved.
- iii. **Readiness to Learn:** Piaget's theory underscores that learning is most effective when it corresponds with the learner's stage of cognitive development. Thus, educators should align the complexity and nature of the learning material with the cognitive developmental level of their students.

Constructivism, when applied to the teaching and learning of Chinese ancient poetry art songs, promotes the idea that students construct their own understanding and knowledge of these art forms based on their interactions and experiences. It advocates for an immersive learning environment where students actively engage with poetry and songs, not only interpreting their meanings but also relating them to their own cultural context, experiences, and pre-existing knowledge.

In the context of Chinese ancient poetry art songs, a constructivist approach may involve students analyzing the poetry, discussing the historical and cultural contexts of the songs, and even performing or creating their own songs based on the structures and themes they have studied. This way, they can construct a personal understanding of the art form, which may help foster deeper engagement and appreciation.

The constructivist approach has been criticized for prioritizing individual learning processes over shared social experiences and cultural contexts, especially evident in the realm of Chinese ancient poetry art songs, which are deeply intertwined with cultural and historical significance. While constructivism provides valuable insights into learning, it should be complemented by theories like Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the social and cultural aspects of learning.

Vygotsky's theory, in contrast to Piaget's Constructivist Theory, highlights the influence of social interactions and cultural contexts on learning. Central to Vygotsky's framework is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which underscores the importance of social interaction and collaborative learning in cognitive development. Additionally, Vygotsky introduced the concept of mediated action, suggesting that cognitive development is shaped by cultural artifacts and language.

In the context of Chinese ancient poetry art song education, Vygotsky's theory suggests the significance of social interaction, cultural context, and guided learning. For instance, collaborative learning strategies could facilitate student engagement, while teaching approaches should emphasize the cultural and historical context of these songs. However, criticisms of Vygotsky's theory include an overemphasis on social and cultural factors, potentially neglecting individual cognitive processes, and challenges in operationalizing the ZPD in practice.

Moreover, Vygotsky's abstract depiction of culture may oversimplify the diverse cultural influences on Chinese ancient poetry art songs. Failure to acknowledge these nuances could lead to a limited understanding of these songs and their cultural significance. To address this, a more nuanced understanding of culture, drawing from disciplines like cultural anthropology, is needed. Interdisciplinary collaboration among researchers and educators could offer a comprehensive understanding of these art forms and their educational implications.

Building on the insights gleaned from Piaget's Constructivism and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, it is useful to consider another prominent perspective in educational theory - Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. First introduced in his seminal work "Frames of Mind" (1983), this theory has been influential in reshaping our understanding of human intelligence and learning.

Gardner's theory (1999) challenged the traditional notion of intelligence as a singular, fixed trait measured by standardized tests. Instead, he proposed a multifaceted and dynamic view of intelligence, comprising at least eight distinct forms. This paradigm shift emphasized the diversity of human cognitive abilities and highlighted the need for tailored educational approaches catering to individual strengths and interests.

In the context of teaching Chinese ancient poetry art songs, Gardner's theory offers significant implications. These songs are not just linguistic artifacts but also musical compositions rich in cultural and historical significance. Learning them engages multiple intelligences, including linguistic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal aspects. Teaching strategies acknowledging and leveraging this multidimensionality could enhance learning outcomes and engagement. For example, educators can employ various instructional methods catering to different intelligences, such as close reading (linguistic), songwriting (musical), group discussions (interpersonal), and reflective writing (intrapersonal). This approach accommodates diverse student strengths and interests, fostering inclusivity and effectiveness.

However, Gardner's theory faces theoretical and practical critiques. Some argue that the boundaries between intelligences are not clear-cut, and implementing a multiple-intelligences approach can be challenging in practice. Educators need deep understanding, diverse activities, and management of complex environments. Moreover, while this approach can enhance engagement and outcomes, it should avoid pigeonholing students into intelligence types, recognizing their complexity and holistic development.

Therefore, while Gardner's theory offers insights for Chinese ancient poetry art song education, its application requires careful consideration and adaptation to specific contexts, mindful of potential challenges and the goal of holistic student development.

Theoretical Framework

This study develops a teaching module for teaching Chinese ancient poems and art songs by integrating Constructivist theory, Sociocultural Theory and Theory of Multiple Intelligences. In terms of content, through the Constructivist theory, Chinese ancient poems and art songs are integrated into the content of university music classroom teaching, with the goal of cultivating students' deep understanding and emotional resonance of ancient poems, literature and music art. There are three main aspects to be considered in utilizing this theory for this research.

Selection of outstanding ancient Chinese poems and lyrics: Representative ancient Chinese poems and lyrics are selected for teaching, covering different dynasties, genres and themes. Through in-depth interpretation and appreciation of ancient poems, students will be able to appreciate the great depth and diversity of ancient Chinese literature.

Analyzing the moods and emotions (feeling) of ancient poems: Students will be guided to analyze the imagery, expressions and emotions in ancient poems and convey these emotions and moods through musical expression. Students will gain an in-depth understanding of how ancient poems are expressed in musical compositions.

Historical and cultural background: By explaining the historical background and cultural connotations in which ancient poems are embedded, students can better understand the cultural meanings and values embedded in ancient poems. At the same time, by linking ancient poems to contemporary society, students will recognize the relevance of the heritage of ancient poems to modern life.

In terms of pedagogy, based on sociocultural theories, interactive and co-operative teaching methods are used to encourage students to actively participate and communicate in the learning process, and to co-construct knowledge through co-operation;

Student interaction: Teachers guide students to explore the mood and emotion of ancient poems together, encourage students to express their understanding and feelings about the songs, and promote the collision of ideas and cultural exchange.

Group work: students form a group to select an ancient poetry art song, perform and create it together, cultivating students' teamwork spirit and creative ability

Literature and music in tandem: Teachers will link ancient poems with corresponding art songs and show the unique charm of ancient poems in music through singing and playing. At the same time, students are encouraged to integrate ancient poems with music through recitation and chorus to deepen their understanding and experience of the works.

In terms of technology, combining the theory of Multiple Intelligences and using modern technological means to enhance the teaching effect and learning experience.

Multimedia projection equipment: Classrooms can be equipped with multimedia projection equipment, such as projectors or large-screen monitors. In this way, teachers can project text, audio and video of ancient poems and related art songs to attract students' attention, provide visual aids and make learning livelier and more interesting.

Web and online resources: Using web and online resources, teachers can provide students with a wider selection of ancient poems and art songs. These resources may include classic ancient literary works, creations by modern artists, audio and video performances, etc. Teachers can also select a selection of excellent online learning materials for students to study and practice independently.

Online discussion platform: To facilitate interaction and communication among students, an online discussion platform can be set up for students to discuss their learning, share their experiences and encourage each other after class. Such a platform can be a dedicated teaching website, a social media group or the forum function of an online teaching platform.

Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality Technology: If conditions permit, teacher can try to introduce Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) technology. Through these technologies, students can immerse themselves in the ancient cultural atmosphere in historical time and space, and even participate in virtual performance experiences of ancient poems, so as to understand and experience the art of ancient Chinese poetry in a deeper way.

Overall, through the integrated use of constructivism, socio-cultural theory and multiple intelligences theory, this teaching module will encourage students to take the initiative to explore, participate in co-operation and give full play to multiple intelligences. The application of technology will provide rich resources and better learning experiences to promote students' deep understanding and emotional experience of ancient Chinese poems and art songs.

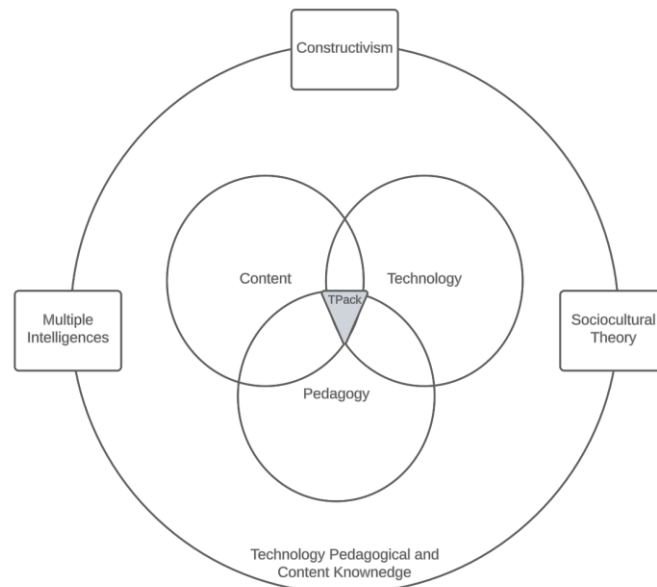


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

CONCLUSION

The study delves into the intricate relationship between the historical evolution, cultural significance, pedagogical applications, and theoretical foundations of Chinese Ancient Poetry Art Songs. These songs are portrayed as a complex fusion of historical, cultural, and regional elements intertwined with diverse singing techniques. Establishing a Chinese vocal music school that blends Western singing techniques with Chinese music and language is seen as crucial for advancing this art form.

The dissemination of Chinese Ancient Poetry Art Songs goes beyond cultural appreciation, contributing to societal identification with traditional culture, bolstering cultural confidence, and fostering social cohesion. Their role in preserving and developing traditional Chinese culture highlights the need for music educators to transmit these cultural underpinnings in a globalized world.

Teaching Chinese Ancient Poetry Art Songs presents both opportunities and challenges. While there are rich teaching strategies to stimulate students' creativity and aesthetics, challenges include students' limited understanding, resource scarcity, and diverse teaching philosophies. Thus, innovative, student-centered teaching strategies are essential.

Scholarly investigations underscore the systematic nature of teaching module development, emphasizing the interplay of preliminary, development, and implementation phases, along with practicality and discipline-specific characteristics. However, research also reveals limitations and areas for further exploration. A deeper understanding of how these songs have evolved over time and adapted to changing sociopolitical and cultural contexts is needed. Additionally, addressing challenges in teaching these art forms to contemporary learners requires comprehensive exploration of effective teaching strategies. By addressing these gaps, the studies contribute to a comprehensive understanding of Chinese Ancient Poetry Art Songs' impact on culture, artistic expression, and education. This enhances appreciation, preservation, and transmission of these cultural treasures, ensuring their vibrancy for future generations.

In conclusion, exploring Chinese Ancient Poetry Art Songs is a dynamic process requiring understanding of their historical, societal, pedagogical, and theoretical dimensions. Future research and teaching should navigate these dimensions to promote the sustainable development and global appreciation of this genre.

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