

# A Study of Music Curriculum Design Strategies in the Context of Core Literacy—A Qualitative Study Based on Grounded Theory

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## Abstract

At the basic education level in China, curriculum design and local curriculum research have become the focus of attention in recent years and have shown diversified developments. In 2017, the Chinese Ministry of Education released the Outline on Curriculum Reform at the Basic Education Level, suggesting that the core aspect of curriculum reform is curriculum implementation. However, the main way of curriculum content implementation is the design strategy of the curriculum. For curriculum designers, there is a need to study the components that make up the curriculum. This paper constructs a strategy model for music curriculum design through rooted theory by coding and analyzing data from 20 literature, 35 music teaching videos, and 15 music teacher interviews on music curriculum design strategy research. The study found that music curriculum design strategies at the basic education level are multidimensional and comprehensive in nature. The design principles embodied in the students' own music practice ability, the external environment of music teaching and the philosophical and theoretical system of music education constitute the overarching role in the curriculum design process, the theoretical system of music core literacy and the analysis of the educated's learning situation are the basis of the music curriculum design, and attention is paid to the students' subjectivity, practice and the diversity of the curriculum content in the design process.

**Keywords:** Core Literacy, Diversity, Grounded Theory, Innovation, Music Curriculum Design

## Introduction

In 1997, the Council of the European Union introduced the concept of "selection and definition of competencies" and the concept of "core competencies". The theoretical system of music core literacy is a reflection of the concept of "core competencies" in the subject of music. The design of the school music curriculum is the core outline of the teaching and learning planning process, and the musical culture presented in the curriculum content requires scientific and rational design strategies to achieve. Core literacy is not only the goal of the curriculum, but more importantly, it needs to be reflected in the process of implementing the curriculum design strategies. The choice of design strategies should consider the polymorphic pattern of design features and collaborative communication.

According to Taylor (1957), curriculum design is all the learning experiences that a school plans and directs to achieve its educational goals. In the process of curriculum design, educators should be musically literate and be able to include a module on improvised music composition in the choice of design strategies that will promote the development of students' creative abilities and sense of collaboration. Chandler (2018) states that teachers need more experience with improvisation in order to provide guidance for students to better engage in music composition. Pellegrino et al (2019) states that the inclusion of improvisation and composition lessons in a general music class setting can enhance students' understanding of traditional curriculum content. Improvisation as a learning tool and as a creative force in the process of teaching music in schools can inspire students to learn about the music curriculum (Siljamäki & Kanellopoulos, 2020). However, traditional music curriculum design has focused more on how the pedagogical tools and curriculum content are represented and less on the choice of strategies in the curriculum design process, neglecting the active learning of student subjectivity. In order to study music curriculum design strategies, this study uses music core literacy and music education philosophy theories to analyze music curriculum in practice in depth, combining music quality class teaching videos with music teacher interviews and music curriculum related literature to form design principles, design basis, design themes, and design methods. Through diverse and multi-faceted specific studies, we hope to provide rich information and enlighten music curriculum design research in order to determine the way forward for music curriculum design at the basic education level in the context of China's concern for music core literacy today.

The study conducts a typical study of music curriculum design based on rooted theory, exploring both design strategies regarding music curriculum based on core literacies proposed internationally today, and providing reference suggestions for local music teachers' curriculum design at the basic education level.

### **Literature Review**

The curriculum is a reflection of the dynamics of social and cultural development, and is the core of disciplinary education. 2011 Music Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education issued by China highlights the nurturing function of music teaching activities; the practical, aesthetic and humanistic nature of the curriculum. As a result, music education is more focused on student-centered teaching and the cultivation of students' creativity and "musical literacy" in the teaching process. The music curriculum, as the main means of implementing aesthetic education, plays an important role in the development of students' core literacy (Wu, 2021). The development of students' creativity enters a critical period of rapid improvement and formation in compulsory education. The teaching of music notation and instrumental technique has been standardized in American schools, and curricula for instrumental performance have been highly successful. However, Clauhs (2018) states that while these instrumental skills are important, failure to develop well-rounded musical talents and creative thinking can undermine students' longevity in the music curriculum.

Curriculum design needs to highlight the plurality of course content and the subjectivity of student learning in the selection of content. Students are the subjects of learning and they have different understanding of musical styles because they have different musical listening experiences, and the selection of musical topics that students like and know well plays an important role in music curriculum design. Professor Colleen of the School of Music, Sultan Idris University of Education, Malaysia, highlights this idea in her article "Learning Ornament Signs through Transcriptions of Malaysian Folk Songs in an Applied Music Course", which Six

Malaysian folk songs, two Chinese folk songs and one Indian folk song were selected so that the musical elements in these folk songs were combined with the performance ornamentation used in Western music systems and were used in a practical music course as a supplement to the music education repertoire. The results of the study showed that through the study of folk songs, the musical elements in the folk songs were analyzed, especially the techniques used in the ornamentation in the folk songs. Students were able to grasp the singing style of each local folk song more accurately. Because folk songs are artistic reflections of the habits of various ethnic groups, students will be able to understand the musical elements in folk songs more easily. Professor Colleen's approach to orchestration is based on the tuning characteristics of folk songs, which allows for a variety of content choices and a subjective approach to the students' musical experience.

School music is dominated by traditional music and cultural education in curriculum implementation and has the explicit characteristics of normative music teaching. However, core literacy theory and postmodern philosophical systems advocate that the content and process of designing school music curriculum should reflect innovation. Informal curriculum design is relative to formal curriculum design in traditional school instruction, and it has an equally important role to play in the development of creative skills. The development of musical literacy exists in everyday life. Gage put together a collaboration between a Montreal high school and Community Arts to place the music curriculum design process in the community from the music teacher's perspective, and the study showed that students were more interested in learning from this non-formal music curriculum. This project was one of the first to integrate music education with community arts, an educational approach that promotes informal music instruction, informal music curriculum design, informal music learning, and popular music-based music education. Gage et al (2020) viewed school music programs from the perspective of the external environment, using a combination of school and community education to promote informal music instruction, informal music learning for students, and highlighting innovations in curriculum content as well as curriculum design strategies. Another perspective presents the limitations of traditional school music curriculum design. Educators are encouraged to take a diverse and innovative view of music curriculum design strategies and music learning.

Music curriculum design should reflect the characteristics of diversity, and the world's ethnomusicology has multicultural characteristics, because different ethnomusicology has different musical styles and different ethnocultural characteristics. In his book "*Music of the World Cultures*", Nettl mentioned that the contribution of ethnomusicology is to popularize music to the people of the world, and that to understand a national culture, it is necessary to understand the music of the culture. Music curriculum themes using different types of musical works for curriculum design requires a multidimensional approach to the design process. The multidimensionality of music curriculum design strategies requires educators to have diverse curriculum design skills. Traditional high school music education is focused on music appreciation, which specifically includes the understanding and mastery of the basic elements of music and the formal elements of music to better listen to music. The content of the textbooks includes the best music of various Chinese and European nationalities as well as classical European music works of the 17th and 18th centuries. Hammer (2020) argues that incorporating improvisation and composition into the music curriculum enhances students' understanding of traditional course content and explores ways of learning about music listening and music theory. Students move from passive listening to music to active learning through musical inquiry through improvisation and composition.

Traditional music curriculum design is knowledge-centered and a philosophy of musical aesthetics. Music core literacy and postmodern philosophy emphasize a dialogic, communicative approach to music curriculum design that embodies a student practice oriented learning model in the teaching and learning process. Traditional models of music curriculum design may put some students at a disadvantage in the school music classroom. But music educators can do so in subtle ways by reimagining content, choosing curriculum design strategies and assessment strategies, and creating a system. This provides high-quality, equitable, and personally meaningful music education for more students (Mellizo, 2020).

In recent years, Chinese academics have also been very active in research activities on music curriculum design with regard to core literacy theories and philosophical ideas of music education. Researchers have not only conducted extensive and in-depth studies on music curriculum design strategies from different perspectives such as text interpretation, theoretical background, philosophical outlook, and dialogue with real-life teaching, but also gradually developed from individual independent studies to the direction of dialogue and communication among scholars.

Curriculum design should highlight openness, and the process of curriculum practice requires students to take the initiative to experience, practice, participate, collaborate, and communicate. Du (2021) proposes that the curriculum design process is a unification of teaching and learning, a constructive process of mutual respect, communication and sharing. Teaching is not a one-way transfer of knowledge, but to establish interaction and dialogue between teachers and students to achieve the construction and development of subjectivity on both sides, and more importantly, to establish a platform for students to mutually support each other in diversity and achieve a broader intermingling of knowledge. Music classroom teaching is learning in context, and the transfer of knowledge and skills is not for students to passively accept, but to actively explore.

These sources, which provide reliable background support for the research and writing of this paper, and the general and generally significant and influential theories in related fields, form an important theoretical basis for the study of this paper. Music curriculum design is an important component of music education. Music education, as an important area of social culture and as an important part of the teaching field, is closely related to philosophical development. Therefore, music curriculum design needs to consider the content of core musical literacy as well as the relevant perspectives of contemporary philosophical theories of music education.

In summary, although there have been many research articles discussing music curriculum design strategies in the field of music education research, these results are not specifically focused on the core literacy theoretical system and related philosophical theories, and the core concepts of pluralism, praxis, and subjectivity, dialogue philosophy, neo-pragmatism, and pragmatism related to the core literacy theoretical system in music have not yet been documented in a holistic and systematic manner.

### **Research Design, Category Refinement and Model Construction**

#### **Research Methodology**

Root theory is regarded as the most scientific methodology in qualitative research, which emphasizes the use of inductive methods to investigate and construct social phenomena in natural contexts. The research question of this paper is a study of music curriculum design strategies under core literacy, which further proposes music curriculum design strategies under the core literacy framework in view of the current situation of music curriculum design

in Henan Province. Music curriculum design strategies are practical and multidimensional, with flexible and variable nature features in the teaching process, and rooted in theory with abstract, analytical and inductive nature features. It can compare and analyze the general characteristics of music curriculum design strategies. Therefore, this paper adopts the method of Zagan theory to gradually code the texts related to realistic teaching design, literature research, and interview contents in the context of music core literacy. In turn, the main patterns about music curriculum design strategies at this stage are identified.

The study used a theoretical sampling method and the sample selection followed the following principles

First, the curriculum design should closely follow the curriculum objectives and curriculum standards, reflecting the core literacy of the music discipline proposed by the music curriculum standards. These include aesthetic perception, artistic expression, and cultural understanding.

Second, the curriculum design of quality lessons selected from each school section of elementary, middle and high school, the teaching process design has individuality and commonality, specificity and universality. Reasonable and scientific analysis of the current situation of school music curriculum design in different school sections and different regions. Explore music curriculum design strategies.

#### Data Collection

Data were collected from 20 curriculum design literature, 35 examples of teaching video summary reflections, and 15 in-depth interviews with music teachers at the basic education level. The literature was derived from Google Scholar music education journal papers from different countries. The interviewed elementary and middle school music teachers all had an average of more than five years of teaching experience, held intermediate titles, and taught music appreciation in their schools and coached their school choral clubs.

Table 1

*Statistical Data of Interviewees*

	Basic Situation	Total Number of People	Percentage (%)
Gender	man	six	40%
	woman	nine	60%
Teaching age	Five to ten years.	eight	53%
	More than ten years	seven	47%
Degree of education	undergraduate course	seven	47%
	Master	eight	53%

Theory saturation test: The sample was determined by drawing according to the principle of theory saturation. Fifteen literature and ten teachers' interview transcripts were first taken for coding, and then five literature materials and five teachers' interview contents were taken for theory saturation test, and no new concepts and categories were found to be generated by analyzing the remaining five literature and five interviews. This indicates that the theory is saturated.

**Open Coding**

Open coding is to code and label the original material word by word, developing initial concepts and refining categories from the original material. In this paper, the collected textual materials are processed. First, the imported textual content is organized according to the interview content, literature, and teaching video summary reflections, and 103 original statements are extracted. Secondly, the initial concepts were developed, and the original statements were condensed and organized to derive 37 initial concepts. For example, "cooperative learning and democratic decision-making" was abstracted from the original statement "Teachers need to guide students to explore the classroom learning process based on cooperative learning, democratic decision-making, and students' interests". The third is to refine the category. A category is a further refinement of a concept, and is made up of multiple concepts that have the same point of view. For example, "World Ethnic Music", "Student Music Culture", and "Integrated Music" are grouped into the category. This resulted in 13 initial categories (See Table 2).

Table 2

*Interviews, examples of categories formed by coding of literature development*

Category	Concept	Original Information
F1 Subjectivity	A1 students as the main body, like pop music	Like a wide variety of music, like to listen to the beautiful melodies in music works
	A2 beautiful melody	Lack of interaction among teachers and students
	A3 Teaching Interaction	Not motivating students to learn
	A4 Student Emotions	Course learning should be based on students' own musical experiences
	A5 student music experience	Not paying attention to students during the teaching process and focusing too much on the content of the textbook The content is boring and does not take into account the students' interests.
	A6 too focused on teaching materials	
	A7 Read the book	
F2 Diversity	A8 Multi-course design	A good music curriculum design should reflect a multidimensional approach, balancing the variety of music from different countries and nationalities and reflecting the diversity of curriculum content. Provide a variety of music genres and styles, and integrate them into the design of the music curriculum to stimulate students' interest in learning music.
	A9 multiple styles of music	
F3 Practicality	A10 Teaching Practice	The course design focuses on the content of the textbook, which tends to create a disconnect with students' learning psychology and is not conducive to their creative expression.
	A11 Student Music Experience	The curriculum should be designed with students' musical experience as the main focus, supplemented by the teaching materials, and the teaching process should highlight the flexibility of musical practice.
F4 Analysis of the learning situation	A12 likes beautiful melodies	Students enjoy listening to the beautiful melodies in music, and teachers need to teach students Explanation of music history, harmony, and music form is not interesting to students
	A13 work analysis is not interested	As a music teacher, it is important to start with students' musical preferences Understand student needs in depth and learn from experienced peers



	A14 Understanding Students	Mechanical listening to music does not stimulate students' initiative For mechanical listening, against the students' psychological needs of music, teaching is not effective
	A15 Peer Learning A16 Mechanical Listening A17 has no effect	
F5 Philosophical System	A18 Philosophy of Music Education	Philosophical thinking facilitates music curriculum design practices and explores music curriculum design strategies that are consistent with student psychology and conducive to creative thinking.
F6 Multiculturalism	A19 Intercultural Music	Teachers choose music culture to achieve cross-cultural awareness of students The Revised Multiculturalism Curriculum argues that comparing music from different countries can present different cultures Multicultural programs believe that curriculum design needs to require students to interact with musical themes in a culture
	A20 Multicultural Music	
F7 Comprehensive Music	A21 World Ethnic Music	The content of the curriculum should reflect the music of the world's peoples, view each type of music equitably, and reflect multi-dimensionality in the design of the music curriculum. Music programs must be designed with the musical culture of the students in mind. Remer believes that the implementation of an integrated music curriculum allows for the development of individual musical talents in combination with other areas.
	A22 Student Music Culture	
F8 Innovative Courses	A23 Practice Innovation	Course design should reflect the creative process of design The inclusion of improvisation and composition in the general music curriculum environment facilitates
	A24 Improvisation A25 Composition Course	Innovation in music curriculum design Composition Course study
F9 External Environment	A26 Local Environment	Hope. 2007) Policies that argue that music programs should be adapted to the local environment



	A27 Community Music	Peters believes that students should be deeply rooted in local social music practices and understand the cultural concepts involved.
F10 Musical ability	A28 singing and playing ability A29 Creative ability A30 Listening ability	Teachers must have the ability to design, implement, sing, play, improvise and listen to music prior to joining the program.
F11 Multi-mode	A31 Multi-modal teaching  A32 multiple design approaches	During the teaching process, teachers can train divergent thinking according to the characteristics of music practice, and a variety of design approaches coexist Young music teachers can promote multimodal teaching of popular music
F12 Collaborative	A33 Cooperative Learning A34 Collaborative Inquiry	Teachers need to guide students to explore the classroom learning process based on cooperative learning, democratic decision-making and student interest.
F13 Theoretical system	A35 Creative Thinking  A36 Creative ability	Music curriculum design strategies should reflect the development of students' divergent and innovative thinking. The development of creative abilities possessed by young people in the new era is in line with the core competencies in the context of core literacy theory.

### Main Axis Coding

The task of spindle coding is to develop the nature and dimensions of the categories and to discover the logical relationships between the categories in order to develop the master categories and their counterparts. This study explores a music curriculum design strategy that categorizes the different categories according to their intrinsic logic at the conceptual level, grouping them into five main categories (See Table 3).

Table 3

#### *Main categories of spindle code formation*

Main Category	Corresponding categories	Scope Content
Z1 Design Principles	F10 Music ability	Music competence is a specific requirement for pre-service teachers regarding curriculum design from the four professional competencies of singing, playing, composing, and listening.
	F9 External environment	The external environment refers to the local cultural environment and community music as the basis for music curriculum design.
	F5 Philosophical system	The philosophical system refers to the philosophical system of music education, which provides philosophical

			thinking and theoretical guidance for music curriculum practice.
Z2 Design Basis	F4	Learning Analysis	Situational analysis refers to a specific analysis of students' music learning experiences, specifically the types of music they appreciate, the ways they listen to music, and the musical knowledge and skills they possess. Theoretical system refers to the understanding of the content of today's core literacy theories and the development of music curriculum design strategies based on artistic expression, cultural understanding, and aesthetic perception.
	F13	Theory System	
Z3 Design Analysis	F1	Subjectivity	Subjectivity means that in the process of music curriculum design should highlight the main position of students, focus on teaching interaction, pay attention to students' own music listening experience, aesthetic sensibility and the degree of mastering basic music knowledge and skills.
	F3	Practicality	Practicability means that the music curriculum design strategy should reflect the characteristics of music practice and highlight creativity.
	F2	Plurality	Diversity means that music curriculum design strategies should be multidimensional, providing a variety of different music genres and music styles to stimulate students' interest in learning music.
Z4 Design theme	F6	Multiculturalism	Multiculturalism means that the content of the music curriculum should reflect different cultures and cross-cultural music, highlighting the multi-dimensional and multi-vision of the curriculum design content.
	F7	Integrated Music	Integrated music means that the music curriculum should include different ethnic groups, different styles and different types of music.
	F8	Creative Curriculum	Innovative curriculum refers to the music curriculum design strategy should reflect creative attributes, specifically including music practice innovation, improvisation, composition courses and other related curriculum features.
Z5 Design Method	F11	Multi-mode	Multi-modality refers to the way the music curriculum is designed to include multi-modal teaching, multi-dimensional teaching, and divergent thinking training in the process of music practice.
	F12	Collaborative	Cooperative learning mode, highlighting teaching interaction and teaching democracy, thus improving the quality of teaching.

### Main Axis Coding

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### Selective Coding

Selective coding refers to the systematic analysis of all the categories found to identify a core category that strings all other categories together into a whole, encompassing most of the findings within a broader theoretical scope. In this study, music curriculum design is the core category, and its "story line" is structured as follows: core literacy theoretical system and in-depth and comprehensive analysis of learning conditions are the basis of curriculum design. The design analysis, design themes, and design principles are the realistic paths of music curriculum design in the context of core literacy. The design approach is based on the above-mentioned research, and the main categories are interrelated and complementary to each other, unified in the music curriculum design.

### Explanation of Music Curriculum Design Strategy Model

#### *Music Curriculum Design Strategy Model*

Musical ability, external environment, and philosophical system constitute the design principles of music curriculum design strategy, which has the overarching role and is the guideline on which the curriculum design strategy is based. The theoretical system of core literacy and the analysis of specific learning conditions determine the premise and foundation of music curriculum design. The design analysis containing subjectivity, practicability and plurality and the design themes of multicultural, integrated music and innovative curriculum are the realistic paths of music curriculum design strategies with practicability. Finally, a music curriculum design approach with a multimodal, collaborative approach is summarized. Each dimension of the model is described in detail below.

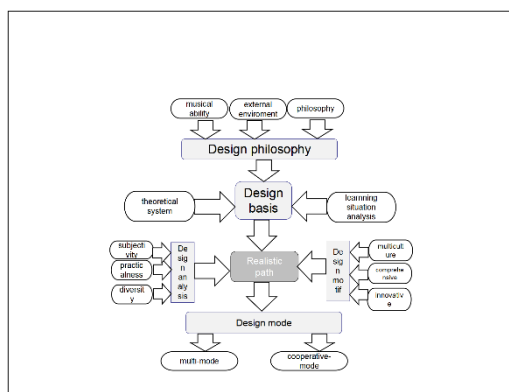


Figure 1. Music curriculum design strategy model

### **Composition and Dimensional Connotation of Music Curriculum Design Strategies**

**Design principles.** Musical competence, philosophical system, and innovative curriculum are the principles of curriculum design. Music teacher curriculum design follows the design principle of musical competence, which is that teachers must have the musical experience of developing their own singing, playing, composing, improvising, and listening. The article mentions that we need teachers who can both teach in general music classes and lead high school orchestra rehearsals, teachers who can both involve folk instruments (e.g., guitars, keyboards, computers, smartphones) and help students find their own way when composing and improvising (Langley, 2018).

In order to achieve music teacher competency, primary and secondary school teachers in Henan Province are required to complete six months of applied practical learning training in singing, performance, composition, improvisation, and listening experiences. The training is specific to singing, playing, and composing and also requires six months of participation in school music clubs, including student choirs, jazz ensembles, or student pop bands. In order to achieve musical competence in music listening, teachers are required to complete courses in world music, jazz and popular music, and educators are expected to have critical and diagnostic listening skills in the process of instructing music listening.

A philosophical system is a systematic reflection on values, beliefs, perspectives and meanings. A philosophy of music education is one that requires systematic reflection on values, beliefs and music teaching, ongoing reflection, adjustment of self, and examination of tradition while also taking the best and discarding the worst. "The first step in any reflective or critical model of music teacher education is to allow students to express themselves so that they can be critically examined" (Woodford, 2002). The philosophy of music education provides theoretical reflection on music curriculum design, and the value of examining music curriculum design with student-centered musical experiences can provide reflective practice on curriculum design that allows students to engage directly in musical activities. Educators can scrutinize each of the musical elements such as listening, playing, composing, and improvising. Think about the way they are arranged and analyze how they make sense to students. By crafting a curriculum model based on philosophical reflection, students' musical perception and their response to the process of musical practice can be enhanced, thus strengthening their experience of music. Thus, one of the principles that underlies the design of music curricula is the need for music educators to establish a philosophy of music education of their own.

The external environment refers to the ability of the educator who is the designer of the music curriculum to create and implement learning opportunities. Dewey believes in a learning environment that should allow each individual the opportunity to explore and pursue his or her interests and potential. Students need contextualized learning, and students at any level from first grade through third grade in high school should have the opportunity to learn to sing, play, compose, improvise, and listen in a curriculum designed to encompass both in-school and out-of-school. Curricula in learning communities are also integrated, using a variety of pedagogies and assessment models. The experience of improvisation occurs in interaction with the environment, and as students improvise, they are transformed by their musical experiences, which in turn change their musical environment. Importantly, having the experience of improvisation develops expressive, and responsive skills (Larsson, 2019). Creating a learning community can be a great help to the general music curriculum and help students gain a deeper understanding as well as the ability to engage in social music activities. In such an environment, students are able to experience a wide range of teaching and learning activities. For example, social music practices give students the autonomy to create and implement their own curriculum. The social culture, humanistic exchanges, and multiculturalism facilitate better and more comprehensive music curriculum design by teachers, and a shift from qualitative music curriculum design to creative curriculum design activities. The transition from semi-structured curriculum design to independent curriculum design by teachers enables educators to experience a sense of creativity and gradually embark on a successful path of autonomous teaching.

**Design foundation.** The theoretical system of core literacy and the analysis of school situation constitute the realistic basis of music curriculum design. In 2014, the Chinese

Ministry of Education issued the Opinions on Comprehensively Deepening Curriculum Reform, which proposed the development of a core literacy system in each school. Core literacy refers to the character and abilities that students should have that can adapt to their lifelong development as well as to the needs of social development, and it is also an urgent need to adapt to the development trend of world education reform and to be able to vigorously enhance the international competitiveness of Chinese education. Music core literacy has distinctive characteristics of the discipline and can include three specific aspects.

**Aesthetic perception:** The aesthetic process needs to be placed in a specific cultural environment to understand and feel the different human connotations. Different cultures promote the formation of diverse musical cultures, and aesthetic music perception requires teaching students to learn to understand and respect in a variety of different musical cultures. Use the different aesthetic connotations of each nationality to focus on the musical genres of different peoples.

**Artistic expression:** refers to a practical ability that is expressed through a person's body movement language as well as facial emotions. The performer needs to accurately grasp the characteristics of the creator's composition, the context of the composition and the human connotation so that the meaning expressed will be more profound. Elliott (2005) argues that people can derive meaning from the miniature worlds created by musical activities. The meaning of music is revealed when one plays, composes, improvises, and listens to it with emotion (Reimer, 2003).

**Cultural understanding:** When listening to music, the understanding of music reflects the phenomenon of cultural adaptation and also allows one to recognize the rules specific to a particular culture. The understanding of music culture is embedded in core music literacy. Differences in time, ethnicity, and geography have created different musical styles (Shen, 2020). Various musical styles present pluralism, and under the influence of postmodernist thinking, the focus on the development of diverse musical cultures needs to be emphasized in the design of specific music curricula to equalize the musical cultures of various ethnic groups.

Another basis of music curriculum design is the specific analysis of the learning situation. A comprehensive and accurate analysis of learning conditions paves the foundation for music curriculum design. Curriculum design without learning conditions analysis is a castle in the air, reflecting the subjectivity of music curriculum design because students are the subject of music curriculum design. Students are involved in the learning process with variability, adaptability, curiosity and imagination. In terms of the laws of education, only by accurately understanding students' existing knowledge structures, knowledge experiences and students' cognitive-psychological characteristics can educators determine students' current and recent developmental areas in the learning process.

**Design Analysis.** Subjectivity, practicability, and plurality constitute the three dimensions of design analysis. Subjectivity refers to the fact that the analysis of students' musical experiences should be taken as the main subject in the music curriculum design process. The design strategy focuses on the practical characteristics of the music discipline, and adjusts and optimizes the curriculum design plan in the process of music activities. The choice of curriculum objectives reflects a diversified vision. Music as a culture has multidimensional characteristics, which are reflected in musical works with different types and different styles. Each ethnic music culture has unique characteristics, and multidimensional analysis is conducted in the actual curriculum design to meet the student-oriented music curriculum goals.

**Design Themes.** Multiculturalism, integrated music, and innovative curriculum constitute the thematic elements of music curriculum design. Based on the research and discussion on each element of subjectivity, practice and plurality based on the analysis of music curriculum design, the theme of music curriculum design is concluded to include three aspects.

Multiculturalism refers to the cultures of different ethnic groups. In school music education, introducing the concept of multiculturalism not only helps to increase students' enthusiasm for music expertise in different cultural contexts, but also helps to establish a more diverse view of music culture (Zhuang, 2016). The Chinese music curriculum standards write that the peaceful development of the world depends on the, respect and understanding of different national cultures. While emphasizing the promotion of national music culture, it is also important to experience, learn, understand, and respect the music cultures of other countries and nations around the world with an open perspective, so that learners can establish equal multicultural values and value human cultural heritage in order to facilitate the sharing of all the best achievements of human civilization.

Integrated music refers to the diversity of music education reflected in the design of the music curriculum and has as its goal to cultivate creative talents with comprehensive musical qualities. Educators provide students with a complete musical aesthetic experience that brings out their initiative and creativity. Comprehensive musical elements are provided in the music experience to avoid the omission and absence of individual musical elements in the practice process. The purpose of integrated music experience as a music curriculum design theme is to cultivate students' creative awareness and innovation, and to give them full freedom and power in the process of exploring music.

The innovative curriculum is based on the concept of core literacy, which is put at the heart of the twenty-first century, and as a school music education, the music curriculum is designed to highlight the application of innovation in the choice of strategies to build new skills as a foundation. Many researchers have found that students can progress in their music learning and music knowledge if they have the opportunity to explore and experiment creatively with sound and are able to express themselves in writing about it.

Students need to learn how to organize and practice their knowledge in the music classroom. According to Webster, "it is important for the mind and imagination to be able to spread out in specific contexts, while for difficult work in general it is necessary to maintain convergent thinking. Composition and improvisation, with the development of creative thinking at the core of the curriculum design, are flexible and perceptive. The development of creative thinking is important not only for the understanding of the content of the piece or for further secondary composition.

**Design Approach.** Multimodal and collaborative constitute the design approach of the music curriculum. Through a specific analysis of the content of core literacy theory, music education philosophy and students' musical experiences, a multimodal and collaborative approach to curriculum design is explored regarding music curriculum design. Piaget proposed that the human brain can establish a multimodal pattern of understanding, and after new experiences are initially interpreted, they go through a revision process of assimilation, conformity, and migration, and eventually form a new understanding. Under the big picture of a multimodal, collaborative curriculum design model arrangement, each classroom activity is interrelated. For example, the teaching and learning of guitar performance, music theory, and sight-reading are arranged in an orderly manner, invoking each other and supporting each other to complete the learning of music course content. The



concept of multimodal and collaborative curriculum design is also applicable to the general music education classroom, where teachers can create music activities that involve the whole class, create teaching situations that lend themselves to group activities, and require students to solve problems in collaborative activities, such as group applied music composition, where groups of two or three learn music composition skills together, which can also be done after listening to music. Multi-modal and collaborative curriculum design addresses the traditional teacher-led, monolithic model of teaching and learning. It reflects the innovative, practical, and subjective nature of music curriculum design.

## **Conclusion**

### *Research Findings*

In this paper, a step-by-step coding and systematic analysis of music curriculum design literature, teaching videos of quality lessons, and the content of interviews with music teachers were conducted using a rooted theory approach. The following conclusions were drawn: musical competence, external environment, and philosophical system are the principles that constitute music curriculum design, and core literacy theory and learning situation analysis are the basis of music curriculum design. The design analysis with diversity, practicability, and innovation as the main connotations and the design themes with multiculturalism, integrated music, and innovative curriculum as the framework are the realistic paths of music curriculum design. Although the data for this study were obtained from high school students and music subject teachers, it is recommended that more diverse interviewees be included in the study, and that the curriculum design needs to increase its attention to students' learning personalities, considering their different family backgrounds and the habits of minority students.

### *Research Contribution*

The research content constructs a model of music curriculum design strategies. By summarizing and analyzing the existing music curriculum practices and using the philosophical system of music education, we abstract the strategic model of music curriculum design.

The research method adopts the coding analysis of the original data by rooted theory, and derives relevant concepts, main categories, and core categories, which makes the theoretical research more practical and time-sensitive.

The research scope focuses more on multidimensionality. It provides a theoretical framework for the design strategy of music curriculum in the new era.

### *Research Shortcomings and Prospects*

The data in this study were obtained from music curriculum design-related literature, teaching video summary reflections, interviews, and other textual materials. Although the process of collecting literature for coding took into account the comprehensiveness and completeness of the information as much as possible and followed the principle of theoretical saturation, the information itself may have a certain degree of subjectivity and focus. The music curriculum design model can be further validated and supplemented in the future using in-depth interviews and specific music teaching practices. At the same time, although this paper provides a theoretical discussion of music curriculum design strategies based on a summary of practice, there is still a dearth of relevant theoretical research. The practicality and plurality embodied in music curriculum design are the themes of today's debate about



music curriculum standards and music curriculum design. To make music curriculum design in primary and secondary schools develop deeply in the track of the times, there is still a need to provide more corresponding theoretical guidance.

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