



CONSTRUCTING GUITBOOK BY THE APPLYING KODÁLY'S TEACHING METHODS FOR TEACHING WESTERN MUSIC NOTATION SINGING FOR 3RD - YEAR STUDENTS AT CHAOYANG NORMAL COLLEGE, CHAOYANG CITY, LIAONING PROVINCE

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Article History

Received; 14-02-2025; Revised; 25-06-2026; Accepted; 25-06-2026
<https://doi.org/10.14456/issc.2026.35>

Keywords:

Kodály's Teaching Methods; Guidebook; Western Music Notation Singing; Music Literacy; Higher Education

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Developing music literacy and singing skills remains a major challenge in higher education, particularly in learning Western music notation. Traditional instructional approaches often emphasize theoretical knowledge rather than active musical practice, resulting in limited student engagement and insufficient development of practical music skills. Kodály's teaching method, which emphasizes singing, sequential learning, and culturally relevant musical materials, has been recognized as an effective pedagogical approach for improving music learning. **Objective:** This study aimed to (1) examine the application of Kodály's teaching methods, (2) construct a guidebook based on Kodály's pedagogical principles, (3) implement the guidebook in teaching third-year students at Chaoyang Normal College, and (4) evaluate the learning outcomes of the instructional implementation. **Method:** A mixed-methods approach was employed. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with three experts in music education to support the development of the instructional guidebook. Quantitative data were obtained from formative and summative assessments conducted during a teaching experiment involving ten third-year students. **Results:** Students' mean scores increased from 61.80 in the formative assessment to 90.50 in the summative assessment, indicating an improvement of 28.70 points after the implementation of the Kodály-based instructional guidebook. Expert feedback also supported the appropriateness of the guidebook in terms of instructional content, learning sequence, and classroom applicability. Students demonstrated improvements in music notation reading, singing performance, and rhythm understanding. **Conclusion:** The findings suggest that applying Kodály's

teaching methods through a structured instructional guidebook can effectively support the teaching of Western music notation singing in higher education. The developed guidebook may serve as a practical instructional resource for music educators who seek to integrate sequential learning and culturally responsive teaching into music instruction.

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary higher education, music literacy has become one of the essential competencies for students majoring in music education. The ability to read, interpret, and perform Western music notation accurately forms the foundation for effective music teaching and professional performance. However, many undergraduate students continue to encounter difficulties in developing music notation reading skills, pitch accuracy, rhythmic understanding, and expressive singing. Conventional instructional approaches often emphasize theoretical knowledge and repetitive practice, providing limited opportunities for active musical engagement and sequential skill development. Consequently, students may experience low learning motivation and limited improvement in practical musical performance.

Among various pedagogical approaches, the Kodály teaching method has been widely recognized as an effective approach for developing music literacy through singing. Kodály emphasized that the human voice is the most natural musical instrument and proposed that music learning should progress systematically from simple to more complex concepts using singing, movable-do solfège, rhythm syllables, hand signs, and ear training. Previous studies have demonstrated that Kodály-based instruction can improve students' music reading ability, singing accuracy, rhythmic perception, and overall musical understanding. Furthermore, the Kodály approach encourages active participation and learner-centered instruction, making it suitable for contemporary music education.

Recent developments in music education have also emphasized the importance of culturally responsive teaching. Integrating culturally familiar musical materials into classroom instruction enables students to connect new musical knowledge with their existing cultural experiences, thereby enhancing engagement, motivation, and meaningful learning. In the Chinese context, incorporating Chinese folk songs and local musical traditions into Kodály-based instruction provides opportunities for students to strengthen both their cultural identity and their understanding of Western music notation. Such integration is consistent with contemporary educational perspectives that promote inclusive and culturally relevant learning environments.

Despite the acknowledged educational value of the Kodály method, previous studies have primarily focused on its application in elementary and secondary education or in general music instruction. Comparatively few studies have investigated its application in higher education, particularly in preparing pre-service music teachers through structured instructional materials. Moreover, there remains limited evidence regarding the development of Kodály-based instructional guidebooks specifically designed for teaching Western music notation singing in Chinese teacher education institutions. This gap suggests the need for research that not only develops instructional materials but also evaluates their educational effectiveness in authentic higher education settings.

To address this gap, the present study develops a guidebook based on Kodály's pedagogical principles and applies it to the teaching of Western music notation singing for third-year students at Chaoyang Normal College, Liaoning Province, China. The study further evaluates the learning outcomes of students following the instructional implementation. It is expected that the findings will provide practical

guidance for music educators, contribute to the improvement of music teacher education, and support the application of Kodály-based pedagogy within culturally responsive higher education contexts.

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To study Applying Kodály's Teaching Methods.
2. To construct guidebook the applying Kodály's teaching methods.
3. To teach third-year Students at Chaoyang Normal College.
3. To find the results of teaching experiments.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundations of the Kodály Method

The Kodály method, developed by Zoltán Kodály, is a comprehensive approach to music education that emphasizes singing as the foundation for musical learning. Kodály believed that music education should begin with the human voice, as it is the most accessible and natural instrument for all learners. This approach promotes the development of musical literacy through sequential learning processes, including the use of solfège, rhythm syllables, and ear training (Kodály, 1974^[6]; Goopy, 2013)^[3]

A key principle of the Kodály method is the progression from simple to complex musical concepts, enabling students to internalize musical understanding before applying it to notation and performance. This sequential structure supports the development of pitch accuracy, rhythmic precision, and overall musical competence. Previous studies have shown that Kodály-based instruction can significantly enhance students' music literacy and singing ability, particularly in formal educational settings (Goopy, 2013)^[3]

Culturally Responsive Teaching in Music Education

In recent years, culturally responsive teaching has become an important framework in music education. This approach emphasizes the integration of students' cultural backgrounds and musical traditions into the learning process, creating a more inclusive and meaningful educational experience. Research indicates that culturally responsive teaching can improve student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes by connecting new knowledge with students' prior cultural experiences (Hallam, 2010^[4]; Liu, 2023)^[7]

Within the context of the Kodály method, the use of folk music and culturally familiar materials is considered essential. Kodály advocated for the use of "mother-tongue music" as a foundation for music education, allowing students to develop musical understanding through familiar cultural contexts. Studies have shown that the integration of local musical traditions can enhance students' connection to learning and facilitate the acquisition of Western music notation skills (Liu, 2023)^[7]

Application of the Kodály Method in Diverse Educational Contexts

The Kodály method has been widely adapted and implemented in various educational settings around the world. Its flexibility allows educators to modify teaching materials and strategies to suit different cultural and institutional contexts. For example, studies have demonstrated that integrating local folk music into Kodály-based instruction can improve both musical understanding and student engagement in non-Western

educational environments (Türkmen & Özal Göncü, 2018)^[8] In higher education, the application of the Kodály method has shown potential for enhancing music literacy and performance skills. Gallina (2006)^[2] found that incorporating Kodály principles into instrumental and vocal instruction can improve students' ability to understand and interpret musical notation. These findings highlight the adaptability of the method and its relevance for teaching Western music notation in diverse contexts.

Teaching Western Music Notation Singing

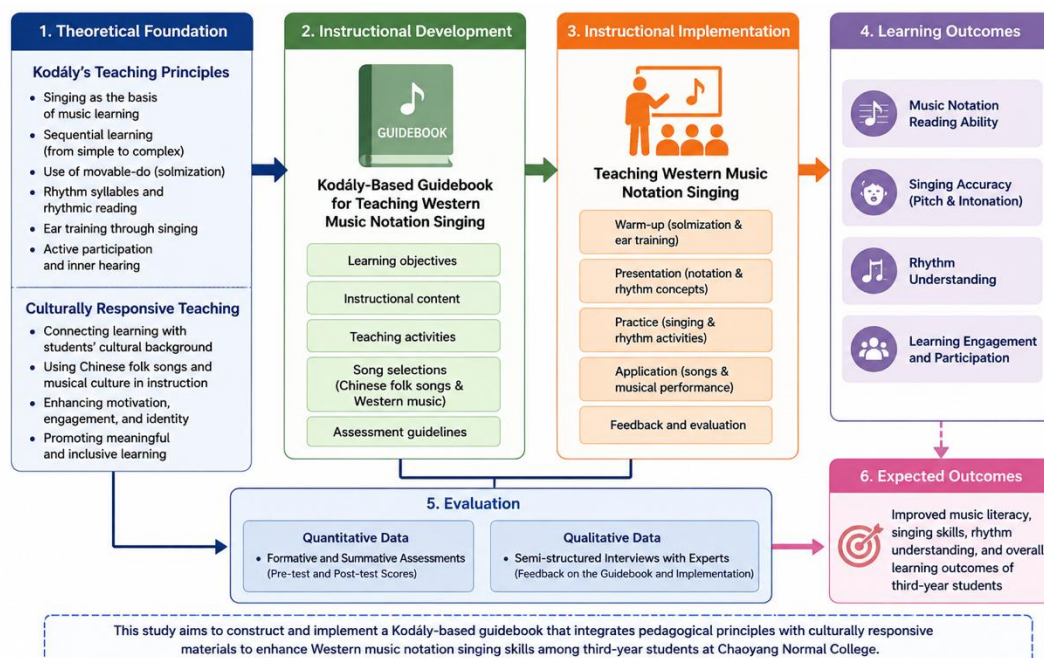
Teaching Western music notation singing presents unique challenges, particularly for students who lack strong foundational skills in ear training and pitch recognition. Traditional teaching approaches often emphasize theoretical knowledge and rote memorization, which may limit students' ability to internalize musical concepts (Hallam, 2010)^[4]

In contrast, the Kodály method provides an effective framework for teaching music notation through singing. By integrating solfège, hand signs, and rhythm syllables, students can develop a deeper understanding of pitch relationships and rhythmic patterns. This approach allows learners to connect auditory perception with visual notation, thereby improving both accuracy and musical expression (Goopy, 2013)^[3]

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1

Research Conceptual Framework



Source: Image generated by ChatGPT [June 24, 2026]

5. METHODOLOGY

1. Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in music education programs at Chaoyang Normal College, Chaoyang City, Liaoning Province, China.

The sample group included third-year students who were studying Western music notation singing. A purposive sampling method was employed to select participants who were directly involved in the instructional intervention. In addition, three experts in music education and Kodály-based pedagogy were selected for interviews to provide professional insights and validate the instructional design of the guidebook.

2. Variables

The variables of this study were categorized as follows:

Independent Variable:

The application of Kodály's teaching methods through the developed instructional guidebook.

Dependent Variables:

Students' learning outcomes, including singing accuracy, rhythm understanding, and music literacy as measured through formative and summative assessments.

3. Research Scope

This study focused on the development and implementation of a Kodály-based instructional guidebook for teaching Western music notation singing. The scope of the research included:

The application of Kodály's teaching principles in classroom instruction.

The construction of a structured guidebook for teaching singing using Western music notation.

The implementation of the guidebook with third-year students at Chaoyang Normal College.

The evaluation of students' learning outcomes through teaching experiments.

4. Research Tools

The research instruments used in this study included:

Kodály-Based Instructional Guidebook A teaching manual developed by the researcher based on Kodály's pedagogical principles, including sequential learning activities, solfège exercises, and rhythm training.

Interview Protocol

Semi-structured interview questions designed to collect expert opinions regarding the effectiveness and appropriateness of the instructional guidebook.

Assessment Tests

Formative Tests: Used during the instructional process to monitor students' progress.

Summative Test: Used at the end of the teaching intervention to evaluate overall learning outcomes.

5. Data Collection

Data collection was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Qualitative Data

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with three experts in music education. The interviews aimed to gather insights into the application of Kodály's teaching methods and to validate the design of the instructional guidebook.

Quantitative Data

Data were collected through formative and summative assessments administered during and after the teaching experiment. Students' performance scores were recorded and analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Kodály-based instructional approach.

6. RESULTS

The results of this study are presented based on the development and implementation of a Kodály-based instructional guidebook, as well as the outcomes of the teaching experiment conducted with third-year students at Chaoyang Normal College.

1. Development of the Kodály-Based Instructional Guidebook Based on literature review and expert interviews, the researcher developed a Kodály-based instructional guidebook designed for teaching Western music notation singing. The guidebook integrates Kodály's pedagogical principles, including sequential learning, solfège, rhythm syllables, and culturally relevant musical materials. The instructional guidebook is structured into five main units: Historical context of the Kodály method Integration of cultural elements in music education

Sequential learning structure Development of aural skills Curriculum design and instructional application The guidebook provides a systematic framework for teaching music notation through singing, emphasizing both theoretical understanding and practical application.

2. Results of the Teaching Experiment

The teaching experiment was conducted using the developed guidebook with a sample of 10 third-year students. Students' learning outcomes were evaluated through formative and summative assessments.

The results indicate a clear improvement in students' performance after the implementation of the Kodály-based instructional approach. The average score of the formative assessment was 61.80, while the average score of the summative assessment increased to 90.50, showing an improvement of 28.70 points.

All students demonstrated progress in their musical performance, particularly in areas such as pitch accuracy, rhythm understanding, and music notation reading.

Table 1

Compare the formative testing and summative testing scores.

Students	Formative Mean	Summative Mean	Comparing	Result
1	63	91	+28	Improved
2	63	86	+23	Improved
3	69	94	+25	Improved
4	52	85	+33	Improved
5	67	96	+29	Improved
6	63	91	+28	Improved
7	58	85	+27	Improved
8	69	96	+27	Improved
9	51	89	+38	Improved
10	63	91	+28	Improved
Mean	61.80	90.50	+28.7	Improved

As shown in Table 1, all students demonstrated improvement in their performance from the formative assessment to the summative assessment. The mean score increased from 61.80 to 90.50, indicating a substantial improvement of 28.70 points. This result suggests that the Kodály-based instructional guidebook was effective in enhancing students' musical performance and learning outcomes.

3. Individual Student Performance A comparison of individual student scores shows that all participants improved from formative to summative assessments. The highest improvement was observed in Student 9, with an increase of 38 points, followed by Student 4 with 33 points and Student 5 with 29 points. Several students, including Students 1, 6, and 10, showed consistent improvement of 28 points. These results indicate that the Kodály-based instructional guidebook was effective in supporting students with varying levels of initial ability.

4. Summary of Findings Overall, the findings demonstrate that the application of Kodály's teaching methods through a structured guidebook significantly improved students' musical skills and learning outcomes. The consistent increase in scores across all students suggests that the instructional approach was effective in enhancing music literacy and singing performance.

7. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the application of Kodály's teaching methods, develop a guidebook, implement it in teaching, and evaluate its effectiveness.

1. The findings confirm that the application of Kodály's teaching methods significantly improved students' ability to learn Western music notation singing. The emphasis on singing, solfège, and sequential learning enabled students to internalize musical concepts effectively. This result is consistent with the theoretical framework proposed by Kodály (1974), who emphasized the importance of voice-based and sequential music learning. Previous studies have also demonstrated that Kodály-based instruction enhances music literacy and performance skills (Goopy, 2013^[3]; Houlahan & Tacka, 2008)^[5]

2. The development of the Kodály-based instructional guidebook provided a structured and systematic approach to teaching. The guidebook facilitated consistency in instructional delivery and supported students' learning process. This finding aligns with Choksy (1999)^[1], who emphasized that structured teaching materials are essential for the effective implementation of Kodály pedagogy.

3. The implementation of the guidebook in classroom practice resulted in increased student engagement and active participation. Students showed greater interest and involvement in singing activities and rhythm exercises. This finding supports the concept of student-centered learning in music education, which has been shown to enhance motivation and learning effectiveness (Hallam, 2010)^[4]. In addition, the integration of culturally relevant materials contributed to improved student engagement. This result is consistent with the principles of culturally responsive teaching, which emphasize the importance of connecting learning content with students' cultural backgrounds (Liu, 2023^[7]; Türkmen & Özal Göncü, 2018)^[8]

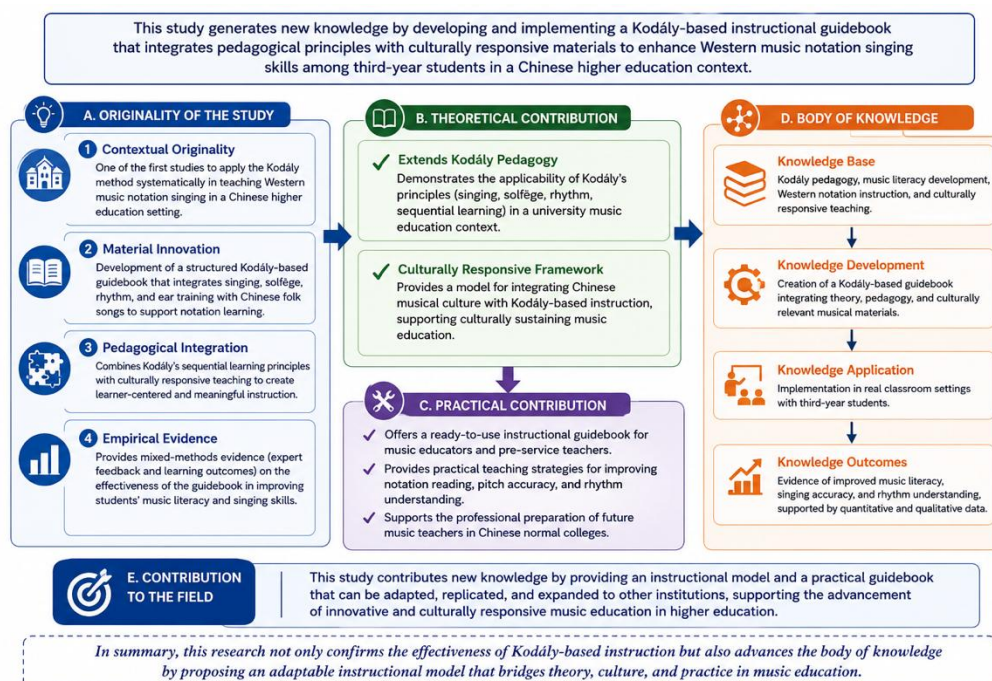
4. The results of the teaching experiment demonstrate significant improvement in students' learning outcomes. The increase in average scores from formative to summative assessments indicates that the Kodály-based instructional approach was effective in enhancing musical skills, including pitch accuracy, rhythm, and notation reading. These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting the effectiveness of Kodály-based instruction in improving musical performance (Goopy, 2013^[3]; Gallina, 2006)^[2]

Overall, this study contributes to the field of music education by providing empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of Kodály's teaching methods in higher education. The findings demonstrate that the combination of structured instructional materials, culturally responsive teaching, and student-centered learning can significantly improve music education outcomes.

8. ORIGINALITY AND BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Figure 2

Originality and body of knowledge



Source: Image generated by ChatGPT [June 24, 2026]

9. RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Implications of the Study

1. The findings of this study suggest that the application of Kodály-based teaching methods, particularly through a structured instructional guidebook, can significantly enhance students' music literacy, singing accuracy, and overall learning outcomes in higher education. Therefore, music educators are encouraged to adopt student-centered and sequential teaching approaches that emphasize singing, solfège, and rhythm training.

2. The integration of culturally relevant musical materials in the teaching process has been shown to improve student engagement and motivation. This implies that music curricula should incorporate local or culturally familiar musical elements alongside Western music notation to create more meaningful and effective learning experiences.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

1. Future studies should investigate the long-term effects of Kodály-based instructional approaches on students' musical development, including retention of music literacy skills and performance abilities over time. Larger sample sizes and multiple institutions are recommended to enhance the generalizability of findings.

2. Further research is needed to explore the integration of digital technologies and innovative teaching tools within Kodály-based pedagogy. This includes the development of digital guidebooks, interactive learning platforms, and blended learning environments to improve teaching effectiveness in modern music education contexts.

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