

# **The Constructing the Mongolian Short Songs Folk Music for Saxophone Quartet Guidebook for Teaching First-year Students at Wuhan Conservatory of Music in The People's Republic of China**

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## **Abstract**

The objectives of this research were (1) To study the usage of the Guidebook for using in the higher education teaching. (2) To construct the Mongolian short songs Folk Music for Saxophone Quartet Guidebook for using with Guidebook in teaching.(3)To use the Guidebook in teaching one year students at Wuhan Conservatory of Music, China.(4)To evaluate the Mongolian short songs Folk Music for Saxophone Quartet Curriculum by using with Guidebook in teaching one year students at Wuhan Conservatory of Music, China.

The findings of this paper are as follows: (1) The usage of guidebook in higher education teaching can bring significant benefits to both teachers and students. These Guidebooks can provide a more engaging and interactive learning experience that can improve students understanding and retention of course material. (2) The guidebooks for the one-year students at Wuhan Conservatory of Music of Hubei have six chapters. The chapter one is to learn the basic knowledge of the saxophone, the second chapter is the posture and changes of playing the saxophone, the third chapter is the introduction of the Mongolian short-tune folk songs, and the fourth chapter is the basic practice of the fingers. The fifth chapter is an interpretation of the repertoire of the saxophone quartet, and the sixth chapter is a further study of the playing skills of the saxophone quartet. (3) The instruction lasted 12 weeks and was taught in two classrooms. Each classroom was given two lessons per week, each lasting 40 minutes. The course was taught using a blended approach with three processes: before class, in class, and after class. (4) The average score of formative tests is 80.46 and summative test score is 84.55.

In conclusion, the utilization of guidebooks in higher education teaching, as demonstrated in this study on saxophone instruction at the Wuhan Conservatory of Music, has proven to yield significant benefits for both educators and students. in improving student performance and understanding in music education contexts.

**Keywords:** The first-year students, Saxophone; Mongolian short songs Folk Music; Saxophone Quartet; Wuhan Conservatory of Music; China.

## Introduction

With the ongoing development of China's social economy, the material living standards of its people are continuously improving. Despite this progress, the cultural significance of folk songs seems to be diminishing. In the realm of philosophy, we contemplate the origins of humanity and its future trajectory. For a diverse nation like China, with its 56 ethnic groups and vast cultural tapestry, it is imperative to distill the essence from the dross in our cultural heritage. Understanding how our ancestors paved the way for our present happiness is crucial for future generations (Li, 2010)

In the evolution of music worldwide, musicians across different nations are striving to depart from classical music conventions, seeking new breakthroughs. Modern music is marked by its spirit of exploration, innovation, and a focus on free structures, unconventional rhythms, dissonant harmonies, complex polytonality, atonality, and unique sound effects, often evoking great excitement. While not all composers pursue these avant-garde elements, some advocate for a seamless fusion of Classical music traditions with their national styles and modern compositional techniques to create superior music. However, not every piece of modern music finds widespread acceptance. Personally, I view each new musical composition as an exercise in continual progress and innovation. I hold profound admiration for these trailblazers. To enhance the proliferation of musical culture, European and some East Asian composers have endeavored to revitalize regional folk music by incorporating modern performance techniques. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of music researchers in China actively engaging in field studies and analyses, leading to the neglect and fading of some remarkable national musical treasures (Li & Feng, 2018).

Due to its relatively late emergence, the saxophone has a smaller repertoire compared to other instruments. Over the past decade, numerous young Chinese musicians have traveled worldwide to study and exchange music, bringing back diverse works and learning resources. However, few of these compositions align well with China's national context. With 56 ethnic groups in China, the Mongols stand out as a historically rich nation known for their singing and dancing traditions, offering ample material for musical development. To advance the Sinicization of saxophone works, I plan to arrange them into saxophone quartets inspired by Mongolian chamber music. This effort is crucial for promoting Mongolian culture and increasing awareness about this enigmatic nation (Gao, 2018).

Conclusion, In China as the social economy progresses, living standards improve but traditional folk songs lose cultural significance. Philosophically, reflecting on humanity's origins and future is essential for a nation like China with diverse ethnic groups. Global music evolution sees artists breaking from classical norms towards innovative structures and sound, though not all compositions gain universal acceptance. There is a lack of music researchers in China, leading to neglect of national musical treasures. The saxophone, with a smaller repertoire, is being explored by Chinese musicians globally, aiming to Sinicize works inspired by Mongolian culture for broader promotion and awareness.

## Research Objectives

- 1) To study the Mongolian short songs.
- 2) To Construct the Mongolian short songs for Saxophone Quartet Guidebook.
- 3) To teach the first-year students at Wuhan Conservatory of Music with guidebook.
- 4) To assess the first-year students at Wuhan Conservatory of Music students learning the guidebook.

## Literature Review

### **Current Situation of the saxophone quartet playing Mongolian short songs folk music**

In the midst of China's advancing social and economic landscape, the improvement in material living standards is evident. However, there appears to be a waning cultural significance attached to folk songs. Delving into philosophical realms prompts contemplation on humanity's

origins and its trajectory ahead. For a multifaceted nation like China with 56 diverse ethnic groups and a rich cultural tapestry, it becomes pivotal to distill the essence from our heritage, recognizing the foundational role our ancestors played in shaping our current happiness, thereby ensuring a meaningful legacy for future generations (Li, 2010). In the global evolution of music, musicians globally are breaking away from classical norms in pursuit of new paradigms. Modern music embodies exploration, innovation, and experimentation, characterized by free structures, unconventional rhythms, dissonant harmonies, polytonality, atonality, and unique sound effects that often evoke excitement. While not all composers embrace these avant-garde elements, some advocate for a fusion of classical traditions with modern techniques to create exceptional music. Despite this, not every modern piece garner universal acclaim; each new composition represents a stride towards progress and innovation, deserving admiration. Efforts by European and East Asian composers to infuse modern performance techniques into regional folk music aim to revive cultural heritage. Regrettably, a lack of music researchers actively studying national musical treasures in China risks their neglect and fading (Li & Feng, 2018).

The delayed introduction of the saxophone has led to a relatively restricted repertoire. Despite young Chinese musicians bringing back diverse works from global exchanges, only a few connect well with China's cultural context. China's rich ethnic diversity, including 56 groups, highlights the historically important Mongols, renowned for their lively traditions, providing ample material for musical exploration. The proposition to rearrange saxophone compositions into quartets inspired by Mongolian chamber music aims to promote Mongolian culture, increase awareness about this intriguing nation, and further the Sinicization of musical works (Gao, 2018).

Mongolian short songs in folk music are known for their beautiful melodies, vibrant rhythms, and succinct lyrics, often accompanied by traditional instruments like the maroquin and Sihu. A saxophone quartet—a Western ensemble comprising soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone saxophones—offers a fresh perspective and artistic allure when fused with Mongolian folk music. While some musicians and groups have experimented with this fusion, widespread adoption remains limited (Ma, 2014).

The challenge lies in balancing the need to preserve Mongolian musical authenticity using traditional instruments while requiring saxophonists to possess advanced skills and a deep understanding of Mongolian folk music (Jiang, 2014). To popularize saxophone quartet renditions of Mongolian short songs, further research, training of skilled performers, and the preservation of Mongolian folk music are essential. This will enhance appreciation and love for this traditional musical art form among a broader audience.

Therefore, in order to promote the performance of Mongolian short songs folk music by saxophone quartets, it is necessary to strengthen the research and exploration of this form of performance, cultivate more performers with relevant skills and literacy, and also

strengthen the protection and inheritance of Mongolian short songs folk music, so that more people can understand and love this traditional music form.

## Research Methodology

**Research methods:** This research uses mixed research methods. Qualitative research includes collecting related literature and interviewing saxophone and Mongolian short songs Folk Music experts. Quantitative research includes the construction of Mongolian short songs Folk Music for saxophone quartet teaching guidebook, the use and experiment of Saxophone teaching guidebook to the students of at Wuhan Conservatory of Music 2023 spring class. Experts

evaluate of teaching results.

**Population**

The population was 24 students from one-year undergraduate students in Music major, at Wuhan Conservatory of Music, Hubei Province, China.

**Sample**

The sample group was 12 students who studied in one-year undergraduate students in Music major. Cluster sampling be used in the research phase.

**Key informant**

Three experts with extensive experience in teaching saxophone quartet.

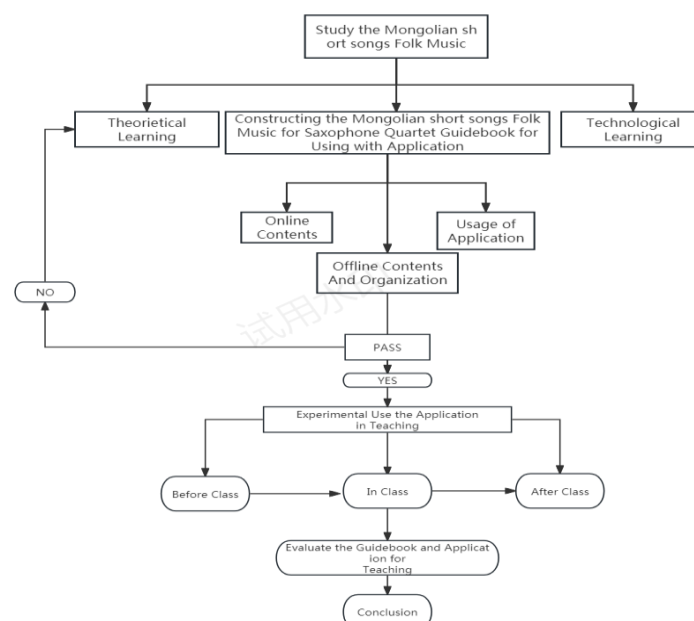
**Inclusion Criteria**

- 1) President and member of Musicians Association.
- 2) Engaged in mass cultural work for more than 20 years.
- 3) Music expert, Various competition judges.

**Data collection:** Data is collected after completion of courses, practices and tests.

**Data analysis:** Descriptive analysis used to explain the information of nine key informants. And statistical analysis was used for the performance test.

## Research Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1** Research Conceptual Framework

## **Research Results**

### **1. A study of the saxophone quartet playing Mongolian short songs folk music**

This is a qualitative study. The researchers studied Mongolian short songs folk music and saxophone quartets. and conducted in-depth interviews with three key informants. The researchers mainly learned from saxophone experts how to write a teaching guide for playing Mongolian short songs folk music through a saxophone quartet, and how to choose the teaching content and mode of Mongolian short songs folk music suitable for saxophone quartet. Through the study of books and literature, the researchers learned about the history of the development of Mongolian short songs folk music and saxophone quartets. and the teaching status and methods of saxophone playing Mongolian short songs folk music. On the basis of the study of the literature and interviews with experts, the acquired knowledge was collated and the book "Saxophone Quartet Playing Mongolian Short songs folk music" was compiled. Before conducting teaching experiments on students, experts were invited to conduct an IOC evaluation of the 8 questions in the teaching guide, and the results of the experts' evaluation were feasible.

### **2. Construct a teaching guidebook for saxophone quartets to play Mongolian short songs folk music**

This is a qualitative study that developed a pedagogical guide for the saxophone playing of Mongolian short songs folk music through literature research and in-depth interviews with experts from three conservatories. Three experts reviewed the effectiveness of the guidelines. The three main informants are renowned saxophone performance teaching experts at the Conservatory, all of whom have more than 20 years of experience working and are professionals with teaching experience in saxophone quartets. They have certain experience or achievements in teaching piano improvisational accompaniment, and their success in teaching piano improvisational accompaniment is widely recognized. For the purposes of the study, this guide is divided into 6 chapters. The researchers designed three evaluation indicators, and the experts evaluated the guidelines. The results of the experts' evaluation are feasible and agree that they can be used in teaching, as follows:

#### **Contents**

##### **Chapter 1 Basic knowledge of saxophone**

- 1.1. Understand the invention and promotion of the saxophone
- 1.2. Understand the development of the saxophone quartet
- 1.3. Re-systematically understand the staff and strengthen the solfeggio ability
- 1.4. Strengthen the rhythm training
- 1.5. International fingering, marking the introduction

##### **Chapter 2 Playing posture and its change**

- 2.1. Playing posture
- 2.2. The saxophone quartet layout distribution
- 2.3. Cultivation methods of playing tacit understanding

##### **Chapter 3 Introduction of Mongolian short-tune folk songs**

- 3.1. Introduction of Mongolian folk songs

##### **Chapter 4 Basic exercises of the fingers**

- 4.1. Training method of finger flexibility and strength

### **Chapter 5: Analysis of the saxophone quartet repertoire**

- 5.1. Track 1: "The Hong Yan"
- 5.2. Track 2: "Sai Ma"
- 5.3. Track 3: "Mongolian Allegro"

### **Chapter 6: Further study of the playing skills of the saxophone Quartet**

- 6.1. Intonation training
- 6.2. The drama of the stage music performance, how to make the audience better understand your musical ideas.
- 6.3. Control the sound of the instrument and simulate the playing skills of other Mongolian instruments.

## **3. Using the Guidebook to Teach the first-year students at Wuhan Conservatory of music**

This is a qualitative and quantitative study. Researchers have developed a teaching plan based on the "The Mongolian Short Songs Folk Music for Saxophone Quartet Guidebook". The course plan includes an 80-minute class per week for 18 weeks. Researchers conduct self-evaluation of teaching after each class. The evaluation form is attached to the course plan. The course plan is as follows:

- Lessons1: Understand the invention and promotion of the saxophone.
- Lessons2: Understand the development of the saxophone quartet.
- Lessons3: Re-systematically understand the staff, strengthen the solfeggio ability.
- Lessons4: Strengthen the rhythm training
- Lessons5: Introduction of international fingering notation
- Lessons6: Playing posture
- Lessons7: The saxophone quartet layout distribution
- Lessons8: The saxophone quartet layout distribution
- Lessons9: Cultivation methods of playing tacit understanding
- Lessons10: Introduction of Mongolian folk songs
- Lessons11: Training method of finger flexibility and strength
- Lessons12: Track 1: "The Hong Yan "Analysis of the saxophone quartet repertoire
- Lessons13: "Sai MA "Analysis of the saxophone quartet repertoire
- Lessons14: "Mongolian Allegro "Formative testing
- Further study of the saxophone quartet playing skills
- Lessons15: Intonation training
- Further study of the saxophone quartet playing skills
- Lessons16: The drama of the stage music performance, how to make the audience better understand your musical ideas.
- Lesson17. Control the sound of the instrument and simulate the playing skills of other Mongolian instruments.
- Lesson18. Performance exams. Key informants evaluate performances.

## **4. Evaluating the Result of Teaching by Using the Guidebook**

It is a research method that combines qualitative and quantitative methods. The researchers prepared pre-tests, formative tests, and summative tests to collect data and test students' performance of Mongolian short songs folk music through a saxophone quartet. Use charts to compare and analyze the collected data. The researchers designed three assessment zones, each with a maximum score of 5 points. Including: Degree of technique completion、

Rhythm accuracy、The overall completion degree of the music etc.

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the teaching effectiveness of the experiment, researchers used qualitative research methods such as expert interviews after the experiment to understand the evaluation of the teaching effectiveness by experts.

1) From a performance perspective, the students improved their saxophone quartet playing skills through learning. First-year college students learn through the saxophone quartet that the Mongolian short-tune folk song is cultural, entertaining and healthy, but it faces physical and psychological challenges. The teaching objectives should focus on the students' achievement expectations, interests and health expectations, and choose the appropriate technical difficulty and music according to the Chinese aesthetics. The study of theoretical knowledge should be based on the comprehension ability and memory ability of freshmen students. The arrangement of performance activities can help them to achieve a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. The experience in the learning process should focus on the communication with students and improve their relevant cultural ability.

2) In the teaching process of the first-grade college students, personalized teaching plans should be made according to the learning needs and characteristics and basic characteristics of college students. Fully understand each student's musical background, learning objectives and learning difficulties to adjust their appropriate teaching content and schedule. Choose the appropriate repertoire and practice methods for first-year undergraduates based on their learning ability and finger flexibility. In the teaching content, pay attention to the foundation and simplification, gradually increase the difficulty, so that they can learn the saxophone quartet in a relaxed and happy atmosphere.

**Table 2 Compare the formative testing and summative testing scores.**

Students	Formative Mean	Summative Mean	Comparing	Result
1	2.75	4	1.25	Improved
2	3	4	1	Improved
3	2.5	4	1.5	Improved
4	2.75	4.33	1.58	Improved
5	3.5	4.33	0.83	Improved
6	2.62	4	1.38	Improved
7	3.12	4	0.88	Improved
8	2.87	4	1.13	Improved
9	3.12	4.33	1.21	Improved
10	2.62	4.33	1.71	Improved
11	2.62	4.33	1.71	Improved
12	3	4.33	1.33	Improved
Mean	2.87	4.16	1.29	Improved

## Discussion

The guidebook "Saxophone Quartet's Guide to Playing Mongolian Folk Songs" was developed through a comprehensive review of local and international resources, consultations with music experts, and engagement with stakeholders. By analyzing Mongolian short songs folk music across different periods and styles, six distinct levels were identified, showcasing remarkable artistry suitable for first-year students at the Wuhan Conservatory of Music. These levels were integrated into the saxophone quartet curriculum for school students. The classification and comparison of class levels accurately gauge student learning progression.

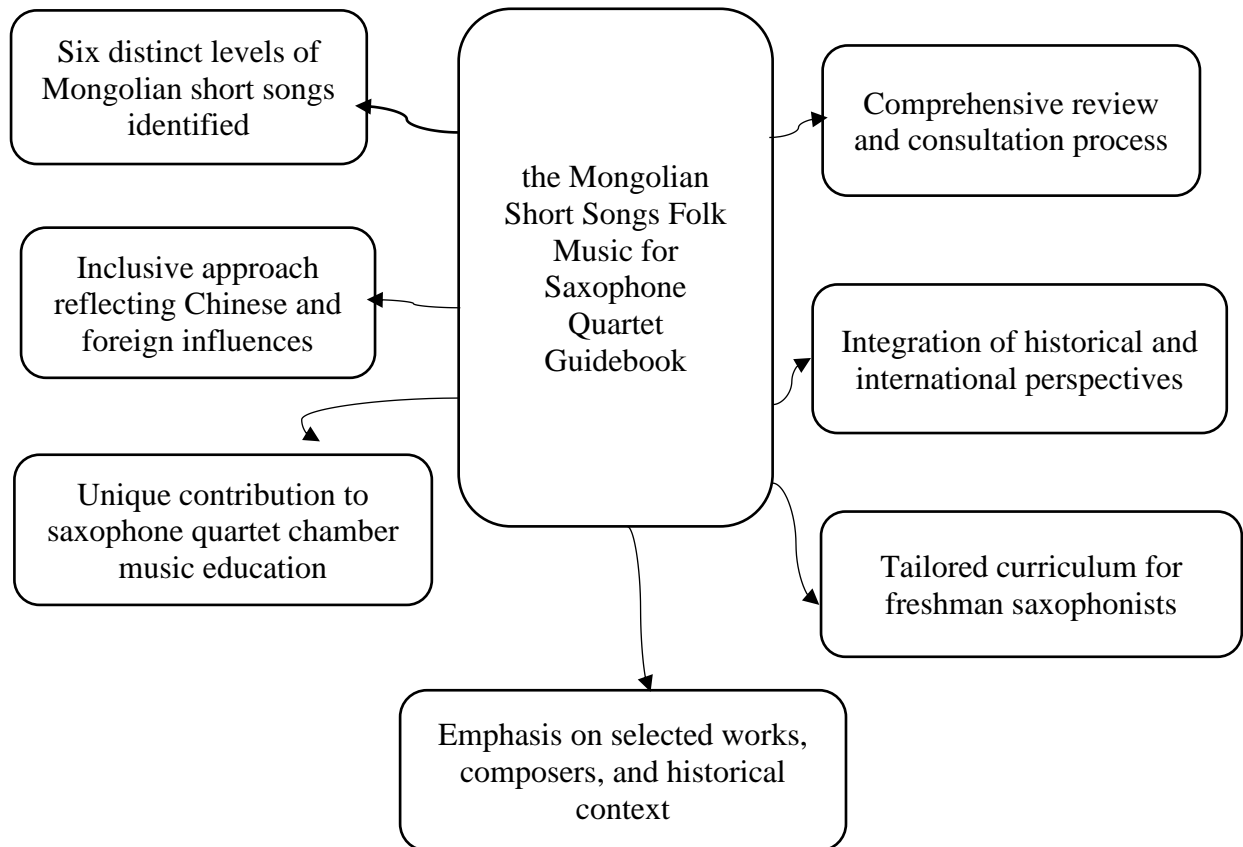
This research delves into historical, temporal, national, and inclusive perspectives by exploring the evolution of music over time, reflecting both Chinese and foreign influences. The final piece selection, "Mongolian Allegro," encapsulates these diverse elements. Tailored for freshman saxophonists at Wuhan Conservatory of Music, the guidebook provides a structured approach to piano repertoire, ranging from easy to challenging, shallow to profound, considering students' performance capabilities, situational contexts, and other pertinent factors (Jiang, 2014).

Currently, there is a lack of specific research on categorizing Mongolian short tunes within university settings. Moreover, many saxophone quartet compositions in China predominantly feature foreign genres. For instance, within the chamber music curriculum at the Wuhan Conservatory of Music, instruction primarily revolves around Western classical pieces. This study guide stands out as a saxophone quartet chamber music textbook that directly incorporates Mongolian short songs folk music, emphasizing selected works for teaching and evaluation purposes. The guide also provides insights into the composers of the chosen works, the historical context in which they were created, the unique characteristics of Mongolian short songs folk music, and other relevant knowledge pertaining to their development process (Li, 2010).

This study meticulously examines the alignment between the school's trajectory and Mongolian short songs folk music within saxophone quartet performance design. It integrates expert recommendations, consolidates input from teachers and students, and thoroughly refines program design. The approach is characterized by innovation and freshness while ensuring a sustained, stable utility cycle in the long run. Emphasis is placed on the individual circumstances of students and incorporates their feedback after each session, fostering continuous improvement and student engagement.



### Synthesize the overall finding as the mind mapping



### Conclusions

Teaching saxophone to first-year students at Wuhan Conservatory of Music through the exploration of Mongolian folk songs via saxophone quartet performances offers numerous advantages. This approach fosters an appreciation for musical diversity, nurtures national pride, establishes a strong musical foundation, enhances daily life with music, boosts social engagement, and more. The construction of a comprehensive saxophone guidebook with chapters covering fundamental saxophone knowledge, playing techniques, Mongolian folk songs, finger exercises, repertoire analysis, and quartet performance skills provides a structured framework for teaching. Implementing this guidebook in saxophone instruction at Wuhan Conservatory of Music ensures a well-rounded educational experience for first-year students, enriching their musical journey and honing their skills effectively. The teaching program includes 18 sessions, ranging from 1 to 17 for taking on the basics of saxophone, playing techniques, and music. Test scores for Lesson 18 and were assessed by experts. We should pay attention to the selection of teaching materials, the arrangement of repertoire, the study of music theory, listening to, playing and singing the melody of Mongolian short-tune folk songs.

The formative total mean score was 2.88 points. The overall composite mean score was 4.49 points. Comparing the formative and summative test scores, the summative test is superior to the formative test 1.61. From a performance perspective, the students improved their saxophone quartet playing skills through learning. First-year college students learn through the

saxophone quartet that the Mongolian short-tune folk song is cultural, entertaining and healthy, but it faces physical and psychological challenges. The teaching objectives should focus on the students' achievement expectations, interests and health expectations, and choose the appropriate technical difficulty and music according to the Chinese aesthetics. The study of theoretical knowledge should be based on the comprehension ability and memory ability of freshmen students. The arrangement of performance activities can help them to achieve a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. The experience in the learning process should focus on the communication with students and improve their relevant cultural ability.

### **Finding new knowledge:**

The process of teaching saxophone to first-year students at Wuhan Conservatory of Music, centered on exploring Mongolian folk songs through saxophone quartet performances, not only cultivates a deep appreciation for musical diversity and national pride but also lays a social engagement, and more. The development of a comprehensive saxophone guidebook structured around fundamental knowledge, playing techniques, Mongolian folk tunes, finger exercises, repertoire analysis, and quartet performance skills serves as a foundational educational tool. Implementation of this guidebook across 18 sessions has yielded positive outcomes, reflected in formative and summative test scores showing notable student improvement in saxophone quartet playing abilities. By focusing on addressing physical and psychological challenges while aligning teaching objectives with student expectations and health considerations, selecting appropriate technical levels and music reflecting Chinese aesthetics, and emphasizing theoretical knowledge based on student comprehension and memory capacity, students receive a holistic learning experience. Through effective communication, cultural immersion, and performance activities that foster a sense of achievement and satisfaction, students are empowered to enhance their musical skills and cultural understanding.

## **Suggestions**

### **1.General Recommendations**

In researching effective strategies for teaching saxophone to first-year students, it is crucial to conduct studies that investigate the impact of culturally diverse music, such as Mongolian folk songs, on student engagement and learning outcomes. Research should focus on designing structured curricula with comprehensive guidebooks, implementing formative assessments to track progress, and exploring the relationship between regular performance opportunities and student skill development. Studies should also address the importance of student well-being, including physical and psychological challenges encountered during saxophone practice. By emphasizing cultural relevance, effective communication, and continuous improvement in teaching methods based on research findings, educators can enhance the saxophone learning experience for first-year students and contribute valuable insights to the field of music education.

### **2. Recommendation for future research**

For future research on teaching saxophone to first-year students, it is recommended to explore the implementation of technology-enhanced learning tools and virtual resources in saxophone instruction. Investigating the effectiveness of incorporating interactive apps, online tutorials, virtual reality simulations, or AI-assisted practice platforms can provide insights into how technology can enhance student engagement, skill development, and overall learning outcomes. Additionally, research could focus on longitudinal studies to assess the long-term

impact of cultural immersion programs on students' musical growth and cultural appreciation. By examining the integration of technology and the sustained benefits of cultural music exploration, future research can offer valuable contributions to optimizing saxophone education for first-year students.

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