

# Innovative Pathways for Integrating Chinese Children's Piano Works into Piano Education at Universities in Guangxi

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## Abstract

This study explores innovative pathways for integrating Chinese children's piano works into piano education in Guangxi universities. It examines the artistic characteristics of these works, focusing on how they enhance students' technical abilities, cultural identity, and teaching skills. Utilizing qualitative research methods, including questionnaire surveys, interviews, and classroom observations, the study investigates the current piano education system and proposes a modular teaching model tailored to Guangxi's unique cultural environment. The results indicate that incorporating Chinese children's piano works into the curriculum significantly improves students' musical expressiveness and teaching practice abilities while promoting cultural heritage. These findings offer valuable insights for future reforms in music education.

**Keywords:** Innovative Pathways; Piano Education; Universities in Guangxi; Chinese Children's Piano Works

## Introduction

Chinese children's piano works are closely related to piano education in universities, especially at the undergraduate level of music education. The integration of these works is crucial for the future career development of music education undergraduates. As future music educators, undergraduate music majors are likely to teach children and adolescents, making Chinese children's piano works highly suitable for their learning and performance due to their simplicity, accessibility, and rich national characteristics. By studying these works during their undergraduate education, students not only learn how to teach piano to children but also gain a better understanding of the artistic and educational value of these works. This contributes to their future teaching practice and lays a solid foundation for music education. Therefore, integrating Chinese children's piano works into university piano education not only aligns with students' career development needs but also meets the practical teaching scenarios of music education.

As a region with a diverse population of ethnic groups, Guangxi possesses a wealth of ethnic music resources, offering a unique cultural background for innovation in piano education. However, despite the significant role these resources play in fostering students' cultural identity and musical expression, piano education in Guangxi universities remains dominated by Western classical works, with a serious lack of exploration and application of local ethnic music and Chinese children's piano works. This limitation is not only reflected in the teaching content but is also closely related to the university curricula and the teaching

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philosophies of instructors. Research indicates that many current music academy curricula tend to prioritize the training of Western music performance techniques, while neglecting students' understanding and mastery of Chinese ethnic music and its application in piano education (Li, 2021). Furthermore, with the increasing demand for music education in society, many undergraduates, despite possessing advanced piano performance skills upon graduation, lack the ability to effectively integrate these techniques with teaching methods suitable for children in actual educational settings. Wang, S. (2019) pointed out that current graduates of music education programs often face difficulties in combining professional skills with practical teaching when entering the workforce, especially in the field of children's music education. Many graduates are "able to perform but unable to teach," particularly in the instruction of children and adolescents, where they lack effective teaching strategies and a solid theoretical foundation. This issue has garnered widespread attention within the field of music education in China.

Therefore, this study proposes and discusses the following sub-questions: (1) Which Chinese children's piano works are suitable for integration into piano education at universities in Guangxi? Can representative works that align with Guangxi's music education context be selected by analyzing their musical language, cultural connotations, and forms of expression? Specifically, how can we choose works that both preserve national culture and meet students' future career needs? (2) How can effective teaching strategies be designed to help students better understand the cultural background and emotional content of Chinese children's piano works? How can teachers combine the national cultural elements of Chinese children's works in teaching to enhance students' musical expression and help them develop the ability to teach these works in their future careers? (3) How can existing piano teaching methods be innovated to better accommodate the teaching of Chinese children's piano works? Can teachers explore more interactive and practical teaching methods by combining traditional piano technique training with cultural interpretation to spark students' interest and improve their understanding and expression of indigenous music?

## Research Objectives

1. To analyze the artistic and cultural value of Chinese children's piano works and construct a modular teaching model that enhances students' performance skills and cultural identity.

2. To design regionally distinctive teaching strategies by utilizing Guangxi's rich multi-ethnic cultural resources, in order to enhance students' capabilities in piano instruction for children and adolescents.

## Literature Review

### 1. Current Status of Domestic Research

In recent years, research on children's piano education in China has gradually increased. Domestic research mainly focuses on three aspects: the current state of children's piano education and textbooks, the creation and development of Chinese children's piano works, and the exploration of piano teaching methods.

### 1.1 Current Status of Children's Piano Education and Textbooks

Research shows that children's piano education in China started relatively late, initially relying on foreign textbooks such as *John Thompson's Easiest Piano Course* and *Czerny's Elementary Piano Exercises*, which still dominate early education today (Zhou, 2018). Zhou pointed out that although foreign textbooks have strong advantages in terms of technique and systematization, they pay little attention to the cultural background and life experiences of Chinese children. As a result, students' cultivation of musical emotion and cultural identity during the learning process is relatively weak. To address this issue, localized children's piano textbooks have been introduced in recent years, such as *Colorful Notes: Piano for Preschoolers* and *Fun Piano Lessons for Children*. These textbooks incorporate music close to the lives of Chinese children, integrating traditional Chinese nursery rhymes, folk songs, and classic children's songs, allowing students to experience the unique charm of Chinese culture while learning piano techniques (Zhou, 2020).

### 1.2 Creation and Development of Chinese Children's Piano Works

The creation of Chinese children's piano works began in the early 20th century, and with the popularization of music education, both the quantity and quality of these works have gradually improved. Many Chinese composers have created children's piano works with distinctive national characteristics, incorporating elements of traditional Chinese music in terms of melody, harmony, and rhythm. For example, the pentatonic scale and ethnic modes are widely used in children's piano works, helping children better understand and express Chinese traditional culture (Wei, 2010). Wei Lian, in analyzing the creative characteristics of 20th-century Chinese children's piano compositions, pointed out that these works not only help children master piano techniques but also improve their musical perception and emotional expression through rich musical narratives. In recent years, more Chinese composers have started to create educational children's piano suites with national characteristics, such as Ding Shande's *Happy Holidays*. These works feature lively melodies and strong rhythmic qualities, making them suitable for children to play. They gradually increase in technical difficulty and align with children's psychological learning stages (Wang, 2022).

### 1.3 Exploration of Piano Teaching Methods

In exploring children's piano teaching methods, China has gradually absorbed internationally renowned teaching methods. The Suzuki method is one that has been widely applied. The Suzuki method emphasizes imitation, emotional development, and diversified interactive forms, helping children learn piano in a joyful atmosphere. The method advocates for students to master performance techniques through listening and repetition, while also focusing on emotional expression and development (Wang, 2022).

Some domestic studies have also explored other teaching methods. For example, based on the philosophy of "joyful piano learning," many teachers have begun introducing gamified teaching to stimulate children's interest and engagement. Research shows that using fun and engaging teaching methods allows children to better understand music theory while maintaining high enthusiasm during practice. This approach enhances children's learning outcomes and alleviates the fatigue and frustration often caused by repetitive technical exercises (Shang, 2022).

## 2. International Research Status

Internationally, research on children's piano education primarily focuses on educational philosophy and teaching method innovation. Scholars abroad emphasize cultivating children's interest in music and their artistic literacy through early music education.

For example, Ineta Zīmele-Šteina (2012) proposed that textbooks should follow principles of gradual progression, visual engagement, musical diversity, and aesthetics to adapt to children's cognitive development. Widely used American piano series such as *Faber Piano Adventures* have gained global popularity due to their modern, diverse repertoire and the educational philosophy of “sound before symbol” and “music that inspires.” This series helps children progressively improve their piano skills while focusing on musical creativity and aesthetic development.

Additionally, internationally, interest-based education and interactive teaching methods are commonly applied in children's piano education, emphasizing joyful music experiences to stimulate children's interest in learning. For example, the “joyful piano learning” philosophy in the United States encourages students to improve their skills and performance through game-based learning, a method that has also significantly influenced children's piano education in China.

### 3. Educational Value of Children's Piano Works in University Teaching

#### 3.1 Enhancing Students' Basic Piano Skills

Although Chinese children's piano works are primarily created for children, they still hold great value for technical training in university-level piano education. These works help students consolidate basic techniques through simple and clear melodies and rhythms. For instance, the pentatonic scale training commonly found in children's piano works can enhance students' sensitivity to scales and their control over finger flexibility. Students can improve their musical expression and rhythm control through the practice of rhythm and harmony embedded in these works (Zhou, 2020).

#### 3.2 Strengthening Students' Cultural Identity

Western classical music has long dominated Chinese university piano education, with local works being relatively underutilized. By integrating Chinese children's piano works, which are rich in national musical elements, students can gain a deeper understanding of the essence of Chinese traditional music culture. Through playing works with ethnic characteristics, students not only improve their emotional expression but also foster a sense of cultural pride and identification with Chinese culture. For example, many melodies in children's piano works are derived from Chinese folk songs, whose distinctive national symbols help students understand the emotional expression within the cultural context of China (Wei, 2010).

#### 3.3 Expanding the Content and Forms of University Music Teaching

Chinese children's piano works provide rich teaching resources that expand the diversity of music education content. These works are not only useful for technical training but also serve as supplementary materials in courses that integrate music with culture and history, improving students' comprehensive education. For example, universities in Guangxi can combine children's piano works with local cultural resources to design culturally distinctive curricula, allowing students to learn about Guangxi's rich ethnic culture through music. This approach not only stimulates students' interest in learning but also helps them better understand and preserve China's cultural traditions.

#### 3.4 Meeting Social Development Needs and Enhancing Students' Teaching Abilities

With the growing demand for children's music education, one of the new challenges facing piano education at universities in Guangxi is to train music teachers who can

meet societal needs. Currently, many piano undergraduates focus excessively on technical performance and neglect an understanding of child psychology and teaching methods. Many students “can play but cannot teach,” particularly when it comes to teaching children, as they lack effective teaching methods and experience in interacting with young learners (Wang, 2019). By integrating Chinese children's piano works into university teaching, students can gain a better understanding of child psychology and master appropriate teaching methods for young learners, improving their teaching skills. Furthermore, the simplicity and fun of children's piano works make them excellent teaching materials, helping university students become more competent children's piano teachers in their future careers.

Introducing children's piano works into university piano education not only enhances students' performance skills but also provides a wealth of teaching case studies, helping students transition from performers to educators. This not only meets the societal demand for music professionals with teaching abilities but also promotes the development of university music education.

## **Research Methodology**

This research primarily adopts qualitative research methods, aiming to explore the application pathways of Chinese children's piano works in piano education at universities in Guangxi. By combining theories of teaching innovation and cultural transmission, the study analyzes the impact of these works on students' cultural identity and teaching competencies.

### **1. Population and sample**

The research participants consist of piano teachers and students from universities in Guangxi, including Guangxi Arts University, Guangxi Normal University, Nanning Normal University, and Guangxi University. These institutions have well-established piano curricula and face the practical need to integrate Chinese children's piano works into their teaching. The sample was selected using random sampling and includes 38 experienced piano teachers and 80 undergraduate students majoring in music education in Guangxi. The students are aged 18-22 and are divided into two groups: 40 students in the experimental group, who received an innovative teaching plan centered on Chinese children's piano works, and 40 students in the control group, who followed the traditional piano teaching model focusing on Western classical works.

### **2. Research Tools**

To ensure comprehensive and accurate data collection, this study utilized the following research tools:

**Questionnaire Survey:** Two separate questionnaires were designed for teachers and students. The teacher questionnaire consists of five sections, covering awareness of Chinese children's piano works, teaching attitudes, practical application, evaluation of teaching effectiveness, and resource needs. The student questionnaire includes questions on exposure to Chinese children's piano works, interest in learning, technical mastery, and understanding of the cultural background. Both questionnaires employed a 5-point Likert scale and were distributed through an online platform.

**Semi-Structured Interviews:** Interviews were conducted with 20 students from the experimental group and 10 piano teachers. The student interviews focused on their acceptance of Chinese children's piano works, depth of understanding, and cultural identity. The teacher interviews explored their experiences and perspectives on incorporating these works into their

teaching. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed into text for subsequent thematic analysis.

**Classroom Observations:**The researcher conducted multiple classroom observations, recording the teaching methods employed by teachers, student responses, and the application of the piano works. The observation form specifically focused on the use of Chinese children's piano works in the classroom and student engagement, with the results being used to assess students' teaching practice abilities.

### 3. Data Collection

**Distribution and Collection of Questionnaires:**A total of 38 teacher questionnaires were distributed, with 36 returned, resulting in a response rate of 94.74%. For students, 80 questionnaires were distributed, with 75 returned, yielding an effective response rate of 93.75%.

**Interview Recording and Data Collection:**Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 teachers and 20 students, each lasting approximately 30 minutes. The interview content included the practical application of teaching, student acceptance of the works, and cultural identity. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed to ensure the authenticity and validity of the data.

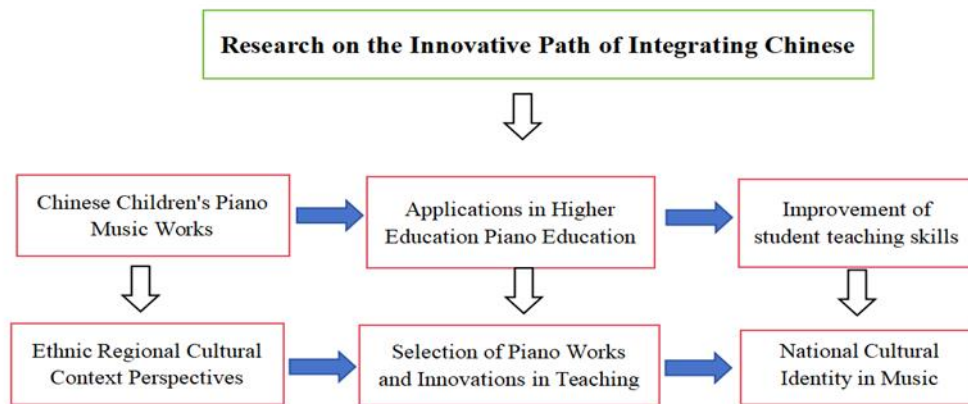
**Classroom Observations and Data Recording:**The researcher observed 10 piano classes, each lasting 40 minutes, documenting the teaching methods, emotional expression, and student participation. The observation data were compiled into classroom reports, which served as the basis for subsequent qualitative data analysis.

### 4. Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was the primary method used in this research, with interviews and classroom observation providing the main sources of data. The interview recordings were transcribed, and classroom observations were compiled into written reports. These data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns.

## Research Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this research is based on three core theories: cultural transmission theory, music education theory, and constructivist learning theory. This framework, combined with the specific application of Chinese children's piano works in piano education at universities in Guangxi, explores how to enhance students' cultural identity, performance techniques, and teaching abilities through these works. The framework is built around three main dimensions: cultural understanding, teaching innovation, and professional application (Figure 1).

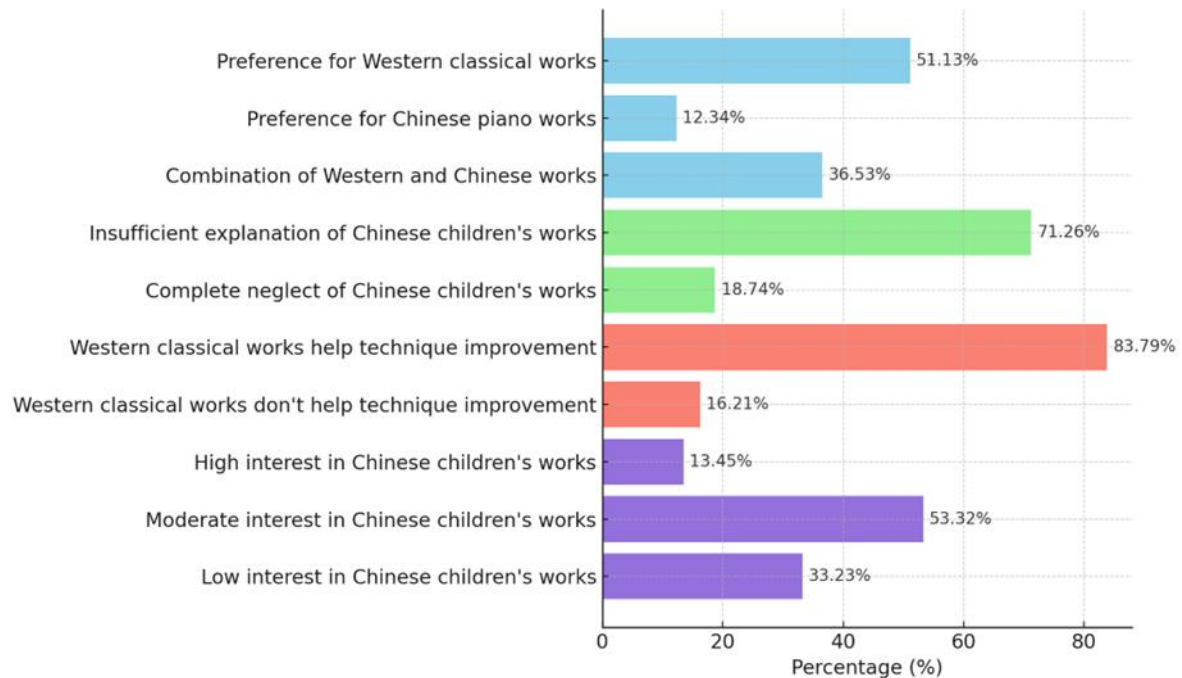


**Figure 1** Research Conceptual framework  
(Source: Constructed by the researcher)

## Research Findings

### 1. Preliminary Data Analysis

The preliminary data were primarily derived from the questionnaire survey, used to analyze the current state of piano education at universities in Guangxi. The data reflect several prominent issues as Figure 2:



**Figure 2** Proportional Distribution of Piano Instruction in Higher Education Institutions in Guangxi  
(Source: Constructed by the researcher)

### 1.1 Emphasis on Western Classical Works:

In terms of preferred works for piano instruction, 51.13% of teachers prefer to use Western classical works, while only 12.34% favor Chinese piano works, and 36.53% use a combination of both. This indicates that Western classical works remain the dominant repertoire in current teaching, with students primarily exposed to Western music, while Chinese piano works are relatively underutilized.

### 1.2 Proportion of Chinese Children's Piano Works Used in Teaching:

A significant portion of teachers (71.26%) believe that Chinese children's piano works are inadequately covered in teaching, and 18.74% think these works are completely neglected. This suggests that most teachers do not prioritize the systematic teaching and application of Chinese children's works. Based on interview content, the reasons for this situation include a lack of teaching materials and resources, insufficient emphasis in the curriculum, or the personal teaching philosophies of the teachers themselves.

### 1.3 Recognition of Western Classical Works for Technical Improvement:

A majority (83.79%) of teachers believe that Western classical works are more effective in improving students' technical skills, while only 16.21% disagree. The complexity and historical status of Western classical works lead teachers to prefer these pieces as core materials for technical training. These works, with their systematic and continuous structures, are seen as effective in addressing technical challenges progressively. However, this preference limits opportunities for teaching local Chinese works, reflecting the lack of systematic textbooks on indigenous piano works in current curricula.

### 1.4 Perception of Integrating Chinese Children's Piano Works into Teaching:

Only 13.45% of teachers and students expressed high interest in integrating Chinese children's piano works into teaching, while 53.32% showed moderate interest and 33.23% showed low interest. This suggests that Chinese children's piano works have limited appeal and influence in the classroom, especially compared to Western classical works. According to interview content, the primary reason for this result is that both teachers and students perceive that learning Chinese children's piano works does not significantly contribute to improving technical skills.

From the survey data and interview results, it is evident that the main issues in piano education at universities in Guangxi include an over-reliance on the traditional Western teaching system, a lack of localized ethnic teaching materials, limitations in teaching methods, and a focus on improving students' playing skills at the expense of addressing societal needs. These issues restrict the application of Chinese children's piano works in teaching, preventing them from realizing their potential cultural and educational value. Future research should explore how to balance the teaching of Chinese children's works with Western classical works without compromising technical training.

## 2. Construction of Innovative Pathways

Based on the results of the preliminary investigation, in order to effectively integrate Chinese children's piano works into university piano teaching to meet societal development needs, it is necessary to construct innovative teaching pathways:

### 2.1 Innovation in Teaching Content

Modular teaching design — Modular teaching design involves dividing Chinese children's piano works into several independent modules based on difficulty, themes, or objectives, allowing teaching to be more flexible, systematic, and targeted. In piano education,



modular design helps students progress step by step, learning works of increasing difficulty while accumulating both technical skills and cultural understanding. The specific pathways can be divided into the following modules:

**Difficulty Level Modules:** Based on the performance difficulty of the works, modular design can classify Chinese children's piano works into three levels: beginner, intermediate, and advanced. Each module includes works that progressively increase in technical difficulty and emotional depth, ensuring that students at different stages have appropriate pieces to study.

**Beginner Module:** Works such as *Little Frog* (Zheng Bing) and *The Cowherd's Flute* (He Luting), which feature simple melodies and light rhythms. These pieces are suitable for teaching beginners basic techniques such as staccato, rhythm, and simple emotional expression.

**Intermediate Module:** Works such as *Clouds Chasing the Moon* (arranged by Wang Jianzhong) and *Dance of the Waterweeds* (Du Mingxin), which possess cultural depth and higher musical expressiveness. These are suitable for teaching intermediate students, focusing on more complex rhythmic patterns and tonal changes while guiding students to explore deeper emotional expression.

**Advanced Module:** Works like *Hundred Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix* (arranged by Wang Jianzhong) and *Xinjiang Suite* (Chu Wanghua), which demand high technical skill and emotional control, particularly in terms of performance technique, speed, and tonal variation. These pieces challenge students with complex rhythmic structures and tonal variations.

**Theme Modules:** Based on the cultural background and emotional themes of the works, Chinese children's piano works can be divided into multiple thematic modules. For example, in the beginner module, *Little Frog* expresses the simplicity and joy of rural life, while in the intermediate module, *Dance of the Waterweeds* portrays natural scenery and emotional flow. Advanced modules feature works like *Xinjiang Suite* and *Hundred Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix*, which use complex tonal and rhythmic structures to represent ethnic customs and natural landscapes.

**Cultural Modules:** Integrating local ethnic music elements, such as music from the Zhuang and Dong ethnic groups of Guangxi, along with Chinese children's piano works, creates culturally distinctive teaching modules. These modules enable students to not only learn piano techniques but also gain an understanding and appreciation of their own cultural heritage.

## 2.2 Defining the Representativeness of Chinese Children's Piano Works

To ensure the effectiveness of selected Chinese children's piano works in teaching, clear criteria must be established to define their representativeness. The following standards help determine which works are representative and suitable for teaching:

**Historical Influence and Widespread Use:** Representative works usually have a long history and are widely used in piano education, competitions, and textbooks throughout the country. For example, *The Cowherd's Flute* by He Luting has been extensively used in children's piano education since the 1950s and has become a classic teaching piece.

**National Style and Cultural Significance:** Representative works must incorporate distinctive elements of Chinese national music, such as the pentatonic scale and the imitation of traditional ethnic instruments, reflecting the unique characteristics of traditional Chinese music. These works not only help students develop performance techniques but also allow them to better understand Chinese national culture through music. For instance, *Xinjiang Suite*

incorporates complex rhythms and melodies that mimic the musical styles of the Xinjiang region, making it a powerful expression of cultural heritage.

**Educational Value and Technical Applicability:** Representative works should possess strong educational value, offering opportunities for students to practice fundamental techniques (such as legato, staccato, and rhythm control) as well as advanced techniques (such as emotional expression and tonal variation). For example, *Hundred Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix* challenges students with its intricate rhythms and lively melodies, improving their dexterity and rhythmic precision.

**Suitability for Teaching:** Works selected for teaching must align with the technical demands of students at different learning stages. Through modular design, representative works can be adapted for beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels, ensuring that students can progressively develop their skills. For instance, in the beginner stage, *Little Bamboo Raft* can be used to teach simple melodies and rhythm control, while *Dance of the Waterweeds* in the intermediate stage helps students focus on legato and tonal variation. In the advanced level, *Hundred Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix* challenges students with its complex rhythms and technical demands.

**Emotional Expression and Cultural Identity:** Suitable works should not only enhance students' technical skills but also foster emotional expression and cultural identity through their historical and cultural context. For example, performing *Xinjiang Suite* enables students to engage with the cultural and ethnic background of Xinjiang, promoting cultural understanding through music.

### 2.3 Case Study and Practical Application

To demonstrate how to incorporate Chinese children's piano works into piano education at universities in Guangxi, a sample class will be presented using *The Cowherd's Flute* as the central theme, targeting first-year undergraduate students majoring in music education at Nanning Normal University. This demonstration class aims to enhance students' performance techniques and emotional expression while emphasizing how to apply these skills in teaching children and adolescents.

**Class Theme:** Chinese Children's Piano Work *The Cowherd's Flute*

**Target Students:** First-year undergraduate students majoring in music education at Nanning Normal University. Group class (two students per class)

**Class Duration:** 40 minutes

**Teaching Objectives:**

a. Students will be able to proficiently perform *The Cowherd's Flute*, mastering its rhythm and technical requirements.

b. Students will understand the cultural background of the piece and its connection to children's music education.

c. Students will design appropriate teaching methods for children to learn this piece and, through in-class demonstrations, practice how to teach such works to children and adolescents.

**Teaching Procedure:**

a. Introduction to Cultural Background and Explanation of Children's Teaching Methods (10 minutes)

**Multimedia Presentation:** The class begins with the teacher showing a video of pastoral life and natural scenery to give students a direct experience of the rural cultural scenes

behind *The Cowherd's Flute*. The teacher briefly introduces *The Cowherd's Flute*, a children's piano piece with strong national characteristics composed by He Luting. This work imitates the sound of a cowherd playing a flute, depicting the natural beauty of the Chinese countryside and the happy life of children. With its lighthearted melody and lively rhythm, the piece is full of childlike charm and the beauty of nature, helping students understand its cultural connotations.

b.Explanation of Children's Teaching Methods: While introducing the background of the piece, the teacher guides students to think about how to convey the cultural background and musical techniques to children. The teacher introduces teaching methods suitable for children, including using visual aids and storytelling to help children better understand the emotions and narratives within the music. For example, the teacher suggests using simple language to describe the life of the cowherd and employing games or interactive activities to help children mimic the rhythms and tones in the piece.

c.Technical Training and Teaching Simulation (15 minutes)

Music Analysis and Technical Exercise: *The Cowherd's Flute* is structured in ternary form (A-B-A'), with a simple structure. The melody flows smoothly, based on a pentatonic scale, with jumping notes imitating the flute sound, and a repetitive, playful motif. The harmony is simple, primarily in major key, with left-hand chords supporting the right-hand melody to create a light and harmonious musical atmosphere. The rhythm alternates between quarter notes and eighth notes, evoking a lively and carefree image of the cowherd. Students need to focus on wrist and finger flexibility, controlling dynamics to reflect the playful nature of the cowherd and the serenity of the pastoral setting. Special lyrical treatment is required in section B, while section A requires elasticity and playfulness in the melody. Section A' repeats section A but with richer emotional depth and dynamic changes.

Teaching Simulation and Practicing from a Child's Perspective: After completing technical training, the teacher asks students to role-play as teachers and children learning *The Cowherd's Flute*. The students take turns playing the role of teacher and child. The student acting as the teacher must explain and demonstrate the key points of rhythm and melody using simple language and physical gestures, and engage the "child" in learning through games or interactive activities. After each round of simulation, the teacher provides feedback to help students improve their teaching methods.

d.Scenario Simulation and Emotional Expression (10 minutes)

Scenario Simulation Exercise: Students simulate the scene of the cowherd playing the flute in the fields. This scenario-based method helps children feel the emotional context of the music. In this section, students are asked to design a story or scenario that helps children imaginatively enter the emotional world of the music. Students need to consider how to use vivid descriptions to capture children's attention and inspire their interest in the piece.

Emotional Expression Performance: Each student performs *The Cowherd's Flute*, incorporating the children's teaching methods they have learned into their performance. They demonstrate to the "child" how to express different emotions and explain the emotional transitions in each section of the music. The teacher provides feedback on students' performances and helps them improve their ability to guide children in expressing emotions.

e.Comprehensive Discussion and Reflection (5minutes)

Class Discussion and Teaching Reflection: Students share their experiences and challenges during the teaching simulation, discussing how they can apply these methods in real-life teaching for children. The teacher leads the students to think about how to design

teaching content based on children's interests, how to convey complex musical concepts in a simple, intuitive way, and how to use interaction and games to stimulate children's interest in music. Students reflect on their performances and teaching simulations and propose improvement plans. The teacher provides personalized guidance based on students' feedback to help them better meet the needs and interests of children in their teaching practice.

## Discussion

### 1. Course Research Summary

After constructing a new teaching pathway, a four-month observation and teaching experiment was conducted. A systematic comparative study was carried out between two student groups (experimental and control groups) at universities in Guangxi. The experimental group adopted the modular teaching design, integrating Chinese children's piano works into the teaching process, supplemented by multimedia support and cultural background explanations. The control group continued with the traditional piano teaching method, focusing primarily on Western classical works. Based on regular observation and data collection, the following conclusions were drawn regarding the progress of students in terms of technical ability, emotional expression, cultural identity, and professional competency:

### 2. The Experimental Group Outperformed the Control Group in Technical Improvement

The students in the experimental group progressively learned a range of Chinese children's piano works, organized into difficulty levels, through modular teaching design. The results showed that the experimental group demonstrated significant improvements in finger dexterity, tonal control, and handling of complex rhythms. This was especially evident in the performance of advanced pieces like *Xinjiang Suite* and *Hundred Birds Paying Homage to the Phoenix*, where students exhibited a higher level of technical mastery and a better understanding of complex musical structures. In contrast, although the control group performed well in fundamental techniques, their emotional expression and adaptability to national music works were relatively weaker due to their focus on Western classical pieces.

### 3. Emotional Expression and Cultural Identity in the Experimental Group Improved Significantly

Through learning Chinese children's piano works, students in the experimental group showed notable improvements in emotional expression and cultural identity. Classroom observations revealed that the experimental group displayed more expressive emotional interpretations, especially when imitating the timbres of traditional instruments and controlling rhythm and dynamics. Compared to the control group, the experimental group demonstrated a more precise grasp of the different emotions within each piece, expressing a wider range of emotional nuances in their performances. This was attributed to their exposure to and understanding of national culture through the cultural background explanation of the works. Interviews with the experimental group students also revealed that learning Chinese children's piano works enhanced their sense of cultural pride, particularly as they recognized the connection between local ethnic music and Chinese children's works.

### 4. Modular Teaching Design Promoted Self-directed Learning and Professional Development

The modular teaching design not only helped the experimental group excel in technical and emotional expression but also fostered stronger self-directed learning abilities.

The tiered design of the teaching modules allowed students to advance at their own pace, developing self-regulation and proactive learning skills. Moreover, during teaching simulations, the experimental group displayed strong teaching competencies, having learned how to teach Chinese children's piano works to children and adolescents. Many students reported that the teaching simulations not only helped them improve their pedagogical techniques but also provided insights into how to simplify complex musical concepts for children. The teaching simulations also enhanced student engagement in the classroom, with teachers generally agreeing that this innovative teaching approach had a positive impact on students' future professional development. In contrast, students in the control group, who lacked systematic cultural understanding and teaching practice, displayed a narrower focus in teaching simulations, primarily concentrating on transmitting technical aspects of Western works.

#### 5. Challenges Observed During Classroom Practice

Several challenges were noted during classroom observations:

**Lack of teaching resources:** The study also noted a lack of adequate teaching resources for Chinese children's piano works, especially for advanced pieces. Teachers lacked effective audio and video materials as well as cultural background resources for complex ethnic music pieces, limiting students' deeper understanding of the cultural significance behind the works. Additionally, outdated teaching videos and materials meant that teachers relied heavily on their personal experience, which sometimes limited the learning outcomes.

**Students' unfamiliarity with national music:** Despite the distinctive ethnic elements of Chinese children's piano works, many students, having primarily studied Western music, struggled with the rhythms, melodies, and cultural background of Chinese ethnic music. Particularly in early lessons with pieces such as *Yao Dance* or *Xinjiang Suite*, students found it difficult to grasp the tonal shifts and rhythmic nuances, displaying some confusion and discomfort. This cultural unfamiliarity affected their emotional expression and musical interpretation.

**Variations in Students' Technical Proficiency:** Classroom observations revealed considerable differences in students' technical proficiency. Although the modular teaching design caters to different levels of students, those with weaker foundational skills—especially in rhythm control and tonal manipulation—faced significant challenges when tackling intermediate and advanced pieces. This required teachers to spend additional time and effort on individualized instruction, leading to an imbalance in the overall classroom pacing.

## Recommendations

Based on the reflection on the demonstration lesson and related teaching practices, it is clear that integrating Chinese children's piano works into piano education at universities in Guangxi has yielded significant teaching results. However, there are still areas for improvement to further optimize teaching effectiveness and enhance students' learning experience. Below are the reflections and suggestions for improvement:

#### 1. Theoretical Recommendation

In future teaching, it will be necessary to further develop and introduce a variety of teaching resources, particularly educational materials and multimedia content related to Chinese children's piano works, such as audio, instructional videos, and cultural background presentations. Teachers should make full use of modern technology, incorporating explanations of cultural background and teaching theory to help students better understand the emotional

and cultural aspects of the works through multi-sensory experiences. Teachers can also form specialized research groups through seminars to develop dedicated instructional materials for undergraduates, as well as record teaching videos, audio, and integrate relevant teaching theories for use in higher education.

## 2. Policy Recommendations

Universities should offer specialized courses on ethnic music culture to help students understand the ethnic background, historical culture, and musical style associated with piano works before learning them. Additionally, ethnic music practice courses should be established, along with regular cultural experience activities such as attending folk music performances and participating in ethnic music workshops. Through interaction and collaboration with folk musicians and ethnic instrument performers, students will gain direct exposure to the origins of ethnic music, experience its characteristics and playing techniques, and enhance their cultural identity. This will enable them to better reflect the style and spirit of ethnic music in their piano performances.

## 3. Practical Recommendations

To address the differences in students' technical proficiency and improve teaching effectiveness, the following measures are recommended: First, implement differentiated instruction by assigning piano works of varying difficulty based on students' technical abilities, ensuring that each student is learning within an appropriate range for their level. Second, increase the frequency of individual tutoring and group practice sessions. Teachers should provide targeted, personalized guidance to students with weaker technical skills, helping them gradually improve their proficiency. Additionally, high-achieving students should be encouraged to assist lower-level or less proficient peers, fostering a collaborative learning environment that promotes overall progress. These measures will effectively address differences in students' technical levels and optimize classroom instruction.

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