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A Study on the Implementation Paths of Music Activities in Kindergarten From the Perspective of Evidence-Based Teaching Research

HUANG Yue[a],*

[a] Master, Lecturership, College of General Education, Deyang College of Urban Rail Transit, Deyang, Sichuan, China.
*Corresponding author.

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Abstract

In the practice of kindergarten music education, teachers' instructional decisions often rely on personal experience. There is a disconnect between activity goals and children's actual experiences, and evaluation lacks objective evidence. This frequently results in music learning remaining at the level of superficial imitation, making it difficult to foster children's core musical literacy and deep learning. To address these challenges, this study, based on the concept of evidence-based practice, attempts to construct and validate an "evidence-reflection-improvement"implementation pathway suitable for kindergarten music activities. This pathway, grounded in creating a supportive teaching and research environment, facilitates the continuous generation and collection of evidence by providing structured tools and fostering immersive music exploration scenarios. It further promotes evidence-oriented deep reflection among teachers, establishing a multi-dimensional evidence collection system and implementing collaborative discussions around specific evidence segments. This encourages a shift in instructional decision-making from"what to teach"to"how children learn."Simultaneously, it advocates for the effective use of life and cross-domain resources to expand the boundaries of music learning. It also aims for the natural integration of musical elements within gamified and project-based activity designs, achieving organic fusion of multi-domain experiences. The research indicates that leading music activity implementation through evidence-based teaching and research can effectively bridge educational philosophy, child behavior, and teacher practice. It promotes a shift in music education from experience-driven to evidence-driven approaches, and from isolated instruction to collaborative reflection. Ultimately, within a cycle of continuous improvement, it enhances activity quality and teacher professional competence, providing a practical reference for the professional and scientific development of kindergarten music education.

Key words: Evidence-based teaching and research; Kindergarten music activities; Teacher professional development

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Music is an important artistic language for young children to express emotions and understand the world. Both the Guidelines for the Learning and Development of Children Aged 3–6 and the Kindergarten Education Guidance Outline (Trial) emphasize the need to respect children's learning characteristics and their central role, promoting their holistic development through the integration of play and art. However, current music education in kindergartens still faces a series of practical challenges. On the one hand, the objectives of music activities are often disconnected from children's actual experiences, the process of activities still heavily relies on teachers' one-sided planning and direction, activity evaluations lack objective evidence based on children's behaviors,

and teaching research mechanisms have yet to establish an effective, continuous improvement cycle. On the other hand, in the specific process of music learning, most activities remain at the level of superficial learning, such as focusing solely on memorizing and imitating melodies and rhythms, lacking systematic attention to the core competencies of music as a discipline, and showing limited understanding of deep learning in the field of music. The root of these issues lies in the fact that music teaching decisions are not sufficiently grounded in systematic evidence-based practices or in-depth professional reflection. Therefore, exploring a scientifically grounded implementation pathway for music activities, guided by evidence-based teaching research, holds significant theoretical and practical importance for enhancing the professionalism and effectiveness of music education in kindergartens. Guided by the principles of evidence-based practice, this study aims to develop and validate an "evidence-reflection-improvement" implementation framework suitable for music activities in kindergartens. The research not only focuses on how to systematically collect and interpret evidence of children's music learning but also emphasizes how to transform this evidence into concrete teaching improvements through structured teaching research mechanisms. By bridging educational concepts, children's behaviors, and teachers' practices, the study ultimately aims to achieve a spiral improvement in the quality of music activities and the synergistic development of teachers' professional capabilities.

1. CREATE A SUPPORTIVE TEACHING-RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT TO LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

The effective implementation of evidence-based teaching and research relies on a physical and cultural environment that supports evidence collection and encourages reflective dialogue. The environment itself serves as a critical educational resource.

1.1 Create an immersive music exploration environment

Since the 1990s, the concept of the "learning environment" has gradually gained widespread recognition as an important educational metaphor. Research suggests that the learning environment exerts both contextual and background influences in children's education, serving as a comprehensive set of conditions that support learner development. In early childhood education, particular emphasis is placed on the intentional design, diversity, and quality of interactions between children and materials, peers, and teachers within the environment. Early childhood educators should move beyond viewing the environment as a static backdrop and instead collaborate with children to create a "researchable" environment that stimulates their desire for musical exploration.Natural sound materials offer children unique musical experiences and positively contribute to their cognitive expansion and creative development. By guiding children to compose and perform music outdoors, teachers enable them to listen to and perceive real natural soundscapes firsthand. This multisensory experience can inspire more novel and personalized artistic expression. For example, educators can set up a "Sound Discovery Station" with objects of various materials, such as metal sheets, sandpaper, and bean-filled bottles, encouraging children to freely explore and compare timbres. Children can record their discoveries through drawings or symbols, forming initial "sound evidence." Additionally, a "Music Imagination Wall" can be created to display children's self-invented graphic scores and movement sequence photos, serving as a visual platform that documents the development of their musical thinking. Such an environment is not only child-friendly but also a dynamic resource library that continuously generates evidence for teaching and learning.

1.2 Providing Structured and Open Teaching Research Tools

The Ministry of Education's Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Teaching Research in Basic Education in the New Era emphasizes the need to further "strengthen school-based teaching research." School-based teaching research typically refers to the research and discussions conducted by school teachers regarding issues that arise during daily teaching processes. It is not only a key method for addressing practical challenges in education and teaching but also an effective way to promote teachers' professional development and improve the quality of basic education. To reduce the cognitive load on teachers in collecting and analyzing evidence, teaching research organizations should develop and provide simple and practical tools. For example, designing an Observation Form for Key Musical Behaviors in Young Children, listing key behavioral indicators around core experiences such as rhythm, melody, and expressiveness; creating an Evidence-Based Discussion Record Sheet for Music Activities, guiding teachers to conduct discussions following the process of "describing phenomena - analyzing evidence - proposing hypotheses - designing actions." Simultaneously, providing basic audio and video recording equipment to ensure the objective and comprehensive capture of activity processes, offering raw materials for subsequent in-depth analysis. Tool support can transform abstract evidence-based concepts into concrete, actionable operational steps.

2. CONDUCTING EVIDENCE-GUIDED IN-DEPTH REFLECTION TO DRIVE OPTIMIZATION OF TEACHING DECISIONS

School-based teaching research over-reliant on individual teacher experience tends to confine itself to ingrained practical logic. When teachers interpret teaching activities and conduct related research based solely on personal experience, it may hinder the research from truly addressing students' actual needs. This can lead to insufficient research effectiveness, delayed resolution of teaching issues, and slow professional growth among teachers. Evidence-based teaching research refers to a research approach grounded in and strictly guided by evidence, where objective and authentic evidence is used to define research questions, design research plans, and implement research activities. In this process, teachers extract knowledge from practical experience, identify issues, and pinpoint genuine problems affecting student learning through individual or collective reflection. They then clarify these problems by drawing on evidence from relevant thematic evidence databases, ultimately forming actionable plans. Thus, evidence-based teaching research emphasizes evidence support at every stage, from topic selection to process implementation. It is this mechanism of relying on evidence that enables school-based teaching research to move beyond mere experience. Evidence-based teaching research does not simply dismiss experience-based approaches but advocates enhancing the use of evidence on the foundation of experience, refining and elevating experience through evidence. The core lies in collective reflection grounded in evidence. This process shifts teachers' focus from "what I taught" to "what the children learned and how they learned it."

2.1 Establishing a Multidimensional Evidence Collection System

Evidence serves as the cornerstone of reflection. The teaching and research group must systematically plan the sources of evidence. By utilizing methods such as video recordings, audio recordings, and anecdotal records, they can capture children's genuine behaviors, language, and emotional responses during activities such as singing, rhythmic movements, instrumental play, and music appreciation, thereby preserving procedural evidence. Additionally, by collecting and analyzing children's visual music scores, self-created lyrics, photos of body postures, and simple homemade musical instruments, they can interpret the musical ideas and creativity embedded within, forming product-based evidence. Furthermore, organizing teachers' instructional designs, reflective journals, and post-activity interviews with children—such as asking, "What part of the activity did you enjoy the most? Why?"—contributes to the formation of retrospective evidence.

2.2 Implementing Problem-Focused Collaborative Reflection

Teaching and research activities should avoid vague discussions and instead focus on specific evidence fragments to engage in in-depth dialogue. The "case slice analysis" method can be employed, selecting a 2–3 minute activity video clip that contains typical phenomena or points of confusion. Teachers should be organized to watch the clip repeatedly and guided to use sentence structures such as "I observed...," "This might mean the children are...," and "Based on this, I am considering how to adjust my teaching..." when sharing their insights. This approach anchors personal perspectives in observable and audible evidence. Such focused reflection can effectively enhance teachers' nuanced understanding of children's music learning processes and foster the development of more targeted teaching strategies.

3. MAKE GOOD USE OF DIVERSE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES TO EXPAND THE BOUNDARIES OF MUSIC ACTIVITIES

Music learning exists everywhere. Evidence-based teaching and research encourage teachers to break through the temporal and spatial limitations of music activities, draw inspiration from life and cross-disciplinary resources, and enrich young children's musical experiences.

3.1 Discovering Opportunities for Music Education in Everyday Life Scenarios

Teachers should develop an eye for spotting "music in daily life." For instance, the clinking of utensils during meals, the rhythm of wind and rain outdoors, and the echo of footsteps in hallways can all serve as starting points for exploring rhythm and timbre. Based on evidence gathered from observing children's spontaneous musical behaviors in their daily routines, the teaching research group can design themed activities such as "Symphony of Everyday Life," guiding children to consciously collect, imitate, and create these sounds, transforming fragmented interests into in-depth exploration. This approach to activity design, grounded in real-life evidence, aligns more closely with children's experiences and better stimulates their intrinsic motivation.

3.2 Integrating Artistic and Cultural Resources Inside and Outside the Kindergarten

Invite parents who are music enthusiasts to participate in activities and showcase different musical instruments. Utilize community resources to organize young children to watch local opera performances and experience regional music culture. Subsequently, based on the children's feedback on these new experiences—such as

imitating movements, asking questions, or creating related drawings—the teaching research group can reflect on how to organically integrate diverse music culture elements into daily teaching in a way that respects children's comprehension levels, avoiding superficial "cultural fast food" approaches.

4. PROMOTING CROSS-DISCIPLINARY INTEGRATION TO ACHIEVE GAMIFIED MUSIC LEARNING

Play is the way young children learn, and music serves as the emotional and rhythmic framework of play. Music activities supported by evidence-based teaching research should be naturally integrated into various games, enabling children to "learn through play and play while learning."

4.1 Designing Integrated Game Scenarios

In the construction game "Building a Bridge," the teacher noticed that the children spontaneously tapped the bridge surface with building blocks to listen to the sounds. Based on this observation, the teaching research group could reflect and design a "Musical Bridge" game scenario. This would guide the children to explore how bridges made of different materials or constructed in different ways produce various sounds. They could then attempt to use these sounds to create audio effects for a story like "Little Animals Crossing the Bridge." This approach naturally integrates sound exploration from music, material properties from science, and storytelling from language. As a result, the game becomes more imaginative through music, while music becomes more engaging through the game.

4.2 Implementing Project-Based Music Composition Activities

Starting with a picture book related to sound and rhythm, such as "The Running Town," the teaching and research group guides young children in developing a complete musical theater creation project. Throughout the process, evidence of the children's performance is continuously collected across various stages, including plot discussions, character movement design, selection of musical instruments for accompaniment, and creation of simple props. After each phase, teaching and research reflections are conducted—for instance, how is children's sense of rhythm reflected in their movement designs? Does their choice of timbre match the characters' personalities? Through continuous adjustments based on evidence, the final production is not only an artistic achievement but also a growth record documenting the children's integrated development in music, language, and social skills.

Leading the implementation of musical activities in kindergarten through evidence-based teaching research represents a professional pathway from experience-driven to evidence-driven approaches, and from isolated teaching to collaborative reflection. It constructs a dynamic, open, and continuously improving music education ecosystem through four interrelated dimensions: creating supportive environments, conducting evidence-oriented deep reflection, utilizing diverse resources effectively, and promoting cross-disciplinary integration. The core value of this pathway lies in placing teachers' professional development within real, complex, and uncertain teaching contexts. By systematically collecting evidence and engaging in collaborative inquiry, it enhances teachers' abilities to "see children," "understand learning," and "support development." Only by consistently reflecting based on evidence and improving through reflection can kindergarten music education truly become a meaningful journey that enlightens minds, nurtures souls, and supports the creative growth of every child.

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