



**Surveying On Percussion
Teaching Method for Grade 2
Students in Lanzhou No 14 Middle
School, Gansu Province,
The People's Republic of China.**

Ban Weizhe*

Pranote Meeson

* Master's degree students Faculty
of Music Bangkok Thonburi University
meesonp@hotmail.com
phone number 0817508565

Received : August 20, 2024

Revised : September 25, 2024

Accepted : November 7 , 2024

* Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to survey percussion teaching methods for Grade 2 students at Lanzhou No. 14 Middle School, Gansu Province, People's Republic of China. This study employed a qualitative research approach, and the main research instruments were interview forms and observation forms. The research findings revealed that Lanzhou No. 14 Middle School provides significant support for rhythm instrument teaching, facilitating the development of percussion skills. The teaching methods include intensive content, and the school has developed specialized teaching materials for rhythm instrument classes. As a result, the school has made considerable progress in percussion teaching.

Keywords:

Percussion teaching method, Middle School

● Introduction

Music education plays a vital role in the overall development of students, as it not only enhances their cognitive abilities but also fosters creativity, self-expression, and emotional well-being. Among the various aspects of music education, percussion instruments hold a unique position due to their versatility and accessibility (Zhang Guowei, 2011). Percussion instruments are an essential component of music education, particularly in primary schools, as they provide a foundation for students to develop their rhythmic and coordination skills. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of percussion education in primary schools, as it has been recognized as a crucial element in fostering a well-rounded music education (Liu Ting, 2019).

The importance of learning percussion instruments in primary school music education can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, percussion instruments are highly accessible and easy to learn, making them an ideal starting point for young students with little or no prior musical experience (Zhang Shuyi, 2008). This allows students to quickly grasp the basics of rhythm and coordination, which are essential skills for any musician. Moreover, playing percussion instruments can help to improve students' fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and spatial awareness, all of which are crucial for their overall development.

Secondly, percussion instruments are incredibly versatile and can be used in various musical styles and genres. This versatility allows students to explore a wide range of musical expressions and develop a deeper understanding of different

cultures and traditions (Huang Pingting, 2020). Furthermore, learning to play percussion instruments can help to foster a sense of teamwork and collaboration among students, as they often need to work together to create a cohesive and harmonious sound.

Lastly, learning percussion instruments can have a positive impact on students' emotional well-being and self-esteem. Playing music has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, and the physical act of playing percussion instruments can be particularly therapeutic (Zhou Yichun, 2018). Additionally, mastering a new skill, such as playing a percussion instrument, can boost students' confidence and sense of accomplishment.

Percussion education in primary schools plays a significant role in fostering students' musical abilities and enhancing their cognitive development. However, the current situation of percussion education in most primary schools is relatively general, lacking depth and breadth in teaching methods and curriculum design. This situation has led to a lack of interest and enthusiasm among students, hindering their potential for musical growth and development.

In contrast, the 14th Middle School in Lanzhou city has been recognized for its exceptional approach to percussion education. The school has successfully integrated percussion into its curriculum, providing students with a comprehensive and engaging learning experience. The school's unique approach to percussion education has not only fostered a love for music among its students but also significantly improved their musical abilities.

The 14th Middle School in Lanzhou city has managed to break away from traditional teaching methods, incorporating innovative and interactive teaching techniques that have proven to be highly effective. The school's success in percussion education is attributed to its emphasis on practical learning, where students are encouraged to actively participate in music-making processes. This hands-on approach has not only enhanced students' understanding of percussion but also developed their creativity and critical thinking skills.

Moreover, the school has also invested in quality musical instruments and resources, providing students with the necessary tools to explore and experiment with different sounds and rhythms. The schools dedicated and passionate music teachers have

also played a crucial role in the success of its percussion education. They have been instrumental in creating a positive and supportive learning environment, inspiring students to pursue their musical interests and talents.

Given the success of the 14th Middle School in Lanzhou city in percussion education, it is crucial to conduct a study to understand its strengths and strategies. This study aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations for other schools looking to improve their percussion education. By examining the current situation of percussion in grades 2 of the 14th Middle School in Lanzhou city, this study hopes to contribute to the advancement of percussion education in primary schools.

In conclusion, the importance of percussion education in primary schools cannot be overstated. It is a vital component of a well-rounded education, contributing to students' cognitive, emotional, and social development. Therefore, it is essential to invest in quality percussion education, drawing inspiration from successful models such as the 14th Middle School in Lanzhou city. This study aims to shed light on the school's successful approach to percussion education, providing a valuable reference for other schools striving to enhance their music education programs.

● Purpose of the study

To survey on percussion teaching method for grades 2 in Lanzhou No.14 Middle School, Gansu Province, People's Republic of China.

● Research of question

1. How to improve the percussion skills of the students in grades 2 of the No.14 Middle School Lanzhou, Gansu, People's Republic of China?

2. What are the most effective teaching methods and strategies for improving the overall vocational skills in percussion for students in grades 2?

● Research Methodology

This research methodology is qualitative research.

Research tools

1. Interview form
2. Observation form

Scope of the study

1. Scope of place:

No.14 Middle School in Lanzhou, Gansu, People's Republic of China

2. Key informants

Three experts from school

Criteria of key informants

1. Has been a percussion teacher in this school for at least 5 years
2. Has been a percussion teacher
3. Has at least 5 years of percussion teaching experience

● Definitions of Specific Terminology

Music percussion instruments :

There are three types of percussion instrument. The first type is classical percussion instrument, the second type is popular percussion instrument, and the third type is ethnic percussion instrument. In Lanzhou no.14 middle school, these music percussion instruments belong to classical percussion instruments.

Percussion instruments in Lanzhou no.14 middle school includes:

Xylophone, Celesta, Drum set, Cymbal, Timpani, Bass drum, Marimba

● Conceptual framework

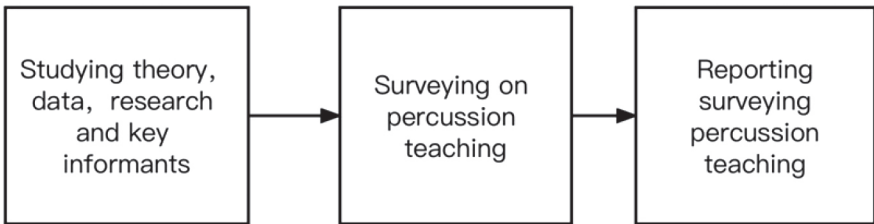


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

● Research Findings

The history of percussion

Percussion instruments have been an integral part of human culture and music since the dawn of civilization. They have evolved over time, adapting to the needs and preferences of different societies and musical styles. This comprehensive history of percussion instruments will explore their origins, development, and impact on music throughout the ages

● Percussion Education

Percussion education refers to the systematic and structured teaching of percussion instruments, techniques, and musical concepts to students of all ages and skill levels. Percussion instruments are a diverse family of musical instruments that produce sound by being struck, shaken, or scraped. They are an integral part of various musical genres and cultures, and their study can provide a solid foundation for a well-rounded musical education.

● Elementary Music Education

Elementary music education refers to the process of teaching and learning music at the primary or elementary school level, typically catering to children aged between 5 and 11 years. This form of education aims to develop a child's musical abilities, appreciation for various music genres, and understanding of music theory and history. It also seeks to foster creativity, self-expression, and social skills through collaborative music-making experiences.

● Basic Percussion

Basic percussion refers to the fundamental rhythmic patterns played on percussion instruments. It forms the backbone of many musical compositions, providing the steady beat and rhythm that other instruments and vocals build upon. Basic percussion can be played on a variety of instruments, including drums, cymbals, tambourines, and more.

● Percussion Ensemble

The percussion ensemble or percussion band is a musical ensemble consisting of only percussion instruments. These groups can include various types of drums, cymbals, bells, gongs, xylophones, marimbas, and other instruments that are struck, shaken, or scraped to produce sound. The size and composition of a percussion ensemble can vary greatly, ranging from small trios or quartets to large orchestras consisting of dozens of players.

● Classification of percussion

Percussion instruments are an essential part of any musical ensemble, providing rhythm, texture, and color to the overall sound. They can be found in various forms and styles across different cultures and musical genres. Here is a classification of percussion instruments, divided into several categories based on their playing techniques, materials, and origins.

● Characteristics of percussion performance

1. Diversity of Instruments

Percussion performances are marked by the incredible diversity of instruments used. These instruments can be broadly classified into two categories: pitched and unpatched. Pitched percussion instruments, such as marimbas, xylophones, and vibraphones, produce definite pitches and are often used for melodic and harmonic purposes. Unhitched percussion instruments, such as drums, cymbals, and tambourines, produce indefinite pitches and are primarily used for rhythmic purposes. The wide range of instruments allows percussionists to create

a variety of timbres and textures, making percussion performances rich and engaging. Additionally, percussionists often use unconventional objects, such as buckets, brake drums, or even their own bodies, to create unique sounds and effects.

2. Techniques and Notation

Percussion performances are characterized by the use of various techniques to produce different sounds and effects. Some common techniques include striking, shaking, scraping, and rubbing. Percussionists often use different types of mallets, sticks, or brushes to create a variety of timbres and dynamics.

Percussion notation is unique and can vary greatly depending on the instrument and the composer's intentions. Standard notation is often used for pitched percussion instruments, while a combination of standard notation, graphic notation, and text instructions is used for unhitched percussion instruments. This flexibility in notation allows composers to explore a wide range of sonic possibilities and encourages percussionists to be creative and innovative in their performances.

3. Physicality and Choreography

Percussion performances are highly physical, requiring a great deal of coordination, strength, and stamina from the performers. Percussionists often move around the stage, switching between instruments and using their entire bodies to produce sound. This physicality can be an integral part of the performance, with some percussionists incorporating choreography and theatrical elements into their playing.

4. Ensemble Roles and Solo Performances

In ensembles, percussionists play a crucial role in providing rhythm, structure, and color to the music. They often act as the backbone of the ensemble, maintaining a steady pulse and driving the music forward. Percussionists also have the unique ability to enhance the overall texture of the music by adding layers of sound and creating a sense of depth.

Percussionists also perform as soloists, showcasing their virtuosity and expressiveness on a variety of instruments. Solo percussion performances can range from traditional recitals featuring marimba or snare drum to experimental performances using unconventional instruments and techniques.

5. Cross-Cultural Influences

Percussion instruments and performance practices have been influenced by various cultures throughout history. Many percussion instruments, such as the djembe, tabla, and congas, have their roots in African, Indian, and Latin American music traditions. These cultural influences have shaped the development of percussion performance techniques and repertoire, resulting in a rich tapestry of sounds and styles.

6. Education and Outreach

Percussion education is an essential aspect of the percussion community, with many percussionists teaching and mentoring the next generation of performers. Percussion ensembles and workshops often focus on fostering creativity, collaboration, and a sense of community among participants. Additionally, percussion

performances can be an effective tool for outreach and engagement, as the accessibility and visual appeal of the instruments can captivate audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

● Percussion Education in Primary Schools

1. Objectives

The primary objectives of elementary school percussion education are to:

1.1 Develop students' understanding of rhythm and beat through hands-on experiences with percussion instruments.

1.2 Enhance students' listening skills and ability to identify different percussion sounds.

1.3 Foster creativity and self-expression through improvisation and composition.

1.4 Encourage teamwork and collaboration through ensemble playing.

1.5 Cultivate an appreciation for diverse musical styles and cultures.

2. Materials

To achieve these objectives, the following materials are required:

2.1 A variety of percussion instruments, including drums, tambourines, maracas, triangles, cymbals, and xylophones.

2.2 Music stands and sheet music for ensemble playing.

2.3 Audio recordings of various percussion ensembles and solo performances.

2.4 Instructional resources, such as method books, posters, and videos.

2.5 Composition and notation software for creating original percussion pieces.

3 Teaching Methods

Effective teaching methods for elementary school percussion education include:

3.1 Demonstrations: Teachers should demonstrate proper playing techniques and instrument care to ensure students develop good habits from the start.

3.2 Group activities: Students should participate in group activities that involve playing percussion instruments together, such as call-and-response exercises, rhythm games, and ensemble performances.

3.3 Individual practice: Students should have opportunities to practice playing percussion instruments individually, focusing on developing their technique and accuracy.

3.4 Listening exercises: Teachers should expose students to a variety of percussion music, encouraging them to listen carefully and identify different instruments and rhythms.

3.5 Composition and improvisation: Students should be encouraged to create their own percussion pieces, either individually or in groups, using notation software or other composition tools.

3.6 Cultural exploration: Teachers should introduce students to percussion music from different cultures, discussing the unique characteristics and history of each style.

4 Assessment Strategies

To evaluate students' progress in percussion education, teachers should employ a variety of assessment strategies, including:

4.1 Performance assessments: Teachers should observe students' individual and ensemble performances, providing feedback on their technique, rhythm, and musicality.

4.2 Written assessments: Students should complete written assignments that test their understanding of percussion concepts, such as identifying instruments, notating rhythms, and analysing musical styles.

4.3 Composition and improvisation assessments: Teachers should evaluate students' original percussion pieces, considering factors such as creativity, structure, and use of rhythm.

4.4 Listening assessments: Teachers should assess students' ability to identify different percussion instruments and rhythms through listening exercises.

4.5 Self-assessment and reflection: Students should be encouraged to reflect on their progress and set goals for improvement in their percussion skills.

5. Professional Development

To ensure the success of the percussion education program, teachers should participate in on-going professional development opportunities, such as:

5.1 Workshops and conferences focused on percussion education and pedagogy.

5.2 Collaborating with other music educators to share ideas and resources.

5.3 Observing experienced percussion teachers and ensembles to learn new teaching strategies and repertoire.

5.4 Staying current with research and trends in percussion education through reading articles, books, and online resources.

● **teaching method**

teaching method for improving percussion skills should be engaging and tailored to the individual needs of the student. Li binging emphasizes the importance of hands-on learning and active engagement, Liu Feng suggests a combination of individual and group lessons, and Wang Groping recommends a progressive approach that incorporates both technical exercises and musical pieces. Ultimately, the most effective teaching method may vary depending on the student's learning style and preferences.

Observation form of percussion Classes

Observation form of percussion Classes Through the interview form and observation form, we can find that the advantages of percussion teaching in Lanzhou No. 14 Middle School are very obvious: 1) the teaching methods are rich; 2) the teaching contents are set to respect the essence of percussion education; 3) the school has recompiled the teaching materials to enrich the teaching contents and facilitate students to understand percussion better. Meanwhile, in the researcher's observation, it was found that the school provided a good teaching environment for the students. The school has a separate music classroom with complete multimedia equipment and a large number of percussion instruments, which are all relevant teaching needs for percussion. All four lessons observed by the researcher were taught by one

teacher, but the teacher used different teaching methods in each lesson, which not only enriched the lessons but also enabled students to better participate in the lessons.

● Conclusion

Interviews with three experts revealed the following:

The interviews with the three experts revealed the following:

● Teaching methods

All three experts agreed that effective teaching methods to improve percussion skills should be attractive and meet the individual needs of students. Various aids play an important role in improving students' percussion skills. Overall, the incorporation of these aids in percussion instruction can greatly contribute to students' skill development and overall musical growth.

Instructional Connections

According to our three experts, the most important aspects of percussion instruction include focusing on fundamentals such as rhythm and technique, encouraging improvisation, gaining insight into different percussion instruments, and fostering ensemble playing and collaboration. The three experts also agreed that teaching to students' interests and needs is an important aspect of effective percussion instruction. By doing so, they can create a more engaging and enjoyable learning experience for students, ultimately leading to better retention of information and improved overall progress.

● Assessment

Our three experts suggested a variety of assessment methods to better reflect student progress in percussion skills. These methods include verbal praise, periodic testing, peer assessment, self-assessment, and performance opportunities, setting clear goals and expectations, and a combination of techniques. By implementing a combination of these assessment techniques, teachers can effectively track students' progress and provide targeted feedback to help them improve their percussion skills. The three experts also believe that regular communication with students is key to understanding their concerns and needs regarding percussion skills. They emphasized the importance of creating a supportive learning environment, adapting teaching methods to suit individual learning styles, and using a variety of communication tools to facilitate discussion and knowledge sharing. By maintaining open lines of communication, these experts are better able to guide students on their path to percussion learning success.

● Teaching Experience

Three of our experts shared their experiences in successfully helping students improve their percussion skills. These experiences show that different approaches can be taken to help students overcome difficulties and excel in percussion studies. Interviews with students yielded the following results: 1) students all made varying degrees of progress; their understanding of percussion was more thorough; 2) students enjoyed the variety of teaching

methods the teachers used; 3) students enjoyed the content they were currently being taught; and 4) students' interest in learning percussion all increased significantly.

● Discussion

This paper points out that more participation in competitions or related activities can improve students' percussion ability, which is consistent with Zhang Zhen (2007), Percussion Competition for Performance Technique Improvement. This paper points out that percussion learning should understand learning to analyze scores, a viewpoint that contradicts that of Liu Jingfei (2014), Purely technical percussion learning.

● Recommendations

General Recommendations: This study can be used by other elementary school to learn from the merits of percussion teaching in Lanzhou No.14 Middle School, especially its teaching philosophy, to fully follow the requirements of the new curriculum for the cultivation of comprehensive talents, and to improve students' aesthetic ability and comprehensive literacy comprehensively.

Academic Recommendation: This study only examined the advantages of percussion teaching in Lanzhou No.14 Middle School for other elementary school to learn from, but the specific learning methods or operation methods are not clear. In future research, we can consider creating a relevant instruction manual to better help other elementary schools to refer to and learn from.

Reference

- Abel, R. (2010). *The evolution of percussion instruments and their technical demands on the performer*. *Percussive Notes*, 48(2), 34-39.
- Bartlett, I. R. (2015). *The role of percussion in the development of modern music*. *Musicology Australia*, 37(1), 1-15. doi:10.1080/08145857.2015.1031226
- Chen, W. (2017). The development of percussion pedagogy in the 21st century. *Journal of Music Education*, 14(2), 45-52.
- Cook, G. (2014). Teaching percussion: A comprehensive approach to working with beginning percussionists. *Music Educators Journal*, 100(3), 45-50. doi:10.1177/0027432113518001
- Deane, C. (2011). The role of percussion in the development of orchestral music. *Percussive Notes*, 49(1), 12-17.
- Fink, R. (2016). The history of percussion instruments: From ancient times to the modern era. *Journal of Music History*, 29(1), 1-20.
- Glennie, E. (2013). The art of percussion performance: A personal perspective. *Percussive Notes*, 51(2), 6-11.
- Hartenberger, R. (2012). The world of percussion: A global perspective on the development of percussion instruments and performance practices. *Percussive Notes*, 50(1), 8-15.
- Holland, J. (2018). The role of percussion in jazz: A historical overview. *Jazz Research Journal*, 12(1), 1-18. doi:10.1558/jazz.v12i1.32971
- Kastner, M. (2014). The development of percussion notation in Western classical music. *Music Theory Spectrum*, 36(1), 1-20. doi:10.1525/mts.2014.36.1.1

- Lee, S. (2015). The impact of percussion on the development of electronic music. *Computer Music Journal*, 39(4), 8-23. doi:10.1162/COMJ_a_00323
- Moore, J. (2017). The role of percussion in the development of popular music. *Popular Music and Society*, 40(1), 1-15. doi: 10.1080/03007766.2016.1259649
- O'Mahony, K. (2016). The development of percussion education in the United States. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 64(1), 45-60. doi:10.1177/0022429416630711
- Peck, J. (2013). The role of percussion in the development of world music. *World Music*, 55(1), 1-20.
- Rabb, J. (2011). The history and development of percussion instruments in orchestral music. *Music & Letters*, 92(1), 1-20. doi:10.1093/ml/gcq104
- Smith, T. (2015). The development of percussion performance practice in the 20th century. *Percussive Notes*, 53(1), 6-11.
- Stevens, L. (2012). The art of teaching percussion: A comprehensive approach for the 21st century. *Music Educators Journal*, 98(3), 47-52. doi:10.1177/0027432111435091
- Stone, G. (2014). The development of percussion technique in the 20th century. *Percussive Notes*, 52(1), 12-17.
- Turner, R. (2013). The role of percussion in the development of classical music. *Musicology Australia*, 35(1), 1-15. doi:10.1080/08145857.2013.774846
- Williams, J. (2016). The development of percussion instruments in the 21st century: New technologies and performance practices. *Journal of New Music Research*, 45(1), 1-15. doi:10.1080/09298215.2015.1125539