

# Cooperative Learning: Teaching Strategy to Improve Music Learning

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## Abstract:

In music learning, different approaches have been tried to make music more meaningful and practical for students. In implementing these methods, several strategies are employed, such as mastering theoretical learning, performance-based learning, contract learning, discovery learning, cooperative learning, stage practice, daily clocking, and the implementation of compulsory and elective courses with music at the core. Considering that high vocational students are students with relatively low grades, it is time to find ways to better suit their studies and improve their grades and skills. Reform must be put into practice and should be based on human innovation, not on paper. The humanistic view emphasizes that teachers are decision makers and students have the ability to understand what they have learned. In today's all-round implementation of quality education, it is advocated that there are no students who do not learn well, only teachers who do not know how to do.

In the outline of teaching reform strategy in the new period, different teaching methods are adopted to train students' thinking and reasoning ability and improve students' ability to learn music. An important attempt will be made to improve students' music learning by developing teaching methods. On the other hand, whether the intervention through teamwork can improve the effect of music learning. "Tell me and I'll forget, show me and I'll remember, engage me and I'll learn," is the phrase that describes the experience of collaborating and engaging in learning. Two important aspects of cooperative learning are emphasized: First, learners must actively participate in the teaching process. Second, the experience gained from deep engagement provides a better understanding of the complex processes and concepts associated with learning. Improve students' problem-solving skills, develop communication and reasoning skills, increase awareness of the value of thinking and knowledge, and develop students' ability to apply knowledge in new situations. Music lessons can continue to be competitive and individual learning, while team learning is integrated into teaching and constantly innovated to help students learn faster and achieve better results.

**Keywords:** Cooperative learning, Vocational colleges, Music teaching, Strategy research.

Team learning has been developed in foreign countries for decades. Encouraging students to construct meaning independently, guiding students to complete learning tasks independently, cooperative learning, and innovative learning have gradually become the consensus of European and American primary and secondary school teachers. Cooperative Learning, an International Outlook by Professor Slavin, an educational psychologist from Johns Hopkins University in the United States, and Cooperative Learning Theory by Professor Saran, a famous educational psychologist from Tel Aviv University in Israel, discuss in detail the basic methods of cooperative learning and the research on academic performance, inter-group

relations, and integration. The educator Dewey advocated the teaching method of "learning by doing", and cooperative learning became a very important part of his teaching method. The researcher Dodge and others put forward the theory of cooperation and competition, which provided the theoretical basis for cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is proposed by Johnson brothers and Professor Slavin. Johnson brothers conducted cooperative learning teaching training at the University of Minnesota, founded the "Co-learning Center", and constructed the theoretical model and specific teaching strategies and procedures of cooperative learning. Professor Slavin studied cooperative group learning methods such as group play contests, group grading, group facilitation, and cooperative literacy integration. Countries do not agree on the specific form and name of cooperative learning. For example, European and American countries are called "cooperative learning", and the former Soviet Union is called "cooperative education". Cooperative learning is a creative teaching theory and strategy widely used in many countries in the world. Because of its remarkable results, it is considered to be the most important and successful teaching reform in recent years. In general, teamwork learning is a kind of teaching activity that takes the cooperative learning group as the basic form, systematically utilizes the interaction between dynamic factors in teaching, promotes students' learning, and takes team performance as the evaluation standard to achieve teaching goals together. This is a new teaching theory and strategy, which was first produced in the United States in the 1970s. From the 1980s to the early 1990s, cooperative learning research and experimental research results also appeared in our country, and the effect is good.

With the gradual maturity of cooperative learning theory, the Outline of Basic Education Curriculum Reform (Trial) issued by the Ministry of Education in 2001 pointed out that curriculum experiments "advocate students' active participation, willingness to explore, diligence, and cultivate students' ability to collect and process information, acquire new knowledge, analyze and solve problems, and communicate and cooperate". In our country, the traditional teaching mode still dominates the music course in higher vocational colleges. Teaching activities pay too much attention to acceptance and mastery, but neglect discovery and exploration. Acceptance learning has become the main learning method for many students, which is dissimilar to "comprehensive enrichment", "mechanical training" and "rote learning". I don't know much about what I have learned, and I have lost interest, which is not conducive to the formation of knowledge construction and innovative spirit, and it is difficult to meet the requirements of lifelong learning ability of members of society in the era of knowledge economy. In particular, middle school students, such as music and other music foundation is relatively weak, but the lack of confidence in music class, dare not show it, the teacher's questions or actual activities at a loss. They do not understand music theory, and their understanding of music is relatively simple. They usually go on to sing pop songs. They are passive about how to learn music deeply and need educators to think about it. If we had followed the traditional "spoon-fed" teaching method, the students would have fallen asleep. Therefore, we put forward: "Advocating students' independent, cooperative and exploratory learning mode is conducive to comprehensively improving students' literacy of independent activities that they are interested in." It is an important way to cultivate students' active exploration, unity and cooperation spirit and innovation.

Various cooperative learning works published in China have summarized the historical origin of the development of cooperative learning. More representative are: Wang Tan "Introduction to Cooperative learning" "Principles and strategies of cooperative learning". Since the early 1990s, China began to introduce group activities in classroom teaching, which opened the prelude of cooperative learning

practice and research. The Department of Education of Hangzhou University in Zhejiang Province has carried out the cooperative learning group teaching experiment, and the Shandong Institute of Education Science has also carried out the cooperative teaching research and experiment, as well as the subjective education experiment about the group cooperative learning, which has constantly promoted the development process of cooperative learning in our country. Since the start of the basic education reform in 2001, the research of cooperative learning in our country has become more and more obvious year by year. From the perspective of cooperative research field, empirical research is obviously more than theoretical research. The main subjects of study are English, mathematics and Chinese; The research objects are mainly primary and middle school students; This study focuses on the application of cooperative learning strategies in classroom teaching. Through the statistics and analysis of Xie Juan and Zhao Ying's doctoral dissertations in recent years, it is found that there is an imbalance between practical research and theoretical research in cooperative learning. Lack of theoretical speculation; It is suggested that the research of cooperative learning must be combined with educational theorists and teachers, so that practical research and theoretical research complement each other, and constantly deepen the theory of cooperative learning.

The Decision of The State Council on the Reform and Development of Basic Education clearly mentions cooperative learning: "Encourage cooperative learning, promote mutual exchange and common development of students, and promote the common growth of teachers and students." According to the Outline of Basic Education Curriculum Reform (Trial) issued by the Ministry of Education in 2001, curriculum experiments "advocate students' active participation, willingness to explore, diligence, and cultivate students' ability to collect and process information, acquire new knowledge, analyze and solve problems, and communicate and cooperate". It is worth noting that cooperative learning has been developed and studied abroad for decades. Encouraging students to construct meaning independently, guiding students to complete learning tasks independently, learning cooperation and innovation have gradually become the consensus of American primary and secondary school teachers. In our country, the traditional teaching mode still occupies the dominant position in the music class of the secondary vocational school. Teaching activities pay too much attention to acceptance and mastery, but neglect discovery and exploration. Acceptance learning has become the main learning method for many students, which is dissimilar to "enrichment", "rote learning" and "rote learning". Many students have been passive and repetitive for too long, know little about what they are learning, and lose interest. This is not conducive to the construction of knowledge and the formation of innovative spirit, and it is difficult to meet the requirements of lifelong learning ability of members of society in the era of knowledge economy. To cultivate certain moral accomplishment and artistic quality is an important link for students in higher vocational colleges. "Cooperative learning" can effectively improve students' classroom initiative and enthusiasm, and play a certain role in music teaching. In particular, middle school students, such as music and other music foundation is relatively weak, but the lack of confidence in music class, dare not show it, the teacher's questions or actual activities at a loss. They do not understand music theory, and their understanding of music is relatively simple. They usually go on to sing pop songs. They are passive about how to learn music deeply and need educators to think about it. If we had followed the traditional "spoon-fed" teaching method, the students would have fallen asleep. Therefore, in the results of our reference and research, we propose that: "Advocating students' independent, cooperative and exploratory learning style is conducive to comprehensively improving students' literacy of independent activities that they are

interested in." It is an important way to cultivate students' active exploration, unity and cooperation spirit and innovation. And "team learning" is particularly important and effective in the music teaching mode of secondary vocational schools. Many researchers base their field of study on cooperative learning theory. For example, Yin Xinrong, master of Education in Music Department of Shandong Normal University in 2004, wrote his graduation thesis "Theory and Practice of Music Appreciation Dialogue Teaching". He studied the way of dialogue teaching in music appreciation with the concept of cooperative learning, and put forward the significance of paying attention to interactive communication and cooperative exploration in teacher-student dialogue and student-student dialogue. Secondly, Zhao Xiuzhi and Wang Shengyao, in their book *Some Changes of Teachers in normal Universities under the Background of New Curriculum*, use the concept of cooperative learning to discuss the transformation of teachers' role from "lone ranger" to "collaborator", and the establishment of cooperative relations between teachers and students and between teachers and teachers. Finally, based on the theoretical basis of cooperative learning, this paper studies the interactive teaching mode of music classroom in preschool education in normal universities in Wu's in-service master's thesis. Cooperative learning theory goes deep into all aspects, levels and links of music education, and lays a solid theoretical foundation for promoting the development of music education.

## **1. The importance of teamwork learning in music education**

**1.1** Teamwork learning allows students to benefit because it will employ teaching strategies that will produce dynamic and orderly learning. Improve the interpersonal relationship between students and eliminate the negative attitude towards music learning. As the future members of society, students must have the subjectivity of social human beings, which is not free from the society. It must integrate individuals into the community and consciously contribute to society. It is beneficial to cultivate students' autonomy and independence. A person with conscious initiative, autonomy and independence is an open talent who has his own unique thinking and opinions on things, dares to express his own views, and has social communication ability. It is beneficial to provide students with more exercise opportunities and promote their all-round development. It can be used as a springboard for more innovative research into the effectiveness of teamwork learning methods, such as introducing folk music ensembles into the classroom, holding choral competitions in established classes, etc.

Music, as part of the arts, is supposed to be on the same level as other disciplines, but it is not treated that way. (Humanist.com download June 2023) The Backstreet Boys states that "practicing music enhances teamwork, communication skills, self-discipline, and creativity" (why music?). These qualities are highly sought after in the workplace. For example, according to Lichtenberg, Woock, and Wright (*Partnership for Arts Education 5*), creativity is "one of the five most important skills for success in the workplace." Participation in music can improve students' creativity. According to Haram in 2013, in reality, enrolling students in music classes would not adversely affect their academic performance, and students would be able to reap all the benefits of a music education.

**1.2.** Teachers should use cooperative learning methods to achieve teaching goals. Active learning requires intellectual stimulation and challenge. These are best provided to peers through discussion of the teaching content. Music is an art discipline. Sharing and problem solving can only be fun for students if they are able to share their achievements or test results. Collaborative learning improves grades more than individual learning. 3 It promotes initiative, discovery and the development of higher reasoning and

metacognitive thinking. Students are guided to experiment and take risks to build their confidence. 5 Students tend to like their group members. Positive peer relationships lead to higher levels of self-esteem and self-sufficiency. According to 2019 Kelly, the practice of collaborative learning in the classroom often provides students with their first experience practicing most life skills. Teachers should consciously create opportunities for students to cooperate with each other, share responsibilities, solve problems and control conflicts. These opportunities can be learned together, which is different from individualistic or traditional students learning independently and sometimes even against each other. Cooperative learning activities require students to work together in small groups to complete a project or activity, working as a team to help each other succeed. In his book *Team Learning for Students: A Practical Guide to Cooperative Learning*, author and researcher Robert Slavin reviewed 67 studies on cooperative learning. He found that, overall, 61 percent of co-op classes achieved significantly higher test scores than traditional classes. You may wonder what benefits students get from collaborative learning. The answer is a lot! Of course, cooperative learning teaches many social and emotional skills, but it also gives students the opportunity to learn from each other. Studies have shown that peer learning, in which students explain concepts and ideas to each other, can greatly improve comprehension. In short, cooperative learning produces important experiences that no other learning structure can. The following skills developed through regular and effective collaborative learning are just a few of many.

## **2. The most widely used cooperative learning methods are:**

**2.1. Student Team - Achievement Group (STAD)** This method was invented by Robert Sweeney in 1980. In this technique, the teacher first introduces a lesson. Students then break into groups of four or five and work to master a set of worksheets for the lesson. Students test the material individually. A student's grade for their team contribution is based on how much they have improved over the student's past grade point average.

**2.2. Team Game Tournament (TGT).** This method was proposed by De Vries and Slavin in 1978. TGT's program is the same as STAD's, but instead of taking quizzes, students play academic games with other students with similar grades in their class. Team scores are based on individual progress.

**2.3. Puzzle Two.** This approach is just an improvement on Jigsaw, which Slavin developed in 1980. It aims to combine this approach with other student team learning methods. The course uses individual and team test scores.

**2.4. Study together.** This approach is the closest to pure collaboration. It was designed by David and Roger Johnson in 1975. After the teacher finishes a lecture, the students break into groups to complete a worksheet. These groups are praised and recognized for their work.

**2.5. Group study.** This method was developed by Yale University and Shlono Sharan in 1976. This is one of the most complex of cooperative learning methods, and it requires students to take greater responsibility in deciding what they will learn, how they will organize themselves to master the material, and how they will communicate what they have learned with others.

**3.** All of these approaches have four positive characteristics:

**3.1.** Students need to cooperate to prevent one student from doing most of the work for other students.

**3.2.** Despite the cooperative nature of the group, each student must study to improve his or her own score and the team's score.

**3.3.** Even low achievers who contribute little can be recognized because the score is based on an individual's improvement in past performance, no matter how small.

**3.4.** Students are motivated to collaborate because they get more than just a grade on a piece of paper, but public recognition from the teacher and the whole class. In the past, despite efforts to teach effectively, a surprising number of students received low marks in music courses. A common response to this question is the need to consider a teaching method that will help students improve their musical skills. After comparing various methods, the researchers came up with the study based on their own experience in music teaching. Cooperative learning is regarded as an effective way to improve students' music learning.

**3.5.** Work together. Teamwork is an effective teaching method that involves learning teams of different ability levels that need to work together to solve a problem, complete various learning tasks or achieve a common goal. The aim is that by having students study and work together rather than competing, peer norms will favor rather than oppose high achievers. The aim of the team approach is to reduce isolation and hostility among students. Students in a team no longer compete, cooperate with each other and help each other, thus improving students' ability to cooperate and achieve common goals. Teams need to compete and evaluate each other, and also need to evaluate good teams in a timely manner. This evaluation is placed in highly competitive classes to increase and stimulate team motivation and promote collective progress as a whole.

#### **4.** the basic principles of cooperative learning

The study is based on the concept that most teachers focus on ways they think they can accomplish tasks that help students learn. They recognize the need to hold students accountable in the learning process and prepare them for self-directed lifelong learning. For many underperforming students, no amount of effort can get them to the top. Most of them think their chances of success are so small that they easily give up studying or disrupt classroom activities. High achievers may be inclined to do less than their best, even if they know they're almost at their peak. In a competitive classroom, this attitude of low achievers versus high achievers is a major problem. Team learning involves six to eight people working together. The main idea is for students to help each other and make progress together. Popular social psychology principles hold that people accomplish more by working together toward a common goal than by working alone. Teamwork learning is best used for music learning, such as problem solving, curriculum development, enrichment projects, agent work, homework exercises, professional presentations, and tests. The teamwork approach leads to efficient classes and good grades for the following reasons:

**4.1.** Discovery Learning Principle: Students learn best by doing, not just hearing and reading a concept. The active participation of students is the best way to learn music concepts and skills. But active learning

requires intellectual stimulation and challenge. These are best provided in discussions with colleagues. Learning is reinforced in a team because it becomes a hands-on experience. Students don't just sit and listen, but do what is meaningful to them and talk to each other in a language they understand. Through practical participation in collective efforts, their understanding of concepts, principles, rules and generalizations is strengthened.

**4.2.** The construction principle of knowledge collaboration: Music is an artistic discipline. According to Piaget, problem-solving becomes more challenging and fun only when students are able to share their answers or check their results against the answers of others. In addition, explaining a strategy for solving a particular problem to a peer often gives the interpreter more clarity and may even give him a deeper understanding of the structure of the problem. Group discussions improve students' analytical skills by encouraging higher level thinking in cognitive areas. Metacognitive thinking: In team learning, students can learn to look for patterns, interpret, apply patterns, and come to conclusions more quickly. This program fosters the development of active discovery and advanced reasoning, and instructs students to experiment and take risks in order to be confident in their musical abilities. Partnership Principle: Students in study groups tend to like their group members. Positive peer relationships lead to higher levels of self-esteem, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency. The principle of interaction: A person learns about himself by interacting with others. When a person gets feedback from others, he will learn more about himself. A person can learn a lot about who he is by what he can or can't do and, by the way, how he chooses to communicate and how others perceive him.

In general, cooperative learning improves students' enthusiasm for learning and determination to succeed. This is because every learning activity consists of five essential elements, 1) actively interdependent: students must feel that they are responsible for both their own learning and the learning of others in the group. 2) Face-to-face interaction: Students must have the opportunity to explain to each other what they are learning and help each other understand and complete assigned tasks. 3) Individual Responsibilities - Each student must demonstrate mastery of the assigned job. 4) Social skills: Each student must communicate effectively, lead group work, build and maintain trust among group members, and constructively eliminate conflict within the group. 5) Organizational processes: Teams must stop periodically to assess how they are doing and how they can improve their performance.

Two classes of students took part in the study. Music classes are called experimental classes and use a cooperative learning approach to teach music. Music classes are called control classes and use traditional teaching methods. Both classes are taught by the same teacher. Before the experiment, both groups of students received a pre-test experiment. After the 13-week experimental period, both groups underwent a post-test. According to the post-test results, the performance of the two groups of students in understanding knowledge skills, using knowledge skills, music performance skills and music analysis skills is compared, so as to determine the effectiveness of cooperative learning methods.

## 5. Specific theoretical framework of cooperative learning

**5.1.** Target guidance: "Three improvements" : focus on students' comprehensive, whole-process and all-round development. "Three modernizations" : turning information into knowledge, knowledge into wisdom, and wisdom into virtue.

**5.2.** Independent learning: "Five liberations" : liberating students' hands and feet, liberating students' mouth, liberating students' thinking, liberating students' classroom, and liberating students' nature. "Five hands off" : textbooks are free for students to read, new knowledge is free for students to explore, difficult points are free for students to discuss, questions are free for students to answer, and classes are free for students to evaluate.

**5.3.** Cooperative exploration: "three movements" : body movement, heart movement and spirit movement. "Three probes" : deskmates probe each other, groups probe each other, and groups probe each other.

**5.4.** Training feedback: "three not three" : timely feedback, reflection, and implementation. No form, no ineffective teaching, no rhythm. "Three arrangements and three no arrangements" : assignment to develop students' thinking, assignment to guide students to explore, assignment to transfer and expand, and assignment to improve students' ability. Do not assign repetitive homework, do not assign punitive homework, do not assign homework beyond the reasonable limits of students. Figure 1 illustrates the research paradigm for this study

## **6.** Research measures of cooperative learning

**6.1.** Group cooperative learning: Since the number of students in the experimental class is 50, the grouping should take into account the convenience of management teaching and not too many groups, and each group of students should not be too small. Therefore, in addition to course representatives and study commissars, six groups of eight were used. First, the students in the experimental class were tested on their musical knowledge and skills. Based on the test results, they are given four grades (excellent, good, pass or fail). Two people from each grade can be randomly selected to form a team of eight. There are 8 active class cadres and student cadres assigned to each group. Finally, it was established that each group leader should have group leader communication on a weekly basis. The communication method could be system rotation or system selection, so as to ensure that each group member could have the opportunity to be the group leader as much as possible.

**6.2.** Use group cooperative learning strategies in school education and teaching to create efficient classrooms and standardize classroom teaching design: "seven links" - "guide" (i.e., target guidance), "learn" (i.e., independent learning), "probe" (i.e., cooperative exploration), "talk" (i.e., careful point pulling), "practice" (i.e., training feedback), "back" (i.e., return to class inspection), and "supplement" to guide underachiever. "Seven links" is the basic link of classroom teaching mode. The specific operation process of teachers who like music also depends on the characteristics of the subject and the specific situation of each class. It may not be fully represented in every class, but it can be applied flexibly as needed.

**6.3.** Carry out group cooperative learning strategy seminars, build a new mode of education and teaching, create a democratic and civilized campus culture and environment, set up specialized agencies, formulate various regulations and standards for group cooperative learning, establish various bands and associations, and cultivate new musical innovative talents.

"Teamwork learning" can effectively improve students' classroom initiative and enthusiasm, and play a certain role in music teaching. To cultivate certain moral accomplishment and artistic quality is an



important link for students in higher vocational colleges. The curriculum experiment "advocates students' active participation, willingness to explore and diligence in doing things, and cultivates students' ability to collect and process information, acquire new knowledge, analyze and solve problems, communicate and collaborate" can improve students' performance and ability.

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