

# The Path of Music Psychodrama Promoting Students' Social Emotional Learning

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**Abstract:** Musical psychodrama is an innovative artistic way that combines music, drama, and psychology, and plays an outstanding role in students' social and emotional learning. After analyzing its function, this paper makes students understand the outstanding significance of music and psychological drama in promoting their social emotional learning, and then makes clear their learning mechanism. In view of the relevant paths, from basics to advancing with the times, and then to extending innovation, a comprehensive learning method is formed to help students grow better and provide support for the development of students' mental health and social emotional ability.

**Keywords:** Music psychodrama; Students; Social emotional learning; Path

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## 1. Introduction

Students' mental health has always been an important part of the school's work, with the rapid development of society and the increasingly fierce competition. Students' social emotional learning is also very important, which is directly related to the process that students will gradually master relevant social emotional knowledge, skills, and attitudes through experience, observation, and reflection in the process of social communication in the future, and then form good qualities. Musical psychodrama was initiated by Joseph Joe Moreno, a professor at the University of Mali in the United States, in the mid-20th century. Its main way is the organic integration of creative music therapy and psychodrama, and the core and function concept of musical psychodrama is obtained from the history of improvisational music therapy and drama therapy, and then this way is carried out in school education and teaching to help students develop psychologically in a positive and healthy direction.

## 2. The significance of music psychological drama in promoting students' social and emotional learning

The significance of music psychological drama in promoting students' social emotional learning covers

the following aspects. First, it improves students' social emotional cognitive ability, in which students can experience different emotional States and behavioral reactions in virtual social situations through role-playing and scenario simulation <sup>[1]</sup>. For example, in music psychological drama, students observe by playing different roles, and improve their understanding of others' emotional state and behavioral motivation. Secondly, the ability to express social emotions refers to the ability of individuals to convey their needs and emotions through language, expression, and action in the process of social interaction. Musical psychodrama can provide students with richer emotional expressions through the organic integration of music, drama, and psychology. Students can express their emotional needs by means of music, dance, and dialogue. For example, in musical psychological drama, students play the role of facing emotional difficulties to solve their emotional problems and psychological troubles, and learn how to adjust their psychological state. The most important thing is that musical psychological drama, as an art form that combines music, drama, and psychology, has the characteristics of ideological and political education, stimulates students' patriotic feelings and national pride by means of relevant methods, and cultivates students' social responsibility <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **3. The mechanism of music psychological drama promoting students' social and emotional learning**

As far as musical psychodrama is concerned, it is centered on free expression, and the most important significance is to awaken students' creativity by means of improvisation. This art form, which combines music, drama, and psychology, can strengthen students' cognitive understanding of emotion and improve students' emotional expression ability with a series of related structured activities.

First of all, music can realize the leap between culture and time and space. As a universal way to connect emotions, it is not a simple background in musical psychological drama, but the core of emotional transmission. Music forms an accurate connection with the inner feelings of the characters through the ups and downs of melody, the changes of rhythm, the warmth and coldness of timbre, thus building a chain between the emotions of the musical characters and students' own emotions. Such resonance breaks down the barriers of students' emotional expression, allowing them to immerse themselves in the feelings of music, which can not only deeply empathize with the emotions of the characters, but also, conversely, connect with their own emotions, thus achieving the deepening of emotional cognition. For example, the school launched related music psychological drama activities around the test anxiety and other content that students are concerned about together <sup>[3]</sup>. Instructors guide students to create music around the feelings of insomnia and loss after the exam, caused by anxiety before the exam. Some students can express their anxiety by playing rapid and intermittent notes on the piano, some students can use a guitar to sweep strings to simulate the rhythm of an accelerated heartbeat, and some students can express their grievances after the exam by humming a melody without words. Then ask the students to share the exam scenes they created after hearing this melody according to the related music they created. Under the traction of many kinds of music, students can actively express their hidden emotions, realize that exam anxiety is a common feeling, and sort out the specific manifestations and triggers of their own anxiety.

Secondly, role-playing is the core of musical psychological drama. Its essence is to build a safe virtual social space for students through a psychological projection mechanism. When students play roles, they will unconsciously project their emotional needs into the whole role-playing mode. In the process of becoming others, they will jump out of the limitations of self-cognition and experience emotional reactions and coping

styles in different positions. Such virtual situational events avoid possible pressure conflicts in real society, and enable students to accumulate emotional experience through trial and error. For example, the school sets up related music psychological dramas around the contradiction of interpersonal relationships in the dormitory. The plot setting is that two students in the dormitory have conflicts because of differences in work and rest, and other roommates do not know what to do in a dilemma. During the performance, students can bring in related conflicts. A student who often stays up late and is reminded by his roommate plays the role of irregular work and rest. When he is accused by his roommate, he suddenly choked up and told everyone that he actually does not want to stay up late, but because of his procrastination, he has no mental state to finish his thesis during the day. Therefore, I have to stay up late to influence others when I catch up with my thesis at night. When I am accused, I am particularly afraid of being isolated and accused by the whole dormitory. The student who plays the roommate who gives advice will reflect and tell others directly whether you can turn off the lights. Can you stop making noises? This kind of language expression will make the other person feel so uncomfortable. He should put himself in the other person's shoes first, ask the reason why he stayed up late, and let the reason for the small friction be discovered through reasonable communication. Both sides understand the emotional needs behind these behaviors from different perspectives, and will use tolerance and communication to replace conflicts and frictions in the later period <sup>[4]</sup>.

Then, with the help of scenario simulation, by restoring those real social scenes such as conflict, frustration, and self-expression, students can express their emotional reactions in such an atmosphere and complete an integrated model from experience reflection to adjustment. This model is completely different from pure theoretical preaching. An immersive experience allows students to directly analyze their emotional shortcomings and then try different methods under the guidance of teachers to gradually master the ability to regulate emotions. For example, in order to improve students' self-emotional management ability when they are criticized, the school simulates a scene in which teachers correct mistakes in answering questions in class. At this time, a girl who would cry every day when she heard criticism from others became red-eyed when the scene was just explained to the teacher. The instructor paused the plot and let the girls express their feelings. She felt that she had no face in front of so many people. The questions she answered were thought from her own point of view and answered according to the knowledge points taught by the teacher. Then guide her to try to reinterpret in the way of "listening first and then responding." When the "teacher" pointed out the mistake, she took a deep breath and said, "Teacher, I really didn't think it through. Could you tell me the key points again?" After the performance, she said frankly, "I didn't rush to refute it, so I wouldn't be so excited, and I could really listen to the suggestions." After many situational exercises, the girl has been able to keep calm and communicate actively in the face of criticism in real class.

Finally, the collective nature of the whole musical psychological drama determines that it has social skills. From plot conception, music creation, role assignment, and live interpretation, every link needs close cooperation between different students. Different students are responsible for different divisions of labor, which realizes the transmission of emotions in this process and can help students improve their communication and teamwork skills. For example, in the music psychodrama activity centered on friendship, a group of eight people is required to complete the whole script creation and live performance. During the whole group cooperation process, an introverted boy is found to be doing the work assigned to him silently, but he does not actively express any opinions. Faced with these situations, the team leader took the initiative to find and ask the student to see if he brought a harmonica every day and could be responsible for assisting with the background music. The boy nodded in agreement <sup>[5]</sup>. During the rehearsal, when the plot advanced to the scene of "friends

quarreling,” the boy suddenly stopped playing and said, “Would it be better to use a low tone here, just like the feeling of tightness in my heart?” In the scene of “friends make up,” he added a light melody. The group members recognized his ideas and invited him to join a harmonica solo at the end of the performance. After the activity, the boy said, “I don’t need to say anything, but I can help everyone.” Other team members also said, “Listening to his music seems to help better understand the mood in the plot.” Teamwork makes introverted students find the value of self-expression, and also makes all members deepen their emotional connection through cooperation.

## **4. The path of music psychological drama to promote students’ social and emotional learning**

### **4.1. Based on the foundation: Building a multi-level curriculum system with musical instruments as the core**

In order to promote students’ social and emotional learning to achieve further development and breakthroughs, the first thing to do is to transform its educational value into a teaching effect. In this process, we can build a complete curriculum system from theory to practice to evaluation. On the premise of sticking to musical instruments as the core of emotional expression and meeting the cognitive needs of different students, the course needs to break the state of separation between theory and practice. Only in this way can students be helped to deepen their emotions with musical instruments in the process of mastering those basic principles. Then use effective evaluation to further enrich your emotions and form a complete emotional growth model.

Schools jointly develop stepped courses-basic courses focus on “expressing emotions with simple musical instruments” and offer basic courses such as “sand hammer and happiness” and “tambourine and tension,” so that students can express “happy running” and “waiting for parents’ anxiety” with the fast and slow rhythm of sand hammer; The theory module is added to the intermediate course to explain “the relationship between melody and emotion,” and the short play with the theme of “campus trifles” is created by combining portable musical instruments such as guitar and harmonica. In the advanced stage, psychological projection theory is integrated, and rich musical instruments such as piano and electronic organ are used to arrange scripts around complex themes such as “parent-child contradiction” and “pressure to enter higher schools.” In the evaluation process, the mode of “self-evaluation by students + group mutual evaluation + teacher’s comments” is adopted. Self-evaluation focuses on “whether the use of musical instruments conveys true emotions,” and mutual evaluation focuses on “communication effect in cooperation,” while teachers give suggestions based on the accuracy of emotional expression to ensure the effectiveness of the course.

### **4.2. Keeping pace with the times: Relying on information technology to develop diversified scripts**

Information technology provides multiple possibilities for the script innovation of music psychological drama. Schools can use digital tools to break the limitations of scenes and forms, make the script content closer to modern students’ life context, and enrich the dimensions of emotional expression and role-building through audio and video technology, so that students with different personalities and emotional needs can participate in it and enhance the attractiveness and adaptability of the course.

For example, the school has developed a series of scripts with the theme of “social fear in the workplace” by using short video platform materials. Teachers first collect real experiences uploaded by students, such as “nervous interview” and “afraid to ask colleagues,” and make them into scene clips with editing software; Then,

with the help of AI music tools, corresponding background music is generated according to different scenes—interview scenes with urgent electronic sound effects, and soothing piano melodies are switched after successful communication. The script design adopts “multi-ending” mode: in the same scene of “newcomers make mistakes,” three roles are set, namely, “avoiding excuses,” “taking the initiative to apologize,” and “asking for help from colleagues.” Students can choose roles according to their own personality, and they can also adjust the tone of their lines through later dubbing, so as to express their emotions more accurately. Some students gave feedback: “It seems that I am not so afraid to communicate with others after watching the scenes in the video that are very similar to me.”

### **4.3. Extended innovation: Building an all-round exhibition and exchange platform integrating ideological and political education**

The educational value of music psychological drama needs to be extended through exhibition and communication. Schools should build a comprehensive platform of “on-campus exhibition + off-campus linkage” to activate students’ enthusiasm for creation and expression in the form of competitions, seminars, and achievements exhibitions. At the same time, the ideological and political education will be organically integrated into the platform activities, so that students can practice socialist core values in emotional expression and social interaction, and realize the coordinated improvement of social emotional ability and ideological and moral literacy.

For example, the Education Group has set up a series of platforms of “Heartfelt Theater,” the school holds a performance on the theme of “Campus Warmth” every semester, and encourages students to create around such contents as “mutual help and friendship” and “respect for teachers.” For example, a class takes “helping students to integrate” as the core of the script and uses the chorus “You are at the same table” as the emotional sublimation link; In the off-campus joint community, the “Red Memory” music psychological drama competition was held. Students adapted the story of “revolutionary ancestors helping each other to break through,” used trumpets to simulate the assault signal to create an exciting atmosphere, and experienced the spiritual connotation of “unity” and “courage” in role-playing. Inter-school seminars are held every year, and psychological teachers and music teachers are invited to comment on the scripts together. Among them, the script “Honesty Examination Room” created by a senior high school is rated as an excellent ideological and political case because it shows the psychological change of “cheating temptation and sticking to honesty” with the turning point of piano melody, so that students can deepen their emotional cognition and practice their core values in the exhibition.

## **5. Conclusion**

To sum up, the promotion of music psychological drama to students’ social emotional learning is not an isolated effort of a single mechanism, but an organic integration and progressive development of the four dimensions of “awakening musical empathy—role projection practice—deepening situational experience—teamwork empowerment.” Its core educational logic lies in breaking psychological defense with art as the carrier, replacing “blunt preaching and indoctrination” with “flexible expression space,” so that students can realize the cognition, experience, regulation and transmission of emotions in melody and deduction, and finally realize the improvement of social emotional literacy of “knowing emotions, expressing, empathizing, and cooperating.” In this process, we should build a multi-level curriculum system, develop diversified scripts, and set up an all-round communication platform to help students grow better.

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## Disclosure statement

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