

# The Impact of Contextual Teaching Method on Sichuan Folk Song Education and Students' Musical Expressiveness

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**Abstract:** This study explores the application of the contextual teaching method in Sichuan folk song education and its impact on students' musical expressiveness. By incorporating contextual teaching methods in music classes, this research investigates the effectiveness of this approach in enhancing students' understanding of Sichuan folk songs and improving their musical expressiveness and emotional expression. A mixed-method research approach is employed, utilizing classroom observations, questionnaires, interviews, and statistical analysis to assess the practical outcomes of contextual teaching in folk song education.

**Keywords:** Contextual teaching; Sichuan folk songs; Musical expressiveness; Music education

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## 1. Introduction

Music education plays a crucial role in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage. Folk songs, as a key element of regional culture, reflect the historical, social, and emotional contexts of a community, offering rich narratives. In music education, fostering students' emotional connection and expressiveness in performance is essential, enhancing both technical skills and cultural appreciation<sup>[1]</sup>. Traditional methods often focus on technical proficiency, potentially neglecting the cultural and emotional depth of music. To bridge this gap, the contextual teaching method integrates real-life experiences and cultural contexts into learning, making it particularly effective for Sichuan folk songs. This approach deepens students' emotional engagement, leading to more expressive and authentic performances.

## 2. Problem statement

Traditional methods in folk song education often fail to adequately enhance students' expressiveness and emotional engagement. Innovative teaching approaches are necessary to bridge this gap, making folk song education more immersive and impactful.

This study aims to investigate the application of the contextual teaching method in Sichuan folk song education and its effect on students' musical expressiveness. By integrating contextual elements into music teaching, the research seeks to enhance students' understanding, emotional connection, and performance skills related to Sichuan folk songs. Below are the research questions (RQ) to be investigated in this study and the hypotheses ( $H_0$ ).

RQ1: How does the contextual teaching method influence students' understanding and expressiveness in Sichuan folk songs?

RQ2: How does this method enhance students' emotional expression during musical performances?

RQ3: What are the perceptions and feedback of teachers and students regarding the application of the contextual teaching method in folk song education?

$H_01$ : There is no significant difference in the vocal skill development of music majors between those who receive Sichuan folk song education and those who receive traditional vocal instruction.

$H_02$ : There is no significant difference in the vocal skill development of music majors as a result of teaching Sichuan folk songs in shared reading activities.

### 3. Literature review

Contextual teaching involves situating learning within the context of real-life experiences and cultural settings. This approach emphasizes understanding and internalizing knowledge through practical and meaningful contexts, which can enhance students' engagement and retention<sup>[2]</sup>.

Folk songs play a significant role in music education by promoting cultural awareness and appreciation. They provide a rich resource for teaching musical techniques, history, and cultural expression. Integrating folk songs into the curriculum helps preserve cultural heritage and fosters a deeper emotional connection between students and the music they learn<sup>[3]</sup>.

Sichuan folk songs are known for their distinctive melodies, rhythms, and cultural significance. They reflect the region's history, traditions, and the everyday lives of its people. The unique qualities of Sichuan folk songs make them an excellent medium for teaching both musical skills and cultural context<sup>[4]</sup>.

Current studies highlight the effectiveness of contextual teaching methods in various educational settings. These methods have been shown to improve students' engagement, understanding, and application of knowledge in music education. For example, research indicates that contextual teaching can enhance students' motivation and interest in music, leading to better learning outcomes<sup>[5]</sup>.

### 4. Methodology

This study employed a mixed-method approach to explore the impact of contextual teaching on Sichuan folk song education, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data collection included detailed classroom observations, structured interviews with teachers and students, and questionnaires designed to assess musical expressiveness and emotional engagement. The research involved 30 students with diverse experience levels and five music teachers specializing in folk song education at a Sichuan university. Classroom observations focused on the application of contextual teaching methods and student reactions (**Table 1**), while interviews and Likert scale questionnaires offered in-depth insights into participants' experiences, perceptions, and the overall effectiveness of the teaching approach. Questionnaire data was analyzed with descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to evaluate the impact of contextual teaching on students' musical expressiveness. Qualitative data from interviews and classroom observations were examined through thematic

analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to the research questions.

**Table 1.** Observation checklist

Criteria	Observed (Yes/No)	Comments
Student engagement	Yes	High engagement was noted in all students.
Use of contextual teaching	Yes	Effective use of storytelling and cultural context.
Student expressiveness	Yes	Students showed increased expressiveness in performance.
Cultural context integration	Yes	Cultural background was effectively integrated into lessons.
Emotional response	Yes	Students demonstrated a strong emotional connection to songs.

## 5. Results

Analysis of questionnaire data indicated a significant positive correlation between the use of contextual teaching methods and students’ musical expressiveness ( $r = 0.68, P < 0.01$ ). Students reported higher levels of engagement and emotional connection to the music when contextual elements were incorporated into the lessons (**Table 2**).

**Table 2.** Questionnaire results

Questions	Mean	Standard deviation
Interest in Sichuan folk songs	4.5	0.6
Understanding of cultural background	4.4	0.7
Expressiveness in performance	4.3	0.5
Emotional connection to music	4.6	0.4
Impact of contextual teaching on learning	4.7	0.3

Interviews with teachers and students revealed that contextual teaching methods significantly enhance students’ understanding and expressiveness. Teachers observed that students were more engaged and expressive when they could relate the music to real-life cultural contexts. Students reported that learning about the cultural background of Sichuan folk songs helped them perform with greater emotional depth. Detailed classroom observations were conducted over a period of four weeks. Each session was 90 minutes long and focused on different aspects of Sichuan folk songs, including their history, cultural significance, and performance techniques. The observations in **Table 3** were noted.

**Table 3.** Classroom sessions overview

Sessions	Details
Session 1: Introduction to Sichuan Folk Songs	Students were introduced to the history and cultural context of Sichuan folk songs. Storytelling and multimedia presentations were used to engage students. Students asked questions and showed curiosity about the cultural background.
Session 2: Learning a Traditional Sichuan Folk Song	This session focused on learning the melody and lyrics of a traditional Sichuan folk song, with the integration of cultural stories related to the song. Students practiced in groups and individually, showing increased enthusiasm.
Session 3: Expressiveness and Performance Techniques	There was an emphasis on emotional expression and performance techniques. Role-playing and dramatization activities were conducted to enhance expressiveness. Students performed the song with noticeable improvement in expressiveness.

Strong engagement and emotional expression were noted in student performances, demonstrating the effectiveness of contextual teaching in Sichuan folk song education. The sessions progressively built students' knowledge, skills, and emotional connection to the music. A comprehensive analysis combining quantitative and qualitative data showed a significant improvement in students' musical expressiveness and emotional engagement with contextual teaching. High mean scores on questionnaires reflected the positive impact of this method. Qualitative data from interviews and classroom observations supported these findings, with teachers noting increased student engagement and performance. Students reported that learning the cultural and historical context of the songs deepened their emotional connection, enhancing their expressiveness.

**Table 4** provides an overview of the four classroom sessions designed to teach Sichuan folk songs. The sessions progressed from introducing the cultural and historical context (Session 1) to learning the melody and lyrics (Session 2), enhancing expressiveness through performance techniques (Session 3), and culminating in a final performance and reflection (Session 4). Throughout these sessions, students engaged deeply with the material through storytelling, multimedia, role-playing, and group activities, significantly enhancing their musical expressiveness and emotional connection to the songs. This structured approach highlights the effectiveness of contextual teaching methods in enriching students' understanding and performance of folk music.

**Table 4.** Summary of thematic analysis from interviews

Theme	Description	Example quotes
Increased engagement	Students showed more interest and participation.	"I feel more connected to the songs we learn."
Enhanced expressiveness	Students performed with greater emotional depth.	"Understanding the stories behind the songs helps me perform better."
Positive teacher feedback	Teachers noted improved student outcomes.	"Contextual teaching makes the lessons more impactful."
Cultural appreciation	Students developed a deeper appreciation for Sichuan culture.	"Learning about the cultural background is fascinating."

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

The findings highlight the significant impact of contextual teaching methods on students' musical expressiveness in Sichuan folk song education.

### 6.1. Enhanced musical expressiveness

The positive correlation between contextual teaching scores and musical expressiveness scores indicates that integrating contextual elements into music education significantly enhances students' ability to express themselves musically. This finding suggests that students taught using contextual methods are more likely to develop a deeper emotional connection to the music they perform. As they gain a better understanding of the cultural and historical background of Sichuan folk songs, their appreciation for the music deepens, which is reflected in their performance.

The contextual approach not only helps students master the technical aspects of music but also encourages them to embody the emotional and cultural narratives embedded in the songs<sup>[6]</sup>. This dual focus on technique and emotional expression leads to performances that are both technically proficient and rich in emotional depth. As a result, students are more capable of conveying the nuanced emotions and cultural significance of the music, leading to more compelling and authentic performances.

This approach develops a solid technical foundation and instills in students a deep sense of empathy and cultural awareness. By being exposed to the historical and cultural context of Sichuan folk songs, students will



become more emotionally invested in their performances, resulting in more engaging and authentic musical expressions<sup>[7]</sup>. As they embody the stories and emotions behind the music, their performances will resonate more deeply with the audience, resulting in a richer and more impactful musical experience. Ultimately, this approach produces well-rounded musicians who can emotionally and culturally resonate with the music they perform.

## 6.2. Cultural and emotional engagement

Contextual teaching methods provide a holistic approach to music education by incorporating cultural and historical contexts into the learning process. This approach extends beyond merely improving students' technical skills; it also fosters cultural literacy and deep emotional engagement. By understanding the cultural stories, historical events, and societal contexts behind Sichuan folk songs, students can connect more intimately with the music they perform<sup>[8]</sup>. This comprehensive understanding allows them to appreciate the intricate layers of meaning and emotion embedded in the songs.

Students who are aware of the cultural significance of Sichuan folk songs are more likely to convey the emotional depth of the music in their performances. They do not just sing the notes; they tell a story, evoke emotions, and bring to life the rich heritage of the Sichuan region. This understanding transforms their performances, making them more authentic and resonant. As they learn about the origins and the cultural narratives associated with the songs, they become more invested in their musical expression.

The holistic nature of contextual teaching ensures that students' performances are not only technically proficient but also rich in emotional and cultural expression. This dual emphasis on technical skill and cultural understanding equips students with a more rounded and profound appreciation of music. Consequently, their performances resonate more deeply with audiences, as they are able to authentically express the emotional and cultural essence of the songs. This approach ultimately leads to a more meaningful and impactful musical education experience, fostering a generation of musicians who are both technically skilled and culturally informed.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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