

Exploration on Curriculum Construction of After-school Music Services in Primary Schools under Policy Reduction

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Abstract: The deepening implementation of the "Double Reduction" policy has driven the transformation of primary education from exam-oriented to competency-oriented approaches. As a core mechanism for alleviating students' academic burden and promoting holistic development, after-school services have become a crucial platform for achieving aesthetic education objectives. Primary school music after-school programs not only extend classroom music instruction but also serve as key pathways to cultivate students' aesthetic literacy, preserve cultural heritage, and enrich spiritual lives. This study examines the current status and challenges in primary school music after-school program development under the policy framework of "Double Reduction," explores scientifically sound curriculum design approaches tailored to children's physical and mental development characteristics, and provides practical references for enhancing music after-school service quality and implementing the "Five-Education Integration" educational policy.

Keywords: Double Reduction Policy; Primary School Music; After-school Services; Curriculum Development; Aesthetic Literacy

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1. Introduction

The implementation of China's "Double Reduction" policy in 2021 marked a new phase of "quality enhancement and burden reduction" in compulsory education. The policy mandates schools to provide after-school services, with aesthetic education courses serving as a crucial component. Primary school music education forms the core of aesthetic education. Although after-school services have become more flexible and accessible, some elementary schools still face challenges such as ambiguous curriculum objectives in music programs, failing to fully realize the educational value of aesthetic education and falling short of policy goals. Exploring effective implementation pathways remains of significant importance.

2. Core Requirements of the "Double Reduction" Policy for the Development of After-school Music Services in Primary Schools

2.1 Upholding the original aspiration of aesthetic education and implementing educational objectives

The "Double Reduction" policy emphasizes fostering students' all-round development. After-school music programs in primary schools should uphold the original purpose of aesthetic education, move beyond the utilitarian focus on technical skills, and integrate aesthetic education into curricula to enhance students' core musical competencies, cultivate aesthetic appreciation, and develop humanistic literacy. In compliance with policy requirements, these programs must maintain non-academic and engaging characteristics to achieve a dual focus on reducing academic burdens while improving educational quality.

2.2 Aligning with student needs and highlighting individual differences

Primary school students exhibit variations in age, musical foundation, and interests. Music after-school programs should adopt a student-centered approach, moving beyond a one-size-fits-all model to cater to the unique characteristics of learners at different grade levels. Early grades should focus on sparking interest, while middle and upper grades emphasize skill development and individual growth. The curriculum must balance accessibility and tiered progression, ensuring participation for all students while providing advanced opportunities for gifted learners.

2.3 Strengthen standardized management to ensure curriculum quality

The "Double Reduction" policy mandates standardized and quality-assured after-school services. For primary

school music programs, it is essential to strengthen regulatory management, establish comprehensive systems, and implement robust safeguard mechanisms. Curriculum content must align with aesthetic education requirements and incorporate exemplary cultural elements. Standardized implementation procedures should be enforced alongside rigorous quality monitoring to eliminate arbitrary teaching practices. Strict adherence to fee regulations is imperative to ensure public welfare objectives.

3.Current Status and Issues in the Development of After-School Music Services for Primary Schools under the "Double Reduction" Policy

3.1 Ambiguous course objectives and unclear educational orientation

Some primary school music after-school service programs lack clear objectives, exhibiting a phenomenon of "emphasizing form over substance" and failing to align with the aesthetic education requirements of the "Double Reduction" policy. These programs either repeat classroom content or adopt an "interest-based entertainment" approach, lacking systematic cultivation. Such practices are equivalent to "childcare services," losing their educational value and contradicting policy objectives.

3.2 Single course content with lack of innovation and comprehensiveness

Curriculum content constitutes the core of after-school music services. Currently, some primary schools face issues with their after-school music programs. The curriculum exhibits monotony, lacking innovation and integration, confined to nursery rhyme recitation and basic instrumental practice. The formats are repetitive, failing to incorporate other subjects or distinctive cultural elements, and neglecting the differences among students across academic stages, thereby failing to meet personalized needs.

3.3 Weak faculty strength affects course quality

The shortage of full-time music teachers, with some positions concurrently held by teachers from other disciplines, results in inadequate professional competence. Existing full-time teachers exhibit traditional teaching philosophies and methods, lacking research on after-school service programs, and employ monotonous instructional approaches. Some schools lack professional training and incentive mechanisms for teachers, coupled with imperfect mechanisms for recruiting external professionals, leading to difficulties in ensuring teaching quality.

3.4 The absence of an evaluation system hinders curriculum optimization

Most primary schools have not established a scientific and rational evaluation system for after-school music services. The evaluation subjects are singular, predominantly teacher-based; the evaluation content is one-dimensional, focusing on musical skills; and the evaluation methods are limited, mostly relying on summative assessments, which fail to comprehensively reflect educational outcomes or promptly identify curriculum issues, leading to stagnant course quality.

4.Practical Approaches to Curriculum Development for After-School Music Services in Primary Schools under the "Double Reduction" Policy

4.1 Clarify curriculum objectives and adhere to the aesthetic education orientation

Course objectives serve as the cornerstone of curriculum development. Primary school music after-school programs must align with the "Double Reduction" policy requirements and students' developmental needs, establishing clear educational goals that prioritize aesthetic education and holistic development. On one hand, efforts should focus on enhancing students' core musical competencies by integrating aesthetic perception, artistic expression, cultural understanding, and innovative thinking into curriculum objectives, while avoiding utilitarian or entertainment-oriented approaches. On the other hand, differentiated objectives should be designed based on developmental characteristics across academic stages: Lower grades should center on "stimulating musical interest and developing perceptual abilities" through engaging music activities to help students experience the joy of music; middle grades should emphasize "improving musical skills and cultivating expressive abilities" through choral

singing and basic instrumental practice; upper grades should prioritize "cultivating aesthetic literacy and preserving cultural heritage" via music composition and cultural appreciation activities. Additionally, curriculum objectives must be integrated with school aesthetic education initiatives and the "Five-Education Integration" policy framework to ensure the full realization of educational value.

4.2 Enriching Course Content to Enhance Innovation and Integrative Approaches

Diverse and rich curriculum content is key to enhancing the appeal of after-school music services. It is essential to break away from monotonous and homogeneous teaching models, establishing a curriculum system that integrates "fundamentals + specialties + interdisciplinary integration." First, strengthen foundational courses by offering essential music knowledge and skills through programs like nursery rhyme singing, rhythm training, and music appreciation. These courses should maintain accessibility to ensure participation for all students. Second, develop specialized courses tailored to school characteristics and local cultural heritage, such as folk song performances, traditional instrument tutorials, and revolutionary music analysis. These initiatives preserve China's excellent traditional culture and red culture heritage while enriching curriculum cultural depth. Third, promote interdisciplinary integration by combining music with subjects like Chinese language, art, physical education, and labor education. Examples include poetry recitation through music-linguistic integration, music-themed painting with art classes, and rhythmic movement exercises paired with sports activities. This approach diversifies teaching formats and enhances students' comprehensive competencies. Additionally, establish student clubs like choir groups, instrument ensembles, and music composition teams based on individual interests, creating platforms for personalized development and showcasing talents through after-school services.

4.3 Strengthening Faculty Development and Enhancing Teaching Service Quality

Enhancing teaching faculty capabilities serves as the cornerstone of curriculum quality assurance. To strengthen after-school music education teams in primary schools, three key strategies should be implemented: recruitment, professional development, and incentive mechanisms. First, broaden talent acquisition channels by intensifying recruitment of full-time music teachers to address staffing shortages, particularly in rural schools. Simultaneously, establish standardized procedures for third-party institutions entering campuses, engaging qualified cultural professionals and retired music educators to enrich teaching resources. Second, implement systematic professional training through regular workshops focusing on music pedagogy, curriculum design, and aesthetic education concepts. Invite experts and distinguished music teachers to provide guidance, enhancing instructors' expertise while encouraging innovative teaching approaches aligned with the "Double Reduction" policy requirements. Third, refine incentive systems by incorporating after-school teaching performance into faculty evaluations, offering subsidies and recognition to motivate educators. This approach fosters teaching enthusiasm, encourages curriculum innovation, and drives continuous improvement in educational quality.

4.4 Establishing a diversified evaluation system to promote curriculum optimization and upgrading

A scientifically sound evaluation system serves as a crucial foundation for curriculum optimization, requiring the establishment of a "multi-stakeholder, comprehensive content, and integrated process-end evaluation framework." First, clarify evaluation entities to create a diversified model combining "school evaluations+teacher assessments+student self-evaluations+parent feedback," ensuring comprehensive and objective outcomes. Schools should focus on evaluating curriculum implementation processes and teaching quality, while teachers prioritize assessing students' engagement attitudes, skill development, and aesthetic literacy. Students conduct self-assessments and peer evaluations to cultivate self-reflection abilities, with parents providing feedback based on post-class performance and interest changes. Second, enrich evaluation content by assessing not only musical skills but also aesthetic perception, participation enthusiasm, teamwork abilities, innovation capabilities, and cultural understanding to fully reflect educational effectiveness. Third, innovate evaluation methods through integrating formative and summative assessments. Formative evaluations utilize classroom observations, assignment feedback, and activity

performance records to track learning progress, while summative assessments employ achievement displays and skill certifications to comprehensively evaluate learning outcomes. Additionally, establish an evaluation feedback mechanism to promptly analyze results, address curriculum development issues, optimize teaching content and methods, and drive continuous upgrades in after-school music education programs.

5. Conclusion

Under the "Double Reduction" policy, developing after-school music programs in primary schools serves as a crucial measure to achieve aesthetic education goals, promote students' holistic development, and alleviate academic burdens. It also plays a key role in strengthening schools' primary educational functions. However, current initiatives still face challenges such as unclear objectives, limited curriculum content, insufficient teaching resources, and lack of evaluation mechanisms, which hinder the full realization of aesthetic education's potential.

To overcome these challenges, we must align with the "Double Reduction" policy requirements and the physical and psychological development characteristics of primary school students. This involves clarifying aesthetic education objectives, refining curriculum goals, enriching course content to enhance innovation and comprehensiveness, strengthening teacher training to improve teaching quality, and establishing a diversified evaluation system to drive curriculum optimization. Only through these measures can after-school music programs truly become a vital platform for students to experience musical beauty, develop individual talents, and cultivate aesthetic literacy. This approach will implement the "Five-Education Integration" policy, support students' holistic development and healthy growth, and propel high-quality advancement in primary school aesthetic education.

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