



## STUDYING THE USING SUZUKI TEACHING METHOD TO GUZEHENG TEACHING AT BAISHAN GUZHEN SCHOOL, JILIN PROVINCE, CHINA

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### Abstract

Traditional Chinese music embodies centuries-old philosophies and practices, shaping both the pedagogy and performance of instruments like the Guzheng. The integration of modern teaching approaches, such as the Suzuki teaching method, into Guzheng education represents an innovative fusion of Eastern and Western educational philosophies, balancing structured skill development with creative expression. This study aims to explore the application of the Suzuki teaching method in Guzheng instruction at Baishan Guzheng School, Jilin Province, China. Using qualitative research methods, data were collected through classroom observations and teacher interviews to analyze the effectiveness and adaptability of the Suzuki method within the context of traditional Chinese music education.

The research findings highlight the importance of incorporating Suzuki's core principles—imitation, repetition, and a nurturing learning environment—into Guzheng teaching. The curriculum design not only focuses on technical proficiency but also integrates student-centered learning, flexible teaching arrangements, and performance opportunities to enhance motivation and

engagement. Additionally, teachers play a crucial role in implementing Suzuki's philosophy, requiring both strong pedagogical skills and a deep understanding of Guzheng performance. The study also emphasizes the necessity of a well-structured teaching environment enriched with cultural and musical resources to support holistic student development. The integration of the Suzuki teaching method into Guzheng education at Baishan Guzheng School provides a modernized approach that respects Chinese cultural traditions while promoting effective learning. Future research could further examine the long-term impact of this method on student achievement and its potential application in broader traditional Chinese music education contexts.

**Keywords:** Suzuki Teaching Method; Guzheng Teaching; Baishan Guzheng School

## Introduction

With the deepening of globalization and the increasing frequency of cultural exchanges, Chinese traditional music education is facing unprecedented challenges and opportunities. How to improve the quality and efficiency of teaching by absorbing foreign advanced teaching methods on the basis of maintaining the characteristics of traditional music has become a hot issue in the current music education sector. As one of the traditional Chinese musical instruments, Guzheng is mostly taught in an apprentice style, i.e., one-on-one teaching of basic knowledge, playing style, playing skills, etc. This method has been used up to now, and it must have its own excellent points, which can make the teachers understand the students to the greatest extent, adjust the teaching content and rhythm at any time, and help the students to form their own style of playing; however, with the gradual increase of the requirements of the society and the acceleration of the pace of life and learning, this kind of teaching method has become more and more important for the music education sector. But as the current social requirements gradually improve, the pace of life and learning continues to accelerate, this training period is long, the training cost is high, the level of teachers to determine the upper limit of the student's teaching method is no longer fully applicable, and with the gradual increase in the national

requirements for the aesthetic education of students, the apprenticeship system of teaching for students, for the personal development of students also played a role in limiting the role of the students. In recent years, with the deepening of education reform, some advanced music teaching methods have been introduced into Guzheng teaching, among which Suzuki teaching method has been gradually attracted attention because of its unique teaching concepts and methods in Guzheng teaching (Che, 2011).

Suzuki teaching method was founded by Japanese violinist Jinichi Suzuki, emphasizing on stimulating students' interest and potential in learning through imitation learning, parental participation and positive encouragement, and cultivating students' musical sense and expressive power. The pedagogy has achieved remarkable results in Western music education, and is especially widely used in string music teaching. However, applying the Suzuki method to the teaching of the Chinese traditional instrument, Guzheng, requires not only the consideration of the differences in the characteristics of the instrument, but also the differences in the musical cultures of China and the West. Therefore, exploring the applicability and effectiveness of the Suzuki method in Guzheng teaching is of great significance in promoting the innovation and development of Chinese traditional music education (Wang, 2020).

Jilin Province Baishan Guzheng School, as a professional Guzheng education institution, has begun to try to integrate the Suzuki teaching method into Guzheng teaching in recent years. The school has actively explored the Suzuki teaching method model suitable for Guzheng teaching by adjusting the teaching content, improving the teaching method, and strengthening teacher training. Taking Jilin Province Baishan Guzheng School as an example, this study aims to analyze the application of the Suzuki teaching method in Guzheng teaching, and to explore its effects in improving students' Guzheng playing skills and cultivating their musical literacy, as well as the problems and challenges encountered in the actual teaching process.

The study mainly includes the following aspects: firstly, sorting out the basic concepts and teaching methods of Suzuki teaching method and analyzing the similarities and differences between it and the traditional Guzheng teaching

method; secondly, introducing the basic situation of Jilin Province Baishan Guzheng School, including the teachers' strength, teaching facilities, curriculum, etc.; thirdly, describing in detail how the Suzuki teaching method is integrated into the Guzheng teaching at the Jilin Province Baishan Guzheng School, including the selection of the teaching content, innovation of teaching methods, organization of teaching process, etc.; then, collect data and analyze the application effect of Suzuki teaching method in Guzheng teaching through interviews, classroom observation, etc.; finally, summarize the advantages and shortcomings of Suzuki teaching method in Guzheng teaching and put forward suggestions for improvement, so as to provide references for other Guzheng education institutions.

## **Research Objective**

1. To study the using of Suzuki teaching method in Guzheng teaching at Baishan Guzheng School.

## **Literature Reviews**

As a bridge connecting teachers and students, Guzheng teaching is not only the output process of teachers spreading what they have learned, but also the input process of students receiving education, and the different modes, methods and teaching methods applied in the process of Guzheng teaching also have different degrees of influence on the final learning effect of students.

Most of the modern Guzheng teaching methods use one-to-one, one-to-two, and one-to-many teaching methods, and the several teaching methods listed above can actually be divided into single-player lessons and multi-player lessons, which are also the teaching modes often used in the traditional teaching methods. The single lesson ensures that the teacher and the student's attention is 100% invested, the single lesson makes the student maximize the attention to receive the transmission of knowledge in the teaching process, so that the teacher can always pay attention to the student's state during the teaching process, to ensure that the

student understands and understands the knowledge to the greatest extent possible, so as to facilitate the accumulation of student knowledge, and in the day-to-day practice, the knowledge received will be transformed into a part of their own style of playing. A part of your own style of playing (Wang, 2008).

This advantage is greatly weakened in a multi-student class, in a classroom, the teacher's attention needs to be divided into two, three, or even more than one, in which case the teacher cannot pay attention to the situation of each student, there will be a student encountered difficulties, cannot be based on the student's situation to give the appropriate instructions, and if the student is too shy to open up to ask, in the long term, the student may fall behind the situation, then In this case, it is necessary for both students and teachers to work together to prevent this from happening.

The two classroom modes have their own advantages and disadvantages. Nowadays, Guzheng schools or Guzheng classes will only give lessons after understanding the student's willingness to learn, the student's own situation, and the student's family's financial situation, and after synthesizing the various aspects of understanding.

In addition to the continuation of the traditional Guzheng teaching mode, the modern Guzheng teaching has also added the courses of music theory and aesthetic education, and increased the training of rhythm training and listening training, etc. In the course of music theory, the students can learn to sing and sing with their ears. In the course of music theory for sight-singing and ear training, teachers mostly choose to use the Orff music teaching method for teaching. In this learning process, students recognize the notes and rhythmic patterns, which speeds up their speed of learning music, and teachers no longer need to spend a lot of time explaining the knowledge of music theory involved in the music; moreover, students can listen to them to determine whether their own playing is accurate or not, which not only exercises their hearing, but also inadvertently makes the students' listening and listening skills more accurate. Invisibly, it also makes the students improve their practice, which can be said that the two complement each other. In the aesthetic education program, students come into contact with beautiful music from all over the world, listen to beautiful stories and



know warm deeds, which helps them form the correct outlook on the three sides of the world, making them have a sound personality and paving a solid path for their future development (Yan, 2018).

In terms of increased training, we all coincidentally chose to incorporate the Kodai and Dalcroze music teaching methods, through rhythmic training, music games, improvisation, etc. into the music that students are familiar with, so that they can continue to deepen their knowledge, understanding, and use of music in the process, and ultimately to form their own unique musical style, which will be integrated into their own performances, and ultimately become a qualified Guzheng player.

Of course, in addition to the use of scientific teaching methods, Guzheng teachers also use the products of modern technology in teaching, such as using the teaching blackboard before the beginning of the course to put the students into the scenario of the learned piece, so as to facilitate the students' understanding of the current music, and thus to better carry out the next study; or, for example, teachers use the teaching blackboard to carry out the music games or music training, which not only improves the efficiency of training, but also facilitates the teachers to summarize the students' deficiencies and strengths, and also makes it easier for the teachers to learn and learn from the students. This not only improves the efficiency of training, but also makes it easier for teachers to summarize students' deficiencies and strengths (Wu, 2019).

From the initial single apprentice teaching to the present day, the integration of various scientific teaching methods, the modern Chinese Guzheng teaching has gradually moved towards a more scientific, more diversified and more efficient time. Of course, nowadays Guzheng teaching also faces its own problems: will students taught by the same teaching method tend to be highly consistent in their Guzheng playing style? With the development of globalization in today's world, such problems will be solved gradually, and the Guzheng teaching method will be improved gradually (Peng, 2021).

## Research Methodology

This study used qualitative research methods to collect data through classroom observations and teacher interviews to study the application of Suzuki teaching methods at Guzhen schools in Baishan, Jilin Province, China.

**Place:** Baishan Guzhen School, Jilin Province, China

**Scope of the contents:** Suzuki teaching method, Guzhen teaching method.

### Key informants

1. Feng Ruitong, a Guzhen teacher with twenty years of experience in teaching Guzhen
2. Liu Jiaqi, a young teacher with five years of experience in teaching Guzhen
3. Jing Yihan, a young teacher with seven years of Guzhen teaching experience.

## Results

Introduce Suzuki teaching method into the Guzhen teaching course design, the key should not only on the Guzhen teaching, pay attention to the Suzuki teaching method education concept into the course, at the same time each student is special individual, so in the course design, both to make the course to all the students in the course, and to design arrangement can think of all the changes. The curriculum design should closely follow the educational concept in the "Suzuki teaching method", and make it closely combined with the different factors in the Guzhen teaching, so as to ensure that it can promote the all-round development of students.

### Teaching Content

In the teaching content, in addition to the skills and knowledge points they should master in the learning stage, students should also consider the will, level and interest of students to conduct appropriate in-depth practice, but from the beginning to the end of master video demonstration class or teacher demonstration course, as well as a large number of practice courses; teachers should choose appropriate songs according to the students 'interest, help to stimulate the students'

interest and enthusiasm in learning; in addition, in the terms of teaching content selection, can also integrate some songs with local characteristics.

### **Teaching Methods**

The concept of "Imitation and repetition of abilities" In the Suzuki teaching method emphasizes the importance of the link between imitation and repetition. Therefore, teachers need to let students practice imitation through accurate demonstration performances in daily teaching, and make sure that every student can understand it before they can move on to the next step. At the same time, appropriate amounts of repetitive exercises should be arranged to help students consolidate the knowledge and skills they have learned. In addition, group lessons should be combined with individual lessons. Group lessons can improve students' social skills and collective ability. Individual courses are special courses for individual students, so that students can get targeted guidance. Only the organic combination of the two can achieve better teaching results.

### **Teaching Environment**

The Suzuki teaching method emphasizes creating a warm and harmonious teaching atmosphere, so the classroom layout should be quiet, clean and comfortable, which is conducive to the concentration of students. In addition, schools should also post music knowledge in classrooms and hallways, introduce famous songs, etc., and play soothing music or familiar music during breaks. Schools should also provide rich learning resources, such as Guzheng textbooks, music, audio equipment, so that students can learn and practice at any time.

### **Teaching Arrangement**

In addition to considering the age and level of students, the teaching arrangement should also take into account the learning needs of students, and reasonably arrange the course time and content of students. For students who are interested in music, the teaching arrangement can be relatively flexible, starting with the most basic fingering exercises, and then arranging subsequent learning according to the student's learning willingness, needs and level. For students with further study needs, teaching arrangements should be flexible and solid, and they need to constantly consolidate their basic skills. Constant imitation and repetition



can make the learning process boring. At this time, teachers need to arrange other teaching activities or performance activities to arouse students' interest again. Performances or competitions are also good choices.

### **Teacher Skills and Knowledge**

In addition to having solid Guzheng performance skills, teachers should have a wealth of music theory knowledge, and be able to accurately demonstrate and explain various techniques and tracks; In pedagogy, we should also master scientific teaching methods and strategies, and be able to teach students according to their aptitude and guide them to learn. At the same time, they also need to have good communication skills and affinity, and establish a harmonious teacher-student relationship with students. In addition, they should maintain their concern and enthusiasm for music education and constantly update their knowledge and skills. In addition, teachers who integrate Suzuki teaching method to teach students Guzheng performance should also have a correct cognition of Suzuki teaching method, and accept and understand it, so that it can have a positive impact on the teaching result.

### **Discussions**

When collecting relevant materials on the Suzuki method and the piano method, it is not difficult to find that in recent years, there are very few books on the Suzuki method in China, or the translation of papers on this method, and few research papers published on the Suzuki method in some professional journals, and there is a lack of profound research on the combination of the Suzuki method and piano teaching practice. At present, no professional music schools have carried out substantive research and teaching practice on the Suzuki teaching method, especially the Suzuki piano teaching method. This also makes it difficult for most local piano teachers to acquire the relevant theoretical knowledge of the Suzuki teaching method into piano teaching, so that they cannot make further practical application of this teaching method (Zhang, 2010).

Different from the Suzuki teaching method which advocates enlightenment learning, the traditional cello teaching advocates the method of reading music before playing. Suzuki teaching principle believes that children

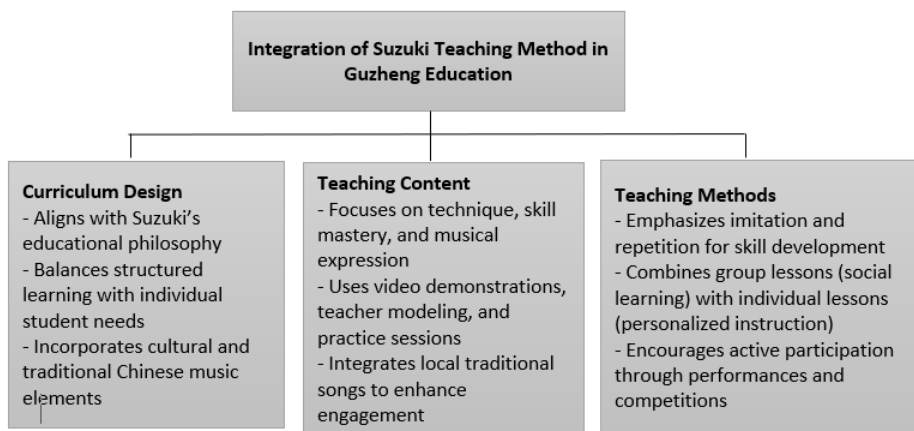
learn Musical Instruments through a large number of repeated teacher's demonstration performance, constantly grinding forging to complete the learning, because the recognition of music for a new contact with music, new contact with the cello for children is more difficult. Teachers can also ask students to imitate the music, which is an easy method for children to accept. Because the human voice is also an instrument, a part of the human body, the way the music is sung will be more natural than the way the music is played. Rhythmic learning can be difficult for children and can be trained to mimic the learning rhythm. If you can clap your hands for students to imitate, you can also clap rhythm patterns on the cello board for them to imitate. The time value and length of notes will be more abstract for children, and only through imitation can they cultivate their sense of rhythm (Liu, 2016).

Some teachers think that the concept of "imitation and repetition of ability" advocated by Suzuki teaching method is not all positive. In fact, the method of learning Musical Instruments through imitation is very common in instrumental music teaching, but the repeated training of "mechanized imitation" advocated by Suzuki is not accepted by many professional teachers in actual practice. This teacher pays attention to consolidating students' basic skills and paying attention to students' personality development in music performance. It hindered the development of students' personality in music, and therefore affected the development and widespread practice of Suzuki music education system in China (Liu, 2016).

Some teachers believe that the implementation effect of Suzuki teaching method is closely related to teachers' ability and the use of teaching materials, which is consistent with the viewpoint of this paper. First of all, the implementation of Suzuki teaching method has certain requirements on teachers' teaching ability. Teachers need to integrate the educational concept of Suzuki teaching method with the teaching of pipa, so that they can flexibly use different teaching methods to teach students at different performance levels. Teachers with different teaching experience will produce different teaching effects, and the proficiency level of teaching methods will also have an impact. Secondly, the unification of Pipa teaching materials is also a problem faced in the practice of

the Suzuki teaching method. A major reason for the success of the Suzuki teaching method is that Mr. Suzuki has written a complete set of teaching materials for violin teaching, which has not only been applied in Japan, but also spread overseas with the Suzuki teaching method and been applied in violin teaching around the world (Wang, 2018).

## New Knowledges



**Figure 1:** New Knowledges Diagram of the Using Suzuki Teaching Method to Guzheng Teaching at Baishan Guzheng School, Jilin Province, China.

## Conclusions

Integrating the Suzuki teaching method into Guzheng education offers a comprehensive approach that goes beyond technical instruction, fostering students' overall musical development. The curriculum must align with Suzuki's core educational philosophy, emphasizing individualized learning, imitation, repetition, and a nurturing environment to accommodate diverse student needs. By incorporating engaging teaching content, flexible methods, and culturally relevant materials, the course design ensures both structured learning and personal artistic growth. A balanced combination of group and individual lessons enhances students' social and technical skills, while a supportive and resource-rich

environment further promotes engagement. Thoughtful teaching arrangements, including flexible scheduling and performance opportunities, sustain motivation and reinforce fundamental skills. Additionally, teachers must possess not only strong Guzheng expertise but also a deep understanding of Suzuki's pedagogical principles, ensuring effective instruction tailored to each student. The integration of the Suzuki teaching method in Guzheng education enhances learning efficiency, fosters a love for music, and nurtures well-rounded musicians. Future research could explore the long-term impact of this approach on students' musical and personal development, further refining its implementation in traditional Chinese instrumental education.

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