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Development of Music Teaching Materials and Teaching Plans for Cultural Diversity in Japanese Schools

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Abstract

Over the last three decades, the number of children with foreign roots and multiple linguistic and cultural backgrounds has increased in Japanese schools. We have to be aware that thinking about education on the assumption of a single language and culture is out of touch with reality. Therefore, we have conducted research for development of music teaching materials and teaching plans that assume cultural diversity in Japanese school.

We firstly drew important points of the argument from the review of theoretical and practical research of intercultural or multicultural music education in USA and Germany. The former is one of the multi-ethnic nations and the latter has accepted many immigrant workers. There were three discussion points that have been derived from the review.

The first is how to connect the learning of music itself with the learning of the historical, cultural, and social background of music. To address this point, we have set the condition that the learning of the music itself and the learning of the cultural background are compatible and linked.

The second is how to define one's own culture and different cultures, and the boundary between them. We believe that understanding "other music" in the light of one's "own music" enables us to capture the diversity of music culture as being related to ourselves. Accordingly, we set the condition that children proceed with learning while going back and forth between their own culture and different cultures.

Thirdly, we view the "musical culture" of individuals as complex and variable due to the various environment surrounding them, including school, home, mass media and social media.

Based on the three points above, we tried to develop music teaching plans for cultural diversity that could be applied to Japanese school. For a conceptual model of teaching plans, we choose several themes "X and music" such as "play and music", which relate music itself and the cultural background of the music. Looking at these relations children are expected to discover similarities and differences between multiple music cultures while going back and forth between their "own culture" and "different cultures", and to understand the diversity of music itself.

In this presentation, we present teaching plans based on two themes. One is "play and music", which focuses on children's play songs, and the other is "life/events and music", which is linked to community life.