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## **Assessing Alignment between Curriculum Standards and Teachers' Instructional Practices in China's School Music Education**

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### **Abstract**

Alignment between curriculum standards and teachers' classroom instructional practices is critical in accessing the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and students' learning. As a part of the ongoing reform movement, the study is intended to investigate the implementation status of national music curricula in schools. By providing SEC-based empirical evidence, the study can also help both education decision makers and teachers to be reflective, critical and creative in improving their curriculum content and teaching practices. The research questions are:

- RQ 1: What are the intended learning goals be achieved for each music content defined in the national curriculum standards?
- RQ 2: To what extent are music teachers' instructional practices aligned with the standards in general?
- RQ 3: What variation exists in teachers' enactments of a curriculum in terms of emphasis in learning contents and objectives?

Using a modified version of the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (SEC) for music, this study explored the alignment between enacted curriculum and the national curriculum standards in Chinese school system. Standards and instructional practices were represented using sets of two-dimensional matrices that comprised content themes and five learning domains: Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor, Social, and Cultural. The alignment result showed an overall high level of alignment (0.81-0.90) between the two, where the degree of alignment decreased gradually from low to high grade bands. Individual variations are evident in both learning content emphasis and learning objective, in which more emphasis was put on cognitive, affective and psychomotor development than social and cultural aspects. The music SEC provided a promising common ground for comparisons of music curriculum enactment across school, regions and, possibly, education systems. The incorporation of the five learning domains ensured that most of the intended learning outcomes from school music education are articulated in the standards-based system.