

SPA-152

## **Beyond the “Outstanding Practice”: An Investigation of the Student-Centered Pedagogical Implementation in Music Demonstration Lessons in Guangdong, China**

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### **Abstract**

In recent decades, the student-centered approach aligning with the constructivist epistemology represents mostly the examples of the “best practice” pedagogy for an educational shift from emphasizing the content and skill memorization to supporting students’ autonomy and individuality. However, identifying any “best” or “excellent” practices is easily challenged by its ignorance of the effect of various contextual implementation. In fact, in China, although the “student-centered approach” has been officially written in the Music Curriculum Standards issued by the Ministry of Education, research reported that inadequate support from the school administration, limited understanding of the curriculum guide, and long-existing oriented-examination are still the practical barriers in most regions.

This research project aims to conduct both observational and interpretive methods to discover the implementation of the student-centered pedagogy. With the research questions in (1) what specific classroom behavior can be observed and (2) in what activities teachers and students interact with each, 19 selected “outstanding” Music Class Demonstration (MCD) lessons in Guangdong province have been observed with non-participant observation with a sequential observational method. As a unique observational document, MCD teachers acting as the learning models allow others to learn and imitate their instructional behavior and pedagogy. Data from the 19 elementary level music lessons were analyzed by a software called MAXQDA for both statistical and interpretive analysis. Time-event sequential data with an observation coding scheme were conducted for quantifying the time spending on teachers and students in class and their specific interactions during the lesson. Interpretive vignettes were documented to further explaining the observational phenomenon.

Findings in the study indicate that a student-centered approach was still lacking constructivist implementation in the demonstration lessons in China. Observable phenomena such as a majority of teaching content was designed for singing, passive learning was observed, and formalized sequential patterns occurred in almost every class for lesson structure revealing the issue of lacking concentration on individual students’ previous experience and progressive cognitive construction. Further, these findings resonate with evidence of research from other Asian countries, with a similarly large number of students, shortage of equipment support, and lacking appropriate perception of the education reform, which may raise new perspectives to interpret the implementation in different contexts.