

# **An Empirical Study of Using Music Education to Connect Young Children with Chinese Culture and Chinese Language**

**Ling-Yu Liza Lee, Ed. D.**

Assistant Professor in Early Childhood Department  
Chaoyang University of Technology

## **Abstract**

In the United States, large numbers of American families are adopting and raising children from mainland China. These parents, who are a very motivated and devoted group – actively look for ways to maintain their children’s linguistic and cultural connections to their homeland. However, the breadth and depth of Chinese culture, with which most Americans’ are largely unfamiliar, has created a strong need for innovative approaches to helping these families to build bridges to a distant culture.

As an educator my studies in the field of music education led me to see music as an innovative tool for building cultural connections to China for these children. With this in mind, I created and then implemented a music-based curriculum to use music and music activities to expose American children to the beauty, richness, and complexity of Chinese culture and language. The curriculum was implemented during weekly, one-hour sessions in a Parent/Child Learning Program, which comprised of an ongoing cohort of 10 parents and their children.

Over the course of one year of instruction, results, based on teacher and parent evaluation, demonstrated that in general, children benefited significantly from the program, gaining new levels of understanding and connection with both traditional and contemporary Chinese culture.

**Keywords:** Music Education, Language, Adoptive Children

## Introduction

### Background

According to United States Department of State records, only 62 Chinese children were adopted by American families in 1991. Much has changed in just a few short years. More than 15,000 Chinese children have been placed in homes within the United States since China passed its first adoption law in 1992 (Postman, 1992).

Adopted Chinese children have left their birth country on the road to becoming Americans. However, because of their distinctively Asian physical appearance, their Chinese heritage will have to be explained to many Americans and their American citizen status will have to be explained to many Chinese. To help them to acclimate to this bi-cultural identity, many adoptive parents have chosen to expose their Chinese children to both Chinese and American culture. With this in mind, parents have an interest in having their children develop proficiency in both a Chinese language (Mandarin) to maintain a connection to their homeland, and English, to prepare for a successful life in the United States. Additionally, many parents express a desire to have their child learn about Chinese culture and their heritage. Most American parents, having little or no Chinese language knowledge or exposure to Chinese culture and history, are ill-equipped to handle these tasks on their own.

Throughout history, music and musical interpretation has been critical to people's connection with and understanding of the world's cultures. The emotions, attitudes, dreams and desires of a society are communicated through the music created by its people. Furthermore, an understanding of a culture's language can often be developed

via exposure to its music. Music helps to bridge cultural understanding, and a society's musical expressions reflect its identity, self-image and perception of its surroundings. A culture's melodic modalities, rhythmic dimensions, content of sung poetry, choice of instruments, musical textures, and prominent dance-step sequences, are all reflective of the people who comprise the culture (Campbell, 2000).

Recently there has been growing awareness of the connections between music, language, and culture. Gardner (1983) has speculated that "buried far back in evolution, music and language may have arisen from a common expressive medium." Sloboda (1997) believes both music and language are based in sound, require skill, and develop in similar stages, such as the phonological, syntactic and semantic. According to Garfias (1997) there is a strong, more than coincidental, relationship between how music and language are acquired. He asserts that every unique music structure is strongly connected to spoken language and its structure.

There is a growing body of research that supports the idea that early childhood experiences exert a formidable influence over children's cultural understanding (Banks, 1993). As music is reflective of culture, there exists a wealth of opportunities for teaching cultural mores, thoughts and behaviors through music (Campbell, 2000). Children have a culture all their own, and song games serve a critical role in communication and social interaction. Music is also a medium that children use to understand and interpret their own feelings, often in solitary play, which is normally complemented by tunes, fragments of songs and rhythm sounds. Children dwell in a "child culture" and song games are a key component of their interaction with others (Bjorkvold, 1997).

In short, an emphasis on exposing children to culture, and developing understanding and intelligence, serve to help fulfill Foshay's philosophy of wholistic education (Foshay, 2000). This theory asserts that there are six components comprising a person's, and therefore a child's, complete "self": the social, physical, intellectual, transcendent, emotional and aesthetic dimensions.

### **Aims**

The aim of this study was to develop, implement and evaluate a music-based curriculum in a classroom setting using Chinese and English songs to help the adopted Chinese children of American parents to simultaneously acquire musical skills and cultural awareness through linguistic competence in both languages. The specific research questions asked are:

1. How does a music education program using Chinese and English songs impact children's social self?
2. How does a music education program using Chinese and English songs impact children's physical self?
3. How does a music education program using Chinese and English songs impact children's intellectual self?
4. How does a music education program using Chinese and English songs impact children's transcendent self?
5. How does a music education program using Chinese and English songs impact children's emotional self?
6. How does a music education program using Chinese and English songs impact children's aesthetic self?

## Methodology

### Participants and Setting

The twenty participants included 10 parents and 10 children ranging in age from two-to-six-years old. There were eight Caucasian families, one Chinese-American family and one family comprising a Chinese-American father and Caucasian mother. All the children – one male and nine females – were adopted from China. A one-hour lesson was provided weekly and the duration of the program was one year (32 weeks). The sessions were held in a large classroom at a local high school.

Development of curriculum (Figure 1)

Musical Activity	Goals of the self development
1. Greeting Song & Goodbye Song	Development of the social self
2. Attendant Song	Development of the transcendent self
3. Moving & Musical Game	Development of the physical self
4. Singing	Development of the emotional self
5. Music Appreciation	Development of the aesthetic self
6. Storytelling	Development of the intellectual self

Figure 1 Outline of the curriculum

A music-based curriculum was developed to familiarize the children and parents with Chinese culture and language. The curriculum's theoretical framework focuses on the ties between language, music and culture – and the use of music in promoting language- and cultural-learning. At the foundation is the work in the areas of language and cognitive development by Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1970). From their work we have learned that children move through stages where social understanding as well as their cognitive skills evolve gradually from contact with the people and objects in their environment.

Cultural content and the promotion of social interaction were key facets of teaching activities. Conversation skills, music appreciation, social development and language learning were targeted for development and reinforcement through the use of rhythm and pitch. Children's musical-ability levels were assessed and activities aimed at increasing musical and language competence were implemented. The classroom musical activities were wide-ranging and included the use of materials created for the parents, the learning of the Zhu-Yin Mandarin phonetic system, utilizing visual aids, singing, playing instruments, storytelling, movement and rhythm activities.

The design of the curriculum is based on Foshay's theory (2000) of wholistic- learning as applied to childhood education. The approach was further influenced by the Kindermusik program, which promotes early childhood music education, while significantly involving parents in the process. Involving parents directly in the learning process is regarded to have great benefit for children. In the

classroom setting, parents are able to bond with their children, focus the young learners' attention and provide comfort and supervision. Through their engagement in the curriculum, parents simultaneously learn, reinforce commitment to the educational process and are able to continue a commitment to the success of the program through out-of-class practice and lesson review.

Songs were chosen with easily singable melodies and simple lyrics. The selections included traditional Chinese folk songs and well-known English-language songs related to subjects of interest to children. English-language western songs were chosen to foster learning confidence and introduce new concepts and words via the less-stressful song-based learning approach. Children listened to English-only versions of the songs first; with a few Chinese target words added subsequently. Chinese songs were first taught in English translation, with a few Chinese target words added after they were familiar with the melody.

Movement included dance, games such as "freeze," and the use of gestures to accompany songs. Most preschool children can understand this form of nonverbal communication as they begin to express their feelings through body movement. Musical activities involved the use of hands, feet, voices, rhythm sticks, and other instruments to play simple rhythms which children were encouraged to imitate. Visual materials included puppets and the use of picture cards. Stories were selected from different topics, themes and cultures. If necessary, stories were changed to meet the children's level of comprehension.

Classroom singing activities taught and reinforced children's primary representational literacy communication through the use of pictures, sequencing skills and signs.

Linguistic skills were taught via vocal play that focused on inflection, articulation, dynamics and timbres; as well as through nonsense syllables and songs. Concepts such as size and color were reinforced. The development of listening skills and attending to the song repertoire helped to teach an awareness of culture. Every culture initiates children in specific symbolic and social forms. The music of a culture will direct and influence a child's attention and interests, therefore lending a structure for creating musical and linguistic knowledge.

The curriculum utilized movement activities to teach and reinforce laterality and spatial awareness; movement control, body awareness; focusing and attending; self-confidence; imagination and self-initiation; language concepts and internalization of movement vocabulary. The meaning of language was made more easily understood through using gestures that communicated words and their meaning. Familiarity of the sounds, visual aspects and spatial relationships within Chinese and American culture were taught through immersing the children in movement activities.

Social skills were taught and reinforced through exposure to playing instruments. Children learned through taking turns and sharing; listening skills; group participation; using motor skills; non-verbal self-expression and following directions. Children developed attentiveness to and a familiarity with visual and aural aspects of eastern musical styles through experiences with standard and Chinese musical instruments.

Critical to the program were listening activities. These served to teach and reinforce knowledge and awareness of the difference between silence and sound;



tension and relaxation; passive and active; no voice and voice; internalizing of the concepts of soft and loud, slow and fast, and low and high. The students learned musical concepts and also the vocabulary that defines the concepts. They learned to capture knowledge of both languages and mesh their musical knowledge into one Chinese/American cultural matrix.

The curriculum called for significant involvement by parents. According to Bruner (1986), parents and caregivers are the primary vehicles for knowledge transmission. Parents made a substantial impact on the success of the learning experience through class participation and home reinforcement.

Within the program, parents were active participants, reinforcing the themes and activities from each weekly class. Parents, therefore, played a key role by continuing curriculum learning, feedback, and involvement during the time that class was not in session. To answer the specific research questions, a sample lesson plan (figure 2) is included in the following:

---

***CLASS GREETING RITUAL – “HELLO SONG” (哈囉歌)***

*ha lo ge*

- Purposes: development of **social self**.
- Goals:
  - \*\*Music – tonal awareness, learning tempo.
  - \*\*Language – simple words and basic greeting words.
- Procedure:
  - (a). While patting a steady beat, sing this greeting song. Invite everyone to join the teacher.

- (b). Gather in a singing circle and sing the song for the children.  
Teacher might accompany with instruments (piano or guitar).
- (c). Encourage everyone to echo the words “hello,” how are you?”  
“music,” “fun” and “happy.”
- (d). After the students can sing the whole song well, the teacher could substitute different concepts into the song. For example: hello could be substituted with the words “Good-morning”, “Good-afternoon” and “Good-night,” etc.

- Materials: Keyboard or guitar.
- Lyrics of English and Chinese translation and pin-yin edition:  
哈囉，哈囉，你好嗎？ 你好嗎？  
Hello, hello, *how are you?* How are you?  
Ha lo, ha lo, *ni how ma?* ni how ma?  
讓我們唱首歌，唱首快樂歌，  
Let's sing a song, sing a happy song.  
*Zang wo men chang shou ge, chang shou kuai le ge.*  
音樂，(音樂)，有趣，(有趣)，  
*Music, (music), fun, (fun).*  
*Yin yue, (yin yue), you qu, (you qu)*  
快樂，(快樂)，唱首快樂歌，  
*Happy, (happy), sing a happy song.*  
*Kuai le, (kuai le), chang shou kuai le ge.*
- *Implement: Repeat this song throughout whole semester.*

**ATTENDANCE SONG** (點名歌 *dian ming ge*)

- Purposes: development of **transcendent self**.
- Goals:
  - \*\*Music – learn steady beat and dynamics.
  - \*\*Language – the children will be able to identify themselves and others' names and improve the social skill by remembering other children's name.
- Procedure:
  - (a). While sitting in the circle, the teacher sings the question of “Where are the children?” to everyone.
  - (b). Ask every child to sing “Here I am” together.
  - (c). 2<sup>nd</sup> time, the teacher sings each child's name and asks them to sing back individually.
  - (d). 3<sup>rd</sup> time, teach the gender to the children. The teacher sings to girls and boys separately and asks children to respond appropriately.
  - (e). 4<sup>th</sup> time, the teacher could apply the song to teach names of instruments.

For example: instead of singing children's names, the teacher could sing instruments. Distribute instruments to the children and have children play the instruments. When the teacher sings “Where is \_\_\_\_\_ (instrument)?”, the child who is holding the instrument needs to respond.
- Lyrics of Chinese and English translation and pin-yin edition:

小朋友(小男孩/小女孩)在哪裡，

*Where are the little children(little boys/girls)*

Xiao peng you (xiao nan hai/xiao nu hai)  
zai na li,

- 小朋友在哪裡，  
 where are the little children?  
 Xiao peng you zai na li,  
 在這裡，在這裡，  
*Here I am , Here I am.*  
 Zai zhe li, zai zhe li,  
 你今天好嗎？  
 How are you today?  
 Ni jin tian hao ma?  
 我今天很好，  
 I am fine today.  
 Wo jin tian hen hao,  
 謝謝你，不客氣。( 再見啦)  
*Thank you, you are welcome (good-bye).*  
 Xie xie ni, bu ke qi. (zai jian la)  
 Extra lyrics: 小鐵琴 glockenspiel, 鈴噹 jingle bell, 三角鐵 triangle and 木棍 stick.  
 Xiao tie qin ling dang  
 san jiao tie mu gun
- Materials: microphone and tube.

### **SONG ACTIVITIES**

#### **1. Teddy bear 泰迪熊 (tai di xiong)**

- Purposes: development of **physical self**.
- Goals:
  - \*\*Music – learn a steady beat and coordination of the appropriate body motions.
  - \*\*Language – learn the appropriate words for the motions.
- Procedure:
  - (a). Show a picture of a teddy bear to the children and discuss the picture.
  - (b). Sing the song for the children and demonstrate the appropriate motions with teacher's teddy bear.
  - (c). Have children sing and do the appropriate motions in a circle.
  - (d). Substitute the words “teddy bear” with “little children”.

- (e). Substitute the words “little children” with each child’s name and encourage each child to create a new motion for the song.
- Lyrics of English and Chinese translation and pin-yin edition:  
泰迪熊，泰迪熊，轉個圈，  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, turn around,  
Tai di xiong, tai di xiong, zhuan ge qiuan,  
泰迪熊，泰迪熊，摸地面，  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, touch the ground,  
Tai di xiong, tai di xiong, mo di mian,  
泰迪熊，泰迪熊，秀你的鞋，  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, show your shoe,  
Tai di xiong, tai di xiong, xiu ni de xie,  
泰迪熊，泰迪熊，你好棒！  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, that will do.  
Tai di xiong, tai di xiong, ni hao bang,  
泰迪熊，泰迪熊，梳頭髮，  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, brush your hair,  
Tai di xiong, tai di xiong, shu tou fa,  
泰迪熊，泰迪熊，爬樓梯，  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, climb the stair,  
Tai di xiong, tai di xiong, pa lou ti,  
泰迪熊，泰迪熊，攀到天空，  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, reach for the sky,  
Tai di xiong, tai di xiong, pan dao tian kong,  
泰迪熊，泰迪熊，說再見。  
Teddy bear, teddy bear, say goodbye.  
Tai di xiong, tai di xiong, shuo zai jian.

- Extra lyrics:小朋友 Little children, 跑 run, 跳 jump, 看 see, 轉個圈 turn around, Xia5o pe2ng yo5u pa5o tia3o ka3n zhua5n ge qua7n 摸摸頭 touch the head, 彎腰 bend the waist. Mo7 mo7 to2u wa7n ya7o
- Materials: teddy bear.
- Implement:
  - (1). Sing the song with teacher's teddy bear and ask children to do the appropriate motions with the teddy bear.
  - (2). Review the song and ask children to do the appropriate motions with their teddy bear.
  - (3). Add children's names to the song.

## 2.Count toad 數蛤蟆 (*Shu5 ha2 ma*)

- Purposes: development of **intellectual self**.
- Goals:
  - \*\*Music – the children will learn a steady beat.
  - \*\*Language – children will be able to count in Chinese.
- Procedure:
  - (a). Show the children pictures of the toad and let them talk about it.
  - (b). Sing the song and teach the children to count.
  - (c). Have the children do the counting and motions while singing the song.
  - (d). Add instrumental accompaniment.
- Lyrics of Chinese and English translation and pin-yin edition:
 

一隻蛤蟆，一張嘴，  
*One toad, one mouth,*  
*Yi zhi ha ma, yi zhang zui*  
 兩個眼睛，四條腿，

*Two eyes, four legs,*

*Liang ge yan jing, si tiao tui*

ㄉㄨㄛˊ, ㄉㄨㄚˋ, ㄉㄨㄛˊ, ㄉㄨㄚˋ,

Pee pa, pee pa,

Pi pa, pi, pa

跳下水,

*Jump to the water,*

*Tiao xia shui*

蛤蟆不吃水,

Toad doesn't drink water,

Ha ma bu chi shui

太平年,

Peaceful year,

Tai ping nian

蛤蟆不吃水,

Toad doesn't drink water,

Ha ma bu chi shui

太平年。

Peaceful year.

Tai ping nian

荷兒梅子兮,

Lotus, plum,

He er mei zi xi,

水上飄,

Floating on the water,

*Shui shang piao,*

荷兒梅子兮,

Lotus, plum,

He er mei zi xi,

水上飄,

Floating on the water,

Shui shang piao

- Materials: Picture of toads.

3. *Sweetest little baby* 最可愛的小寶貝 (*zui ke ai de xiao bao bei*) – *mirror play*

- Purposes: development of **emotional** self.
- Goals:
  - \*\*Music – learn imitation, vocal interaction.
  - \*\*Language – self-identity and eye-muscle development.
- Procedure:
  - (a). Sing the song while rocking or swaying.
  - (b). Encourage parents to sing with the teacher.
  - (c). Pass out a mirror to each parent. Encourage exploration and play with the mirror. Remind the parents to interact closely with their child.
  - (d). While looking in the mirror together, ask parents to sing with child using the words “ma ma” or “ba ba.” After parent makes vocal sound, wait for child to respond.
- Lyrics of English and Chinese translation and pin-yin edition:

媽媽，媽媽告訴我，

*Ma-ma*, *Ma-ma* told me O,

*Ma ma*, *ma ma* *gao su wo*,

我是世界上最可愛的小寶貝，

I'm the sweetest *little baby* in the country O,

*Wo shi shi jie shang zui ke ai de xiao bao bei*

當我照照鏡子後，發現，嗯！

I looked in the *mirror* and found it so,

*Dang wo zhao zhao jing zi hou*, *fa xian*,  
en!

就像媽媽告訴我。

Just like *ma-ma* told me O.

*Jiu xiang ma ma gao su wo*



爸爸，爸爸告訴我，

*Daddy, daddy told me O,*

*Ba ba, ba ba gao su wo*

我是世界上最可愛的小寶貝，

*I'm the sweetest little baby in the country O,*

*Wo shi shi jie shang zui ke ai de xiao  
bao bei*

當我照照鏡子後，發現，嗯！

*I looked in the mirror and found it so,*

*Dang wo zhao zhao jing zi hou, fa xian,  
en!..*

就像爸爸告訴我。

*Just like daddy told me O.*

*Jiu xiang ba ba gao su wo*

- Materials: mirrors.
- Implement:
  - (1). Teach the song.
  - (2). Distribute the mirrors to children and parents and lead them in the interactive movement.

#### **4. Jasmine 茉莉花 (mo li hua)**

- Purposes: development of **aesthetic self**.
- Goals:
  - \*\*Music – learn to identify the rest, pause and tempo.
  - \*\*Language – learn simple expressive words.
- Procedure:
  - (a). Show a picture of jasmine, and talk about it.
  - (b). Sing the song.
  - (c). Teach the song and do movement.
  - (d). Distribute the scarves to the children while playing the music and ask them to dance with the music.

(e). When music stops, they stop; when music plays again, they dance with music again.

- Lyrics of Chinese and English translation and pin-yin edition:

好一朵美麗的茉莉花，  
 What a *beautiful jasmine*,  
 Hao yi duo mei li de mo li hua,  
 好一朵美麗的茉莉花，  
 What a beautiful jasmine,  
 Hao yi duo mei li de mo li hua,  
 芬芳, 美麗, 滿枝椏，  
*Fragrant, beautiful and many branches*,  
*Fen fang, mei li, man zhi ya*,  
 又香又白，人人誇，  
 Smells good, looks white, everyone praises,  
 You xiang you bai, ren ren kua,  
 讓我來將你摘下，  
 Let me pick you up,  
 Rang wo lai jiang ni zai xia,  
 送給別人家，  
 Give you to someone,  
 Song gei bie ren jia,  
 茉莉花呀，茉莉花！  
 Jasmine, jasmine!  
 Mo li hua ya, mo li hua!

- Materials: Picture of jasmine and scarves.
- Implement:
  - (1). Teach the song.
  - (2). Distribute the scarves to children and parents and lead them to dance.

---

Figure 2: a sample lesson plan

### **Assessment**

The curriculum was evaluated using observation, semi-structured parent interviews, informal and systematic parent feedback, and my own researcher-teacher field notes.

The formative evaluation of the study included assessments from a Teacher's Journal, parents' weekly interviews and other regular communication with parents. The formative evaluation provided a way to trace children's learning progress and make adjustments while implementing the curriculum and teaching strategies as needed. Summative evaluation included an analysis of parental observation forms (see table 1), anecdotal evidence and teacher's own comprehensive analysis of the program's efficacy. In addition, classes were videotaped to provide a weekly, visual log of their progress. The data was reviewed and analyzed to determine answers to the research questions above.

### **Results**

According to parents' and the teacher's evaluation, each child demonstrated substantial progress in cultural knowledge and in the development of all six elements of

**Table 1. Parental Observation Form**

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Introduction: The behaviors should be recorded using this measurement system: 0 = not observed                      1 = seldom observed 2 = frequently observed              3 = always or consistently observed		
Language behavior area	Number	Comments
Speaks Chinese when alone, if yes, what words?		
Speaks Chinese in response to adult interaction.		
Imitates parent inflection in speaking Chinese.		
Imitates environmental or animals sounds during play.		
Responds correctly to directions of speaking Chinese.		
Speaks or sings Chinese while looking at a picture book.		
Speaks or sings to accompany other routine Activity. Examples:		
Speaks or sings along with (check all that apply) ___ other children                      ___ recordings ___ parents                                ___ other (specify)		
Matches the objects while parents saying or singing Chinese.		
Points out the right object while parents saying the Chinese words.		
Creates own songs or Chinese text.		
Says fragment of Chinese sentences Examples:		
Says entire Chinese sentences Examples:		
Please describe any other vocal behaviors you have observed that are not listed:		

the self, as described by Foshay. The following are several key examples of documented children's progress within the program. (Names have been changed to preserve anonymity):

#### Development of the social self

- Hua is making good progress in social skills, and has gone from isolation (clinging to her mother's side) to playing and successfully interacting with other children. According to her parents: "At age 2, when Hua began the class, she was young and unsure of herself in a classroom setting. She absorbed a lot of content and this year is much more comfortable and willing to participate."
- During the first semester, instead of participating in movement activities with the class, Tao would only sit with her mother. This situation changed within a couple of months and when we sang one of her favorite songs – "Butterfly" – she would dance with colorful scarves with an expression of happiness.

#### Development of physical self

- When she hears music, Mang really comes to life. She dances, claps or sings along.
- Ming especially seemed to enjoy activities that combined singing and movement. Sometimes, he would suggest additional movements during activities, such as "wiggle your nose and toes."

#### Development of intellectual self

- According to Ching's parents the reinforcement provided by musical activities has been very effective in helping the young girl to learn. According to them, "in her daily life, Ching often sings the songs that she learned in class, such as the 'Washing Hands' and the Zhu-Yin symbol song that helped her in her regular Chinese class, and she remembers all of the symbols without difficulty.'
- Lie spoke Chinese at home while cooking with her mother and responded to her parents' inflection when speaking Chinese. She can now speak fragments and entire Chinese sentences.

#### Development of transcendent self

- When a newspaper reporter who was writing an article about the class asked why she was studying Chinese, Lie responded "because I am Chinese."

- According to her parents, Tao once told them “You are not Chinese. You should not learn Chinese.” A month later, she had changed her attitude and become more positive about her parents’ involvement. She told her parents “I am Chinese so you should learn Chinese too.”

#### Development of emotional self

- According to Mang’s mother, after participating in Chinese school, her daughter likes to sing “If You Are Happy, And You Know It” when she is happy. Her parents also told the teacher that Mang would sing, “If You Are Angry, And You Know It” when she was angry or upset.

#### Development of aesthetic self

- Mang once told the teacher that she would like to be the “prettiest flower in the world” while the class was learning the concept “What is beautiful?”

Table 2 (below) presents a summary of each student’s language growth and development. This includes each child’s age (at program commencement), their Chinese-learning background, and areas of Chinese language growth in learning both concepts and conversation. The background column notes whether they were previously enrolled in a Chinese program and in what activities they were involved.

**Table 2. Children's Language Growth and Developmen**

Child	Age	Chinese Experience	Chinese Language Growth: Concepts	Chinese Language Growth: Conversation		
				Before	After	Before
Ching +	5.5	Chinese folk dance	Songs	Size, movement, dance, numbers, Zhu-yin symbols	One greeting (How are you?)	Many (greetings, how old, places)
Hong *	4.5	Chinese school	Songs	Colors, numbers	One word sentences	Several word Sentences (greetings, names of family members)
Ming ** +	4	Chinese school	Songs	Dynamics: loud & soft, cars, numbers, Zhu-yin symbols	Few words, little conversation	Many words (greetings, feelings, emotions)
Tao +	3.5	Chinese gymnastics	Songs	Drawing, colors, numbers, shapes	Few words	Many words (greetings, how old)
Lie +	3.5	Chinese school	Songs	School, book, counting, weather	One word sentences	Many words (greetings)
Mera n * +	3.5	None	None	Games, numbers	No words	A few words (basic greetings)
Mang +	3	Chinese school	Songs	Music, pitch, dance, counting, colors, sound, feelings)	Few words	Many words (greetings, feelings, emotions)
Mei +	3	Chinese school	Songs	Friends, counting	One word sentences (How are you)	A few words (basic greeting, names of family)
Hua +	2	None	None	Animals, counting	No words	A few words (basic greetings, how old)
Han * +	2	None	None	Names of family, colors, numbers	No words	A few words (basic greetings)

+ Previous and concurrent with class      \* Only attended one semester      \*\* Male

“Chinese Language Growth” refers to the ability to express conceptual information and sustain dialogue with others.

As language is an intrinsic part of a culture, through learning language, one begins to learn about the culture (and vice versa). Through this program, children were exposed to Chinese instruments, melodies and sound patterns unique to the culture. They learned songs and heard stories about specific Chinese holidays such as the Chinese New Year and the Moon Festival. Moreover, the findings of this study show that the connection between music, language and culture is a critical basis on which to base a curriculum, especially one hoping to meet the challenge of a bicultural educational experience. Stimulating continued interest in learning should be a key goal of any curriculum and providing opportunities to learn more about the culture that surrounds the language is show here to do just that.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

All children within the study clearly demonstrated progress in the six elements of Foshay’s wholistic self. As the program’s core goal was to reinforce and connect children with a specific culture, this goal was accomplished. One can, therefore, conclude from the results that the implementation of the curriculum was successful in supporting wholistic development and connecting American children with Chinese language and culture.

Research results also demonstrate that there are some challenging obstacles to be conquered if children are to progress in language skills and cultural knowledge in the future. First, there must be an organization to support adopted Chinese children and their families to study and explore Chinese culture. Second, there must be a specialized school that can provide this type of program for



families with children of dual cultures that is not only as a small subsidiary program of a traditional Chinese school. Enhanced financial support is also critical to the success and further development of Parent/Child music and language programs. Furthermore, as this was an experimental program, there were no limitations on the subjects in terms of age grouping or level of ability. Improvements can be made for these programs if classes can be focused on more narrow age groups and specific skill levels.

In conclusion, after completing this project, I have faith that all the children have a natural, inborn response to music and that can promote a highly effective environment for using music for the teaching language and culture. In sum, the program provided children with an unprecedented opportunity for the exploration and learning of Chinese culture through music.

## References

- Banks, J. (1993). Multicultural education for young children: racial and ethnic attitudes and their modification. In B. Spodek (Ed.), *Handbook of research on the education of young children*. New York: Macmillan. ED 361 107.
- Bjorkvold, J. (1997). Wilson, F. R. & Roehmann, F. L. (Ed.) Canto – Ergo Sum. *Music and child development, 2nd edition*, 117-135.
- Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Harvard University Press.
- Campbell, P. S. (2000, June/July). Embracing the wide world of musical cultures. *The American music teacher v 49, n6*, p.52-3.
- Foshay, A. W. (2000). *The curriculum: purpose, substance, practice*. Teachers College Press.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind*. Basic Books, Inc., Publishers.
- Garfias, R. (1997). Wilson, F. R. & Roehmann, F. L. (Ed.) Thoughts on the processes of language and music acquisition. *Music and child development, 2nd Edition, 100-105*. MMB Music, Inc.
- Piaget, J. (1970). *The science of education and the psychology of the child*. New York: Grossman.
- Postman, D. (1999). One child a time. *Seattle Times: June 28, 1999*.
- Sloboda, J. A. (1997). Wilson, F. R. & Roehmann, F. L. (Ed.) Music as a language. *Music and child development, 2nd Edition*, 28-43. MMB Music, Inc.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). In Cole, M., John-Steiner, V. Scriber, S. & Souberman, E., (Eds.) *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological process*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

# 使用音樂教育連結幼兒的中國文化 和語言之實徵研究

李玲玉

朝陽科技大學幼保系 助理教授

## 摘要

在美國，有許多的家庭，領養來自中國大陸的幼兒。這些父母親都非常的投入，積極地尋求任何可以連結他們幼兒與自己家鄉語言及文化的方法。然而，精深的中國文化是大部分美國人所不熟悉的，因此，為這些家庭創造出一個新穎的方式，去幫助他們與這個距離遙遠的文化，建立起一座橋樑，有著迫切的需要。

身為一位教育工作者，在我音樂領域的研究裏，引導我為這些美國家庭尋找出一個創新的方法，那就是使用音樂為工具，去為這些領養的中國幼兒建立他們與中國文化的連結。有了這個動機，我因此創造並執行這一個建立在音樂基礎架構上的課程，利用音樂活動，引領這些美國孩子去探索複雜、美麗、豐富的中國文化和語言。

研究課程的執行為十對父母親與他們的小孩，採親子同時學習的方式，每週一次，每次一小時。研究為時一年，結論乃建基於教學者與父母親的雙向評鑑，結果顯示，大體上孩子們從這個研究教學中得到相當多的助益，獲得對傳統與現代中國文化的了解與認識。

**關鍵詞：**音樂教育、語言、領養小孩

