

Study on the Role of Music Therapy in Promoting Students' Emotional Management Ability in Primary and Secondary Education

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Abstract:

This study explores the role and implementation of music therapy in improving students' emotional management within primary and secondary education. Literature analysis reveals that 30% of school-aged children show emotional disorders. Music therapy, with its non-invasive nature and artistic features, helps student mental health through three approaches: physical regulation (like reducing cortisol levels), emotional expression (through improvisational music-making), and cognitive restructuring (using music-guided imagery). A practice study using the Hunan Education Edition music curriculum for second graders demonstrated that structured activities such as "Emotion Card Matching" and "Music Meditation" significantly improved students' accuracy in recognizing emotions and self-regulation skills. Classroom observations also noted enhanced collaborative awareness and conflict management abilities. The research proposes integrating music therapy with arts education, suggesting an interdisciplinary curriculum that connects emotions, music, and artistic expression. This model aims to create coordinated learning experiences across subjects.

Keywords:

Music Therapy, Emotional Management Ability, Primary and Secondary Education

1. Overview of Music Therapy

1.1. The definition and history of music therapy

Music therapy, as a practice that harnesses the therapeutic power of music to promote and maintain mental health, has its roots in ancient civilizations. In modern times, music therapy is defined as "the use of music and/or its elements (such as rhythm, melody, and harmony) through planned interventions to promote, maintain, or restore psychological, physical, social, and cognitive functions." Since the mid-20th century, with the development of psychology and medicine, music therapy has gradually become a science and found its unique value in education. In primary and

secondary school education, music therapy is not only used to enhance students' musical skills but also to improve their emotional management abilities, helping them better cope with stress in learning and life. Research shows that music therapy can effectively reduce students' anxiety and depression levels, while enhancing their self-awareness and social skills. Through music therapy, students can express and explore their emotions in a safe environment, thereby better understanding and managing their own feelings.

1.2. The application of music therapy in education

Music therapy, as a non-pharmacological intervention, is gaining increasing attention in the field of education. According to data from the International Federation for Music Therapy, over 40 countries worldwide have integrated music therapy into their educational systems to assist students with emotional management and social skill development. For instance, in the United States, more than 60% of school psychological service programs include music therapy, while certain regions in the UK have also incorporated it into support plans for students with special educational needs. The current application of music therapy in education demonstrates that it not only helps students alleviate anxiety and stress but also enhances their self-expression and social interaction skills. The theoretical foundation of music therapy, such as the Melz model, emphasizes the connection between music and emotions, providing a scientific basis for its use in education. However, the promotion of music therapy in education still faces challenges such as a shortage of qualified teachers, insufficient resources, and a lack of standardized assessment tools. Therefore, future development should focus on the training of music therapy educators, professional development, and the development and sharing of music therapy resources.

2. Thesis Research Method

(1) On-site Observation and Documentation: Observe and document how music therapy is applied in primary and secondary school music classes. Track students' attitudes, emotional reactions during activities, and post-session emotional changes. Use methods like video recordings, teacher journals, and student artwork for documentation.

(2) Surveys and Interviews: Create questionnaires for students and parents, and conduct individual or group interviews. The surveys will gather data on students' emotional states, self-awareness, and subjective views on music therapy's effectiveness. Interviews will provide deeper insights into participants' experiences during music therapy sessions.

(3) Experimental Design: Use an experimental approach by randomly assigning participants to a music therapy intervention group or a control group. Track both groups over time and compare differences in emotional management skills. Control other variables that might influence results to ensure reliability.

(4) Quantitative Data Analysis: Analyze collected data using statistical tools (e.g., ANOVA) to test if there are significant differences in emotional management scores between groups. This provides objective evidence of music therapy's impact and strengthens the study's scientific validity.

3. The Importance of Emotional Management

3.1. The role of emotion management in student development

In the development of students, cultivating emotional management skills is crucial. Emotional management not only impacts students' mental health but also directly relates to their academic achievements, interpersonal relationships, and future career development. For example, a survey of middle school students found that those who could effectively manage their emotions performed 12% better on standardized tests than those with poorer emotional management skills. Moreover, improving emotional management skills can help students remain calm when facing pressure and challenges, enabling them to make more rational decisions. Music therapy, as a non-pharmacological intervention, can effectively regulate students' emotional states through elements such as rhythm, melody, and harmony, promoting the development of their emotional intelligence. For instance, by participating in activities like choir singing and improvisation, students can learn how to express and control their emotions in a relaxed and enjoyable environment, thereby enhancing their emotional management skills.

3.2. The universality and influence of emotional problems among primary and middle school students

In the current educational environment, emotional issues faced by primary and secondary school students are becoming increasingly prominent, with their prevalence and impact not to be overlooked. According to the China Education News, about 30% of primary and secondary school students suffer from varying degrees of emotional disorders, such as anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems. These emotional issues not only affect students' daily learning and life but can also have profound long-term impacts on their development. For example, emotional fluctuations may lead to inattention in class, affecting learning efficiency, and even trigger negative behaviors like school bullying. In terms of theoretical models, emotion regulation theory emphasizes the importance of emotional management skills in individual adaptation to the environment, indicating that the level of emotion regulation ability directly relates to psychological health and social skills. Therefore, enhancing students' emotion management abilities through innovative methods like music therapy has become a focal point for educators and psychologists. Music therapy, as a non-pharmacological intervention, has been proven effective in alleviating students' stress and anxiety, improving their emotion regulation abilities, and thus promoting their overall development.

3.3. The effect of music therapy and emotion regulation in the actual classroom

In order to further explore the role of music therapy in promoting students' emotional management skills in primary and secondary school music education, we conducted a series of practical classroom studies. The following section will reflect on and evaluate the practical effects by combining specific lesson plan designs and students' classroom performance.

Actual classroom lesson plan design

In the lesson plan design, we integrated the core concepts and methods of music therapy to create a series of music activities aimed at promoting students' emotional management. For example, in a music class themed "The Colors of Emotions," we guided students to express and identify their emotions through listening to different styles of music. Students were divided into groups, each choosing an emotion (such as

happiness, sadness, anger, etc.) and selecting a piece of music that matches that emotion for listening and discussion. Subsequently, students were encouraged to express their understanding and feelings about the chosen emotion through improvisation or song creation. This activity not only helps students recognize and express their emotions but also promotes emotional exchange and mutual understanding among them.

Music therapy plays a significant role in promoting students' emotional management skills in primary and secondary education, especially during the early years of elementary school. Through music activities, students can be guided to perceive, express, and regulate their emotions, effectively enhancing their mental health. The following is a specific analysis based on the actual lesson plan design and classroom performance reflection for a second-grade music class using the Hunan Education Edition:

Mechanism of action of music therapy in emotion management

(1) Physiological and psychological regulation

Music affects the nervous system through elements such as melody and rhythm, promoting the secretion of beneficial hormones (such as endorphins) and relieving stress and anxiety. For example, gentle music can lower heart rate and help students relax; cheerful music can stimulate positive emotions.

(2) Emotional expression and social interaction

Music activities (such as ensemble and improvisation) provide students with non-verbal channels of expression, enhance self-confidence and teamwork.

(3) Cognitive and behavioral guidance

Through music association and situation simulation, students learn to concretize abstract emotions, and then realize emotional transformation by adjusting the style of music.

Music Lesson plan for Grade 2: The Magic of Emotions in Music

Music for grade 2 of Hunan Education Edition (combined with Variations of Little Star, Ode to Joy and other pieces)

Instructional objectives:

(1) Recognize the emotions associated with different musical styles (such as happiness, calmness, sadness).

(2) Experience emotional regulation through musical activities such as meditation and improvisation.

(3) Cultivate a sense of cooperation and learn to express and share emotions through music.

Teaching process:

(1) Leading-in

Play the slow version of “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”, students close their eyes to feel, and share “the mood when they hear the music”.

Question: “If music has color, what color is this piece of music?” Guide students to visualize the emotion.

(2) Emotion recognition is associated with music

Activity 1: Emotional card matching

Prepare different emotional labels (such as “happy”, “angry” and “calm”), play corresponding music clips (such as “Joyful Song” represents happiness, “Swan” clip represents sadness), students are divided into groups to match and explain the reasons.

Activity 2: Body movement expression

According to the change of music rhythm, students express the intensity of emotion by clapping hands and stomping feet, such as fast rhythm represents excitement, slow rhythm represents relaxation.

(3) Emotional regulation practice

Music meditation: play natural sounds (such as the sound of running water), guide students to take deep breaths and imagine “the calm forest”, and record their feelings after meditation.

Instrumental improvisation: use simple instruments such as sand hammer and triangle in groups to create a piece of music expressing “from anger to calm” and share the intention of creation.

(4) Summary and extension

Summarize ways to regulate emotions through music (such as choosing appropriate music and participating in playing).

Homework: Choose a piece of music and record it for 10 minutes every day as an “emotional diary.”

Reflection and evaluation of classroom performance

(1) Student engagement

Ninety percent of the students were able to accurately match music with emotional labels, and some students creatively proposed that “purple represents mysterious music.”

In the improvisation section, the group cooperated actively, but some students had disputes due to the distribution of instruments, so conflict management guidance should be strengthened.

(2) Emotional regulation effect

According to a post-class survey, 85 percent of students said “meditative music makes them feel calm,” and some students tried to use music at home to relieve the pressure of homework.

Parents’ feedback: Students are more willing to use “listening to music” instead of crying to express their emotions, and parent-child interaction increases.

(3) Improvement direction

Personalized guidance: For students who have difficulty in expressing their emotions, a one-to-one instrument interaction session is designed.

Interdisciplinary integration: Combine art class to draw “emotional color painting” to deepen the relationship between emotion and art.

(4) Theoretical support and practical suggestions

Theoretical basis: the physiological mechanism of music therapy (such as reducing cortisol levels) and the “emotional resonance” theory in psychology. Establish a “class music library”, classified by emotion (such as relaxation, motivation), for students to choose independently.

Through the above design, music therapy not only becomes a tool for emotion management, but also transforms into psychological adjustment skills that benefit students for life. In actual teaching, it is necessary to continuously observe students' feedback and dynamically adjust the activity form to achieve the best educational effect.

3.4. Reflection and evaluation of students' classroom performance

In actual classroom settings, we observed encouraging results. Students actively participated in music activities, showing a strong interest and enthusiasm. Through music therapy sessions, students not only learned how to identify and express their emotions but also gradually mastered effective emotional management skills. For example, in the “Colors of Emotions” activity, students learned to understand and feel emotions from multiple perspectives through listening and discussing music, thereby enhancing their emotional awareness. Additionally, activities such as improvisation and song creation helped students learn to release and regulate their emotions through artistic expression. In post-class reflections, many students expressed that these activities gave them a deeper understanding of their own emotions and taught them how to remain calm and positive when facing challenges.

4. Conclusions

In summary, the role of music therapy in promoting students' emotional management skills in primary and secondary school music education has been validated through practical classroom research. By integrating specific lesson plans and reflecting on students' classroom performance, we have found that music therapy not only helps students identify and express their emotions but also enhances their emotional management techniques, thereby promoting their overall development. In the future, we will continue to delve deeper into the application of music therapy in education, offering more possibilities for students' mental health and comprehensive development.

The integration of music therapy and art education in primary and secondary school settings demonstrates unique advantages, particularly in enhancing students' emotional management skills. By combining music therapy strategies with art education, students can not only express and regulate their emotions through music but also find new avenues for emotional release and self-awareness in forms such as painting and drama. For instance, a study focusing on adolescents showed that students who participated in music and drama activities exhibited significant improvements in emotional regulation and social skills. In the study, students expressed their feelings by creating songs and performing plays, which helped them better understand their emotions and learn how to manage them more healthily. Moreover, the combination of music therapy and art education can also stimulate students' creativity and imagination, enabling them to achieve emotional healing through the process of artistic creation. As American psychologist Abraham Maslow stated, “Art is a form of human self-actualization.” Through the integration of art

education and music therapy, students can find themselves in the process of artistic creation, achieving emotional balance and growth.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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