

# Investigation and Research on Rhythmic Activities in a Kindergarten in Chongqing

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## ABSTRACT

The art education is one of five fields in the preschool education, and the rhythmic activities constitute the infants' music education significantly. Chongqing x Kindergarten is taken as an example in the paper. With the rhythmic activities as the research object, the observational method, questionnaire survey method and interviewing method are applied mainly for the research and analysis on the current rhythmic activities of kindergarten from three dimensions including preparation before class, implementation process and evaluation. Many problems have been discovered for the rhythmic activities in the kindergarten at present. On the basis of previous research, the author has conducted the scientific analysis and statistics and proposed own improvement strategies in a targeted way to promote the rhythmic activities in the kindergarten.

**Keywords:** Kindergarten; Rhythmic activities; Investigation and research

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rhythmic activities refer to the activities accompanied by music in which the infants are capable of music performance harmoniously with body<sup>[1]</sup>. Two objectives have been set regarding art education in the *Early Learning and Development Guideline at 3-6 Years Old* (in China): first, feeling and appreciation; and second, performance and creation. The rhythmic activities are important ways for preschool children in the music education, and also a significant component for the teaching activities in kindergartens. The rhythmic activities of infants will not only develop their power of observation, memory, imagination, expressiveness and other abilities, but also effectively improve their aesthetic judgment. The author will deeply explore the current rhythmic activities in Chongqing x Kindergarten to analyze the existing problems in details and propose the strategies to improve the effectiveness of rhythmic activity implementation in kindergartens.

## 2 RESEARCH METHODS

x Kindergarten in Shapingba District, Chongqing is taken as the object in the research. Through questionnaire survey, the author has provided 42 questionnaires for teachers, and taken back 42 effective questionnaires. The effective collection rate reaches 100%. The teachers have been investigated from three dimensions including preparations, implementation and evaluation for rhythmic activities. The kindergarten teachers have been interviewed after the

rhythmic activities in all classes once a week in x Kindergarten to know the problems existing in the rhythmic activities of x Kindergarten immediately. Totally 12 rhythmic activities once a week in the top class, mid-class and primary class of x Kindergarten have been observed and recorded for 2 months continuously by observation schedule. The objectives, use of teaching resources, content selection, interaction, evaluation, etc. of rhythmic activities have been recorded.

## 3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### 3.1 Objectives set for rhythmic activities in x Kindergarten

For the class hours, the rhythmic activities in primary class, mid-class and top class of this kindergarten are organized once a week. The recorded results for the objectives set regarding 12 rhythmic activities are classified and counted as per three dimensions, including knowledge and skills, methods and processes, as well as emotions, attitudes and values to make statistics for respective percentages of knowledge and skills, methods and processes, as well as emotions, attitudes and values in the total objective in each rhythmic activity, which are expressed with A, B, C and  $\bar{A} = 1/N \sum A$  (N=12). The results are shown in Table 1:

**Table 1 Contents Noted for Setting Teacher's Objectives during Rhythmic Activities**

Objective setting	Percentage of total objective
Knowledge and skills	38.72%
Methods and processes	34.55%
Emotions, attitudes and values	26.73%

The recorded results for the objectives set regarding 12 rhythmic activities are classified and counted as per two dimensions, namely the infants as main body and the teachers as main body to make statistics for respective percentages of infants as main body and teachers as main body in the total objective in each rhythmic activity, which are expressed with A, B and  $\bar{A} = 1/N \sum A$  (N=12).

The results are shown in Table 2:

**Table 2 Main Bodies in Objective Setting for Rhythmic Activities**

Main bodies in objectives setting	Percentage of total objective
Infants	39.27%
Teachers	60.73%

From Table 1, 70.28% of teachers pay more attention to cultivating the infants' knowledge and skills when setting the objectives of rhythmic activities. But only 29.72% of the kindergarten teachers attach importance to training the infants' artistic feeling and creation when designing the objectives of rhythmic activities. From Table 2, the objectives are set with teachers as the main body by 60.73% of kindergarten teachers when carrying out the actual objectives of kindergarten, and 39.27% of kindergarten teachers are able to set the objectives of rhythmic activities with the infants as the main body.

### 3.2 Theme selection for rhythmic activities of kindergarten

The author has analyzed and made statistics for the music selection of rhythmic activities in this kindergarten. For example, the average comprehensive score of children's songs is  $3.85 = (\sum \text{frequency footnotes}^{\text{①}} 40 \times \text{weight}^{\text{②}} 4) / \text{person-time for filling of this theme } 42 + (\sum \text{frequency } 1 \times \text{weight } 4) / \text{person-time for filling of this theme } 9$ . The results are shown in Table 3

**Table 3 Music Selection for Rhythmic Activities of x Kindergarten**

Music style of rhythmic activities	Average comprehensive score
Children's songs	3.85
Adult music	0.73
Folk music of China and foreign countries	0.37
Classical music	0.27

From Table 3, the proportions of children's songs, adult music, folk music of China and foreign countries, classical music and the music in other styles are respectively 3.85, 0.73, 0.37, 0.27 and 1.37 among the music selected by teachers in rhythmic activities, having the wide gap with the use rate of children's songs.

After investigation and analysis, from Table 4, 53.66% of movements in rhythmic activities come from teaching materials and reference books, 51.22% of them are from those interested by infants, 51.22% of them are from web-based learning, and for 41.46%, the teachers regard proper growth for infants which are interested by infants. After observing the infants, the author has discovered that the infants from primary class to top class are able to accept the more diversified music with stronger rhythmicity upon their cognitive experience and development of bodily functions, and moreover the body movement exchanges more frequently.

**Table 4 Source of Movement Arrangement in Rhythmic Activities**

Source type	Percentage
Teaching materials and reference books	53.66%
Web-based learning	51.22%
Those interested by infants	51.22%
Proper growth for infants regarded by teachers which are interested by infants	41.46%

### 3.3 Organizational form and methods of rhythmic activities

From Table 5, the organization form of rhythmic activities in x Kindergarten is based on collective organization, accounting for 71.47%. The proportion of rhythmic activities organized in groups is 28.57%, and there is no rhythmic activity organized in the individual form. Generally, the kindergarten teachers will select the methods based on teaching activities of teachers, such as method of lecture, conversation method and visual demonstration method. Based on the teaching by teachers, the exercise method will be used upon the learning activities of students, and the teaching method will be used upon the interaction by teachers and students.

<sup>①</sup>The number of times for this option appeared is frequency.

<sup>②</sup>The weight is determined by the positions of options arranged. For example, if there are 4 options for sorting, the weights for the first position, the second position, the third position and the last position are respectively 4, 3, 2 and 1.

**Table 5 Organizational Form of Rhythmic Activities**

Organizational form	Percentage
Collective organization	71.47%
Organized in groups	28.57%
Individual organization	0%

**3.4 Guidance by teachers**

From Table 6, 47.62% of teachers in x Kindergarten will tell the infants who are unwilling to participate in the rhythmic activities about the interest of activities to try to attract them. 40.48% of teachers in x Kindergarten will select the guidance upon their interest after arranging other infants. Besides, 11.9% of kindergarten teachers will try to attract them and let them be if unwilling. There are no teachers will criticize the infants reluctant in rhythmic activities and force them to participate

**Table 6 Guidance of Teachers for Infants in X Kindergarten**

Countermeasures	Subtotal	Proportion
Criticize him and force him to participate	0	0%
Tell him about the interest of activities and try to attract him to participate	20	47.62%
Try to attract him and let him be if unwilling	5	11.90%
Guidance upon his interest after arranging other infants	17	40.48%

**3.5 Participation by infants in rhythmic activities**

From Table 7, 64% of infants are positive to participate in the rhythmic activities, and 36% of them have general participation in rhythmic activities. There is no infant inactive.

**Table 7 Participation by Infants in Rhythmic Activities**

	Percentage
Active	64.29%
General	35.71%
Inactive	0%

**3.6 Resource utilization in rhythmic activities of kindergarten**

From Table 8, the use ratios for piano, such multimedia as TV and computer, and various percussion instruments in the rhythmic activities are respectively 28.57%, 47.62% and 23.81%. After observation, each class of kindergarten

has been equipped with piano, computer and projector. The percussion instruments provided for infants are relatively complete in top class and less in mid-class and primary class. There are a few of books and materials regarding rhythmic activities in the kindergarten, which are less viewed by teachers, who will select from website more often.

**Table 8 Resource utilization in Rhythmic Activities**

	Percentage
Piano	28.57%
Multimedia	47.62%
Percussion instruments	23.81%

**3.7 Current evaluation on rhythmic activities**

From Table 9, for the evaluation subject of rhythmic activities in x Kindergarten, the proportions of joint evaluation by teachers and students, the separate evaluation by teachers, and the evaluation among infants are respectively 78.57%, 19.05% and 2.38%. From Table 10, it can be seen that the teachers' evaluation includes collective evaluation and the targeted evaluation for infants in 85.71% of cases. General evaluation is only made for the collective or group in 14.29% of cases. There is no evaluation only on the personal performance.

**Table 9 Evaluation Subject for Rhythmic Activities in x Kindergarten**

	Percentage
Evaluation among infants	2.38%
Evaluation by teachers	19.05%
Joint evaluation by teachers and students	78.57%

**Table 10 Evaluation Methods for Rhythmic Activities in x Kindergarten**

	Percentage
General evaluation on the collective	14.29%
Evaluation on personal performance	0.00%
Collective evaluation and targeted personal evaluation	85.71%

After analyzing the basic present situation of rhythmic activities in x Kindergarten, the author has discovered the chaotic objective setting for rhythmic activities in x Kindergarten; discordant music selection proportions in rhythmic activities; simple teaching methods and organizational form in rhythmic activities; and insufficient teaching resources and inadequate utilization during rhythmic activities.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The teachers' objectives for rhythmic activities in the kindergarten are set evenly as per knowledge and skills, methods and process, feelings, attitudes and values, and the objective subject is based on teachers. Children's songs are selected as the music of rhythmic activities in most cases, and movement arrangement is mainly sourced from teaching materials, reference books and network and selected to promote the development of preschool children. Basically, the activity is organized in the form of collective organization. Teachers reasonably guide the activities, and preschool children actively participate in activities. For the resource utilization, the rhythmic activities are based on multimedia followed by piano and percussion instruments (usage rate). The activity is evaluated based on joint evaluation by teachers and students, including collective evaluation and personal evaluation.

#### 5. SUGGESTIONS

(1) Objective design for "multi-way learning" during rhythmic activities. Teachers study the standard design of rhythmic activities, and insist on the objective setting for rhythmic activities with infants as the main body through orientation training, induction training, on-the-job training and other trainings. The teachers shall prepare the activity scheme in advance, and pay attention to the importance of scheme design in rhythmic activities. The deficiency of activity scheme design shall be discovered and adjusted in time in work. The activity shall be reflected in writing after the activity is ended in time, with summarizing the experience.

(2) Selection of music themes for rhythmic activities based on physical and mental development of infants

The music shall be selected upon the developmental level of infants. The proportion of infants aged 3-4 for rhythmic music and the music in general Chinese style can be suitably increased in primary class. The music with simple rhythm and beautiful melody can be selected as the material of rhythmic activities, which is easy to be perceived by infants and to stimulate their interest in learning<sup>[2]</sup>. The game-based music can be selected in the first semester of mid-class. Distinctive and vivid music image and game scenarios are more beneficial to the performance and movements of infants to facilitate them to combine the games and rhythm through imitation, so as to delight the body and mind of infants and also improve their music expressiveness. While digging the value of story context itself, teachers shall screen and select the contents suitable for the movement development level and life experience of infants at present, so as to better create the appropriate game scenarios. In the next semester, the Chinese music with national style and lively rhythm can be added gradually. The Chinese music with distinct national character and different styles can be added gradually in top class to improve the infants' perception for music little by little, so as to make them concentrated. Such motivational

music as *A Man Should Stand Strong* can be selected, which is deeply fond by boys. In the meantime, the music with exotic charm like *Spanish Dance* can be selected as well, which has obvious style and lively rhythm to bring abundant imagination for infants<sup>[3]</sup>.

(3) Reasonable movement arrangement upon infants' developmental level

Movements of rhythmic activities are mainly from livelihood, rhythmic imitation and dance. For infants, the materials selected for movements in each stage are different<sup>[4]</sup>. The infants in primary class know that each part of body can be used for dancing. Therefore, some simple life movements shall be selected generally, such as pickup, hand-shaking and treading. The difficulty of some movements shall be suitably increased since entering the mid-class. Specific requirements shall be slightly proposed from the movements of arms and legs slowly, including the difficulties of movements themselves and harmony with music.<sup>[5]</sup> In the mid-class, in addition to increase the difficulty of "life movements", the proportion of "rhythmic echomotism" must be increased. Except for obvious single body movements like hand clapping and nodding, the integral comprehensive movements can be tried as well. For the infants in the top class, some movements shall be standardized. Infants may be requested to learn and imitate the formal dance postures. In addition, the proportion of rhythmic echomotism shall be increased constantly. In the top class, three rhythmic movements can be used based on "rhythmic echomotism" and "dance movements" and assisted by more difficult "general life movements". Due to the difference between infants in actual developmental level, consideration is required in the selection of "dance movements"<sup>[6]</sup>.

(4) "Diversified" teaching methods and organizational methods

"Diversified" rhythmic activities combine the "gamification" and "localization". "Gamification" refers to the teaching contents combined with game activities to "diversify" the activity subject with infants' interest as the starting point<sup>[7]</sup>. "Localization" refers to the local culture integrated with education to "diversify" the activity contents with "Experience is education" as the starting point. The "localized" and "nationalized" rhythmic activities will also be able to combine the infants' learning and active life to cultivate their sense of national identity, and utilize the contents learnt from rhythmic activities in daily life as well<sup>[8]</sup>. Kindergarten teachers can "recompose" or "create" the featured national culture and living contents in the form of rhythmic activities. The folk songs are always accompanied with the movements with local ethnic style. Learning such simple folk songs will enable children to experience the rich vitality of national minority<sup>[9]</sup>.

(5) Sufficient use of teaching resources

In case of the lack of training aids in rhythmic activities, the kindergarten teachers shall use the effective resources and give full scope to creativity to guide the infants and parents to produce the simple instruments together. While solving the problems, the infants' manipulative ability has been trained at the same time, so that they will cherish the instruments more. For example, different sounds at high

tones will be made after knocking on the edges of glass bottles in which there is water with different mass. Various sounds at different tones will be made if different objects are placed in bottles. Community resources shall be fully used in kindergartens. For example, the workers of local cultural center or folk artisans can be invited in the kindergarten for performance, to let the infants know related instruments and for related rhythmic activities.

## **PROJECT FUNDS**

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