

Article

Casting Souls, Casting Firms - Exploring the Educational Practice of *On the Songhua River* in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: Most of the classic red music works were born at the time of national crisis or the stage of change, and the emotion contained in them can deeply grasp the pain point of the times and show the style of the times. The song *On the Songhua River* was born in the period of the war of resistance, and it is a classic work of patriotism based on the theme of the September 18th Incident, and it was widely popular among the nationals as soon as it appeared in the world. Although the war is far away now, the spirit of resistance and never outdated patriotic feelings conveyed in the song still has a profound influence on young students in contemporary universities. This paper will explore the educational practice of *On the Songhua River* in colleges and universities by integrating socialist core values, casting the soul and the spirit of patriotism from the three aspects of the song's connotation, teaching practice methods, and practical difficulties and solutions.

Keywords: patriotism; red music culture; educational practice; colleges and universities

1. Introductory

Guided by the core principles of modern education reform, integrating aesthetic education and ideological education has become an important direction for higher education development. There is an emphasis on promoting the alignment of vocational education with industry, and advancing the integration of science and education to meet societal needs and strengthen the role of practical education. In recent years, colleges and universities have been exploring innovative forms of music education, such as music performance groups combined with ideological and political education, deepening students' understanding of culture through artistic practice. This approach not only responds to the reform of "Civics and Politics in the Curriculum" but also strengthens students' emotional identity through immersive experiences, demonstrating the unique advantages of music education in fostering national identity and social responsibility [1].

In the field of domestic and international research, the practical function and educational value of music education have attracted widespread attention. Domestic scholars have focused on the development of music resources, the integration of traditional music with aesthetic education, and the innovation of practical teaching modes. Research in higher education has pointed out that practical teaching needs to break through the limitation of "focusing on theories but not paths" and enhance the effectiveness of education through the multi-dimensional construction of the curriculum system and evaluation mechanism. Although foreign studies are not directly related to specific cultural music, they emphasize the emotional resonance function of music in cross-cultural communication, providing valuable reference for localized practice [1].

Taking a well-known patriotic song as an entry point, this paper explores its practical path and educational value in college education, aiming to address the challenge of "how to deepen civic education through music." Combining policy orientation, theoretical

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frameworks, and empirical cases, the study will analyze the multi-dimensional application of this work in the classroom, performance, and social practice, providing new ideas for building a more holistic and effective music education system, and contributing to the high-quality development of talent cultivation in colleges and universities in the new era [2].

2. Historical Background of *On the Songhua River*

On the Songhua River is a patriotic song that emerged during a turbulent time in Chinese history. The song reflects the deep emotional connections people have to their homeland and their collective longing for peace and unity. Composed by Zhang Hanhui in 1936, it draws inspiration from the sorrow and struggles of individuals affected by conflict, as well as traditional folk music from his hometown of Dingxian County, Hebei.

The song's heartfelt lyrics and melody quickly gained popularity, touching the hearts of many. It spread throughout the country and was embraced by a wide audience, including military organizations. The emotional depth of the song, coupled with its spirit of resilience, has made it an enduring symbol of the patriotic sentiments of the time [3].

On the Songhua River remains a powerful piece that resonates deeply with audiences today, inspiring a sense of national pride and unity, making it a valuable tool in education and cultural expression.

3. Exploring the Educational Practice of *On the Songhua River* in Colleges and Universities

Patriotic songs have long served as an important resource in the educational landscape, particularly in fostering a sense of national pride and responsibility. Songs that embody the spirit of resilience and unity can significantly deepen students' understanding of national identity and the role of historical memory in the educational context of colleges and universities.

3.1. Teaching practice activities

3.1.1. Incorporate *On the Songhua River* into the required vocal works of the semester.

On the Songhua River is a classic piece in the history of modern Chinese music, praised for its artistic charm and wide adaptability. It is well-suited for students majoring in music at colleges and universities and can be sung by tenors, baritones, and even in chorus by both men and women. Regardless of the version, the song demonstrates its versatility and accessibility, making it easy for groups to perform. Including *On the Songhua River* in the compulsory repertoire for vocal music majors helps preserve and promote the cultural heritage of China. Additionally, by learning and performing this song, students majoring in vocal music can enhance their understanding of the cultural values embedded in the piece and strengthen their sense of national pride.

3.1.2. Combine the songs of *On the Songhua River* with historical shadow materials.

With the continuous development of the times, the expression form of songs and their dissemination methods have evolved. The combination of music and video can create a strong audiovisual impact. Educators can use multimedia teaching methods, such as creating popular short videos, to edit and integrate the song with its background, relevant imagery, and other information. For instance, the lyrics of the song, "My home is in the northeast, by the Songhua River, where there are forests and coal mines, as well as the mountains of soybean sorghum," can be paired with the natural beauty of the northeastern region. This allows students to appreciate the beauty of the region while also experiencing a more intuitive connection to the song's charm and the story behind it. By using modern methods of expression, educators can engage students and enhance the efficiency of disseminating the song, fully utilizing its educational value.

3.2. Campus Cultural Activities

3.2.1. Create a Red Song Campus Culture Business Card.

The importance of campus culture construction in school education is becoming increasingly prominent. Campus culture development can include integrating music as part of the curriculum system, with a focus on songs that enhance students' understanding of cultural heritage. If a music major is not offered in colleges and universities, schools can strengthen the training of campus choirs, rehearsing choral works such as *On the Songhua River* and other similar songs. These works embody cultural values and can be used to cultivate students' sense of cultural pride. By incorporating such songs, universities can foster students' connection to their cultural identity, adhering to the principle of educating through culture. This approach will help nurture future leaders who are well-prepared to contribute to society and their communities through cultural influence.

3.2.2. Campus Radio Station Red Song Time Slot.

As an important medium for spreading campus culture in student life, campus radio plays a significant role in guiding the development of campus culture [4]. In the new media era, campus radio, as a traditional communication tool, has its unique advantages. Using the campus radio station to set up dedicated time slots for cultural songs, such as *On the Songhua River*, allows for the promotion of positive cultural values. This helps guide students to form correct cultural concepts and behaviors while enhancing campus culture and improving the school's reputation and influence.

3.2.3. Campus Concerts by Professional Singers.

Professional singers who excel in both talent and character often inspire students to actively imitate and learn from their behavior. Inviting singers to campus to perform *On the Songhua River*, through their passionate interpretation, allows students to enjoy a musical experience while deepening their understanding of the song's cultural value and artistic depth. This not only enhances students' appreciation of music but also fosters a deeper connection to the artistic expression and emotional resonance conveyed through the lyrics [5].

3.3. Social Practice Activities

3.3.1. Specialized On-Campus Performances of Red Songs.

The musical performance of *On the Songhua River* on campus allows college students to hone and transform their mindset through singing practice. It serves as a way to evaluate the effectiveness of students' learning in school and identify areas for improvement. When performing in front of teachers and fellow students, participants can express their personal understanding of the song through emotion, while simultaneously refining their singing skills. This practice helps them gain valuable stage experience, ultimately improving their vocal performance [6].

For students who do not perform on stage, listening to the *Songhua River* performance allows them to appreciate the singers' passionate expression and the overall atmosphere of the performance. This experience can subtly enhance the audience's cultural awareness and provide a deeper understanding of the artistic value and emotional depth conveyed through the music.

3.3.2. Take Students to Visit Cultural Heritage Sites

Cultural heritage sites and exhibitions embody resilience and unity. They play an essential role in preserving cultural heritage and fostering a deeper understanding of a nation's progress. For example, the song *On the Songhua River* is an important cultural work that can inspire students. Schools can arrange field studies and visits to cultural sites to help students explore the significance of this music and its role in shaping cultural

awareness. These activities help students deepen their understanding of the importance of cultural heritage and the power of artistic expression.

3.3.3. Grassroots Community Music Charity Performances

The community, as a key place of contact with the public, plays a vital role in meeting the spiritual and cultural needs of the masses. Organizing music charity performances in the community helps to form a positive atmosphere and foster the establishment of correct values. Therefore, arranging for students to participate in community-based artistic charity performances not only enhances their social practice skills and accumulates stage experience but also teaches them how to interact with others. These activities contribute to strengthening the sense of community and cultural awareness among grassroots community members.

4. *On the Songhua River* Educational Practice Exploration in Colleges and Universities Current Issues to Focus on

4.1. Problems

4.1.1. Inadequate Investment by Schools

Lack of Environmental Atmosphere. While well-developed hardware facilities and a beautiful campus environment highlight the importance of material culture in a school, they cannot replace the significance of spiritual cultural construction. *On the Songhua River*, as an excellent example of cultural music, is primarily promoted through audio recordings, but this method alone limits its impact. There is a lack of a comprehensive display of patriotic cultural achievements on campus, and no long-term cultural symbols are established to create a subtle influence on students. This weakens the overall educational effect, as students miss out on the deeper understanding and appreciation of the values embodied in the song [7].

Insufficient Integration of Resources. Taking *On the Songhua River* as an example, schools that aim to integrate red music culture into their educational practices need to gather a wide range of cultural resources. These include music recordings, videos, interviews with experts, and books that discuss the cultural significance of music and its role in shaping societal values. However, many colleges and universities have not invested enough in building teaching resource libraries or organizing musical performances and related activities, which makes it difficult to carry out comprehensive educational practices based on the cultural values embedded in *On the Songhua River*.

4.1.2. Lackluster teacher curriculum design

Lack of specialized knowledge. When non-music teachers, such as Civics teachers, integrate the course content with the red art song *On the Songhua River* they are required to convey the professional knowledge of the discipline in an easy-to-understand manner, while integrating the basic knowledge of the music discipline can effectively integrate and demonstrate the connection between different disciplines. However, not all Civics teachers have specialized knowledge in the field of music, and they even lack interdisciplinary teaching resources, including various books, scientific experimental materials and tools for multimedia teaching. Similarly, some music teachers have no understanding or lack of knowledge about the background of the song's creation and basic historical general knowledge when teaching the song *On the Songhua River* leading to biased teaching results.

Single teaching method. To integrate *On the Songhua River* into the teaching practice of colleges and universities, it is necessary to give full play to the teaching level of teachers. For some teachers with long teaching experience, their teaching methods and teaching templates are already mature, and when they habitually use their own traditional teaching methods, the integration of *On the Songhua River* into the red music and cultural works may be difficult to integrate or too rigid, resulting in the teaching of the red music content has become superficial or formal, and can not be deeply excavated into the depths of the

connotation of the work. It is difficult to give full play to the educational value of red music culture in the traditional classroom education mode.

4.1.3. Insufficient attention by students

Low motivation. At present, most of the students entering colleges and universities are living in the era of pop music and fast-paced short videos, and inevitably think that the red music *On the Songhua River* is old and the melodic rhythm is not as dynamic as the current pop music. Moreover, the singing style of most red music works is more traditional, which is quite different from the current free-flowing pop singing style. Students are used to listening to pop music with diversified styles, and it is often difficult for them to listen to the red songs attentively [8]. And because part of the subject curriculum in the introduction of the "Songhua River", often into the hard, single teaching method, mostly simple play tracks, mechanical introduction of background knowledge, it is difficult to mobilize students' interest in active learning.

The understanding is not thorough. Contemporary college students live in the era and red music *On the Songhua River* created in the period of the interval is far away, have not experienced the social unrest during the war of resistance and the displacement of the northeastern military and civilian hardship, for the period of the arduous history has no personal experience and special feelings. This makes it difficult for students to truly realize the spirit in *On the Songhua River* from the depth of their souls.

4.2. Recommendations for improvement

4.2.1. Create a red atmosphere on campus to promote optimal resource integration.

Red music culture cannot rely on instantaneous influence to directly stimulate students' patriotic feelings. In order to enhance the influence of *On the Songhua River* on campus and give full play to the effects of the work, themed landscapes related to the song's culture can be set up in various places on campus, such as constructing red music fountains, sculptures of heroes and figures with additional character introductions, and posting eye-catching red music posters and uplifting slogans, etc., so that students can come into contact with the elements of red music at any time during their daily study and life. At the same time, during the campus radio broadcasting time set up red music works to play, so that between classes, dinner breaks become the window of red melody dissemination, subtle infection of students. At the same time, we can hold the "Searching for the Soul of Generals *On the Songhua River* - Red Music and Culture Festival in Commemoration of the Victory in the War of Resistance", inviting professional cultural groups to perform red music, and organizing teachers and students to carry out red music performance competitions, so as to form a strong atmosphere of red music and cultural activities. As for the integration of red cultural resources, we should make full use of the library, multimedia classrooms and other resources to build a red music and culture data room, and collect music books, music scores, audio-visual materials related to the works of *On the Songhua River* for teachers and students to consult and study. At the same time, the campus network platform is utilized to build a database of red music culture and enter detailed information of the works, so that teachers and students can access related resources anytime and anywhere. Effectively drive all teachers and students to study *On the Songhua River* in the campus life to enhance the students' learning experience and perception, and feel the unity of heart, strong and unyielding spirit of patriotism.

4.2.2. Enrich teachers' interdisciplinary integration and innovative curriculum design.

To address the problem of insufficient teachers' cross-disciplinary knowledge, schools should organize special training work. On the one hand, carry out special training on revolutionary culture, inviting experts in modern Chinese history and cultural scholars to explain the historical background of the Chinese national resistance efforts, interpret the spirit of unity and perseverance, and help teachers deepen their understanding of the

historical context of *On the Songhua River* and its lyrical meaning. On the other hand, non-music majors in colleges and universities are provided with basic training in music knowledge, exploring interdisciplinary teaching strategies and improving teachers' curriculum design and teaching abilities. Teachers are encouraged to participate in academic seminars to broaden their horizons and constantly update their knowledge system. In the innovative design of the curriculum, the patriotic education contained in *On the Songhua River* and red cultural materials can be integrated into the development of micro-courses, micro-videos and other teaching resources, as well as all kinds of online moral education courses, making full use of teachers' multimedia equipment, from listening, speaking, reading, speaking and other aspects of the combination of electronic equipment, multifaceted interpretation of the *On the Songhua River* of the world's prosperity and demise, the patriotic sentiment of the responsibility of all men [9].

4.2.3. Motivate students and deepen knowledge and understanding.

From the point of interest of students, guide them to participate in red music learning. For example, using the new media platform, with the song *On the Songhua River* as the background music, make short videos and animations full of knowledge points of modern Chinese revolutionary history to be incorporated, attracting students' attention and active learning with vivid image forms and double stimulation of vision and hearing. Organize student teams to rehearse red music works, give students full creative space, properly adapt and create red music works, and independently and deeply learn to understand the spiritual connotation of the songs in innovative creations, so that the century-old works show the new style of the times. Recognize and reward the works that have been created, adapted or emotionally interpreted in place, highlighting unique insights, stimulating students' motivation and sense of competition, and promoting the spirit of patriotism that keeps pace with the times and never goes out of fashion.

5. Conclusion

As a song carrying profound historical memories and national sentiment, "Songhua River" plays a unique role in fostering patriotism and shaping students' values in higher education. Through in-depth exploration and diverse educational practices, universities not only pass on red culture but also instill a deep sense of patriotism and national responsibility in young students.

Practice has shown that integrating Songhua River into ideological and political courses, artistic activities, and campus cultural events effectively inspires students to reflect on national history, enhancing their cultural confidence and sense of mission. With the emotional power of music, students experience history, remember past struggles, and draw strength from the melodies, achieving a meaningful unity of knowledge and action. Meanwhile, by innovating teaching methods and enriching practical experiences, universities have explored more dynamic and engaging approaches to patriotic education.

Looking ahead, universities should continue to deepen the educational practices centered on Songhua River, leveraging the power of musical culture to nurture students' values. Through singing this classic piece, students can strengthen their ideals and beliefs, embracing the responsibilities of their generation. Let this timeless melody continue to resonate in the hearts of young people, sparking patriotism and inspiring them to forge a brighter future in the new era.

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