

# Comparative Study of Choral Education in Chinese and American Primary and Secondary Schools

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**Abstract:** Choral education is an essential component of the music curriculum in the compulsory education stage. This paper conducts a comparative study on the development history, curriculum standards, teacher education, teaching materials, and current teaching practices of choral education in primary and secondary schools between China and the United States. The study aims to summarize and induce experiences and measures that are beneficial to the development of choral education in Chinese primary and secondary schools, hoping to provide some reference and lessons for the improvement of the quality of choral education in Chinese primary and secondary schools.

**Keywords:** China and the United State; choral education; comparative study

## 1. Introduction

In 2015, the General Office of the State Council issued the "Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools," which emphasized the need to enhance aesthetic education in schools and to construct a scientific curriculum system for aesthetic education. Primary and secondary schools were encouraged to carry out group activities such as choruses based on class units. In 2022, the Ministry of Education of China promulgated the "Art Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)," further clarifying the academic standards for chorus courses in various stages of primary and secondary education. It pointed out that chorus, as an integral part of the music curriculum in the compulsory education stage in China, plays a significant role in cultivating students' comprehensive musical abilities and developing core artistic literacy.

In the United States, choral education is regarded as an indispensable part of the music education system in primary and secondary schools, promoting the growth of students' musical literacy, teamwork, and social interaction skills. From church choirs to community choruses, choral activities are closely related to religious practices and community life in the United States.

This study focuses on the development history, curriculum standards, teacher education, teaching materials, and current teaching conditions of choral education in primary and secondary schools in China and the United States. Through multidimensional comparison, it attempts to analyze the existing differences and causes in the field of choral education in primary and secondary schools between the two countries. Furthermore, it summarizes experiences and measures that are beneficial to choral education in Chinese primary and secondary schools, hoping to provide some reference and lessons for the improvement of the quality of choral education in Chinese primary and secondary schools.

## 2. Status of research

### 2.1 Status of Research in China

In terms of research on choral education in primary and secondary schools in the United States, Cindy (2002) detailed Pittsburgh's rich choral culture in her article "Choral Revelations and Reflections on the City of Pittsburgh, USA," describing a variety of choral ensembles, including community groups, church choirs, and school choirs, as well as their regular rehearsals and performances<sup>[1]</sup>. Wang (2011) pointed out in his article "American School Music Lessons Zero Distance," states that choirs with regular rehearsals and performances are commonly found in American schools. He also mentioned that music training in the United States generally begins in middle school, and the curriculum is divided into chorus, band, and

orchestra, requiring students to choose their instruments and select the type of ensemble they want to participate in at the beginning of the school year. Choral singing is widely popular in American schools, and choral programs can cater to students of different skill levels<sup>[2]</sup>. Han Bing (2018) further explores the American elementary and secondary music education system, which is characterized by a variety of teaching methods and approaches. The curriculum is organized around three core components: "choir," "instrumental ensemble," and "general music class," all of which are designed to cultivate students' musical interests and abilities. Educators customize materials to students' interests, incorporating a variety of teaching methods, including those inspired by Orff, Kodai, and Dalcroze. This approach has resulted in a uniquely American paradigm of music education<sup>[3]</sup>.

In the study of choral education in primary and secondary schools in China, Zhang Hongshun (2011), in his research "Empirical Study on the Development Status of Choral Education in Shaoguan, Guangdong", based on questionnaires and interviews, reveals that the popularization of choral education in the Shaoguan area is low, the number of choral practice activities is small, the teaching staff is weak, and the differences in the quality of music of the students are large. It is mainly limited by the shortage of teachers, low support from school leaders, and insufficient instrumental equipment<sup>[4]</sup>. In Yang Song's (2016) article, "Let Every Class Become a Choir," the author advocates that no student should be left behind in class choral singing, even if there are differences in their musical skills, and the article also discusses how schools can incorporate choral teaching into the music curriculum, realize integrated choral education inside and outside the classroom, and advocate the concept of "everyone sings, and the class has a song! The article also discusses how schools can incorporate choral teaching into the music curriculum, realize the integration of choral education inside and outside the classroom, and advocate the concept of "everyone sings, every class has a song"<sup>[5]</sup>. Chen Dan (2019) pointed out in his study "Path Analysis of Scientific Choral Training in Music Classroom" that choral training can not only improve students' music appreciation and understanding, but also enhance the sense of teamwork and the importance of the individual in the collective<sup>[6]</sup>. The choral training can not only improve students' music appreciation and understanding, but also enhance the sense of teamwork and the importance of individual in the collective. In his 2024 article, "Selection and Organization of Choral Activities for Middle School Students," Wei Zhou pointed out that the selection of choral music should take into account the age characteristics, vocal skills, and cognitive level of students, while paying attention to individualized instruction and the special needs of students during the period of voice change in rehearsal<sup>[7]</sup>.

## ***2.2 Current status of foreign research***

In terms of research on choral education in elementary and secondary schools in the United States, Freer (2011) explored the core of the potentially competing relationship between the quality of musical performances and the quality of education provided to students in the context of choral education in his article "The Performance-Pedagogy Paradox in Choral Music Teaching Paradox. The authors argue that educators should recognize the complementary nature of performance and educational goals rather than viewing them as mutually exclusive options. The authors state that choral music teachers should increase their awareness of how artistic goals influence decision-making and teaching practices, and find a balance between educational and artistic goals<sup>[8]</sup>. In her 2021 article, "Assessment in the choral classroom: a case study of a secondary school choral program," published in the *International Journal of Choral Research*, Hearn explores the perceptions of high school choral students and their choral teachers about assessment practices. Focusing on participants' beliefs about assessment, factors influencing beliefs, experiences with assessment practices, and the challenges of assessing choral music students, the study's findings reveal the relationship between assessment practices and choral achievement, and how assessment practices are influenced by school culture and participants' beliefs<sup>[9]</sup>. In their 2017 article, "'I Dream a World': Inclusivity in Choral Music Education," published in the *Music Educators Journal*, Fuelberth and Todd address the importance of Inclusive Practices in Choral Music Education, the article emphasizes that in an educational environment that values equity and diversity, music education must also adapt to these values. The article suggests that educators utilize the 2014 Music Standards and the Universal Design for Learning framework to drive classroom content and gain the flexibility needed to build inclusive classrooms so that choral music education can become a more inclusive and diverse field in which all students can participate and feel valued<sup>[10]</sup>.

In the study of choral education in Chinese primary and secondary schools, the article "Choral Teaching Based on Aesthetic Education in China" by Yang Xi, Chutasiri Yodwised and Pariphon Dinlansagoon discusses the long history and importance of music education from the "six arts" in ancient China to the "seven arts" in ancient Greece. "In the article "Choral Teaching Based on Aesthetic Education in China," Pariphon Dinlansagoon discusses music education from the Six Arts of Ancient

China to the Seven Arts of Ancient Greece, and explains the long history and importance of music education. The article points out that in recent years, China has issued the Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era, which makes it clear that aesthetic education is aesthetic education, emotional education and spiritual education, and that under the background of aesthetic education, good choral teaching can help students master the correct way of singing, and improve their music appreciation, innovation and teamwork ability. The article also discusses the definition, history and development of choral singing, as well as the different forms of expression in China and the West, and promotes the innovation and practice of choral teaching in the mode of vocal music teaching<sup>[11]</sup>.

### 3. The Evolutionary History of Choral Education

#### 3.1 United States

School music education in the United States has its roots in the singing schools of the early 18th century colonies, which were originally established to improve the quality of singing during Christian musical services, and in the 1830s, through the efforts of pioneers of music education in the United States, such as Lowell Mason, the music program was formally established as a statutory part of the American educational system in 1838. The music program was officially established in 1838 as a statutory part of the U.S. education system. After the end of the American Civil War, school music education became clearer and clearer, and the music program gradually expanded from singing to music appreciation, instrumental music, chorus and other activities, and many schools set up chorus and orchestra, and the chorus teaching of the schools in this period was based on the singing of small-scale forms of the Glee chorus (Glee).

In 1928, at the National Conference of Supervisors of Music in Chicago, the president of the conference, George Bowen (George Oscar Bowen), announced that the revitalization of choral education in American schools would be the main topic of the conference. The General Assembly proposed: "the old American schools of all kinds of choral forms, such as extracurricular glee chorus, outdated light opera performances, as well as small oratorios, will no longer be used as the main form of school choral teaching, school choral teachers should be committed to pure a cappella," in the mid-1930s, a cappella rise, American school choral education Entering the Golden Age<sup>[12]</sup> In the 1960s, "Manhattanville Music Curriculum Program", "Contemporary Music Program", "Comprehensive Music Education" and other music education reform programs were enacted one after another. U.S. education policy began to tilt toward arts education, choral education began to become an important part of the U.S. school music program. Choral education began to become an important part of the American school music program<sup>[13]</sup>.

#### 3.2 China

At the end of the 19th century, western music education was introduced into China's modern new school, the rise of school music songs, Mr. Li Shutong's composition of "Spring Journey" opened up China's modern polyphonic songwriting precedent. During the New Culture Movement, various types of music groups and academic music societies were established in China, and choral education in China ushered in rapid development. During the Anti-Japanese War, choral creation responded to the current situation, and the sound tide swept across the country for a while. During the Anti-Japanese War, choral creation responded to the current situation and the sound wave swept across the country<sup>[14]</sup>.

After the founding of New China, the State Education Commission and the Ministry of Culture jointly issued the Opinions on Strengthening Art Education for Children and Youth in 1958, which pointed out that "art education helps to build a socialist spiritual civilization and to cultivate a new generation with ideals, morals, culture and discipline", and that choral art has the characteristics of a large number of participants, In 2001, the Ministry of Education of China formulated and promulgated the "Full-time Compulsory Education Music Curriculum Standards (Experimental Draft)", which pointed out that: "Choral singing is one of the important forms of music education, and students in grades 7-9 should be able to confidently and emotionally sing in unison, in rounds, and in chorus. In 2011, the Ministry of Education issued the "Compulsory Education Music Curriculum Standards (2011 Edition)", which states: "Students in grades 3 to 6 should be able to participate in chorus, rounds and choruses with correct postures, natural voices, and accurate tonal rhythms, and should accumulate choral learning experience in junior high school, and feel the artistic charm of chorus". Chorus has become one of the most important elements in China's choral education. Nowadays, choral singing has become an important part of the

school music curriculum at the basic education stage in China.

#### **4. The Curriculum Standards for Choral Education**

##### **4.1 United States**

In 1994, the U.S. government passed the "Goals 2000: Educate America Act," officially classifying the arts as a fundamental subject within the primary and secondary education curriculum. Concurrently, the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations developed the "National Standards for Art Education" (NSAA), which articulate that "art education encompasses music, dance, theater, and the visual arts." The NSAA delineates the solo and choral components of the music curriculum across three ascending levels of complexity: early childhood through fourth grade, intermediate levels from fifth to eighth grades, and advanced levels from ninth to twelfth grades.

Five standards of classroom achievement have been established for students in Phase I (K-4): first, students can sing independently with accurate pitch and rhythm, correct posture, and appropriate tone and intonation; second, students can sing with appropriate expression, phrasing, and intensity; third, students can sing in a fixed-pitch pattern and in rounds; fourth, students can sing songs from different cultures and styles by heart; and fifth, Students can sing cooperatively with others with a blend of tones and respond to a conductor.

Four standards of achievement have been established for students in Key Stage 2 (grades 5-8): first, students can sing with good breathing and technical accuracy in a group setting; second, students can sing a difficult set piece with expression and technical accuracy and memorize individual pieces of the repertoire. Third, students are able to sing works of different themes and cultural backgrounds with appropriate expressions. Fourth, students will be able to sing choral works for two or three voices.

Four standards of classroom achievement have been established for students in Key Stage 3 (grades 9 through 12): first, students can expressively and accurately sing vocal suites with a high level of difficulty, memorizing individual pieces of the repertoire; second, students can sing four-part choral repertoire with or without accompaniment; and, third, students can demonstrate proficient choral skills<sup>[12]</sup>.

##### **4.2 China**

In January 2019, China's Ministry of Education opened the third revision of curriculum standards and officially promulgated the Compulsory Education Curriculum Program (2022 Edition) in April 2022. The new version of the curriculum standard is comprehensively revised around the core literacy orientation of the curriculum standard, and for the solo and choral modules in the music curriculum according to the difficulty of the coursework is divided into four stages of learning, the first stage (grades 1-2), Stage 2 (grades 3-5), Stage 3 (grades 6-7), and Stage 4 (grades 8-9).

For the first stage (grades 1-2), it is proposed that students should be able to sing emotionally with correct posture, combined with simple performance movements, and respond correctly following the teacher's directions.

For students in Stage 2 (Grades 3-5), it is proposed that they should: first, be able to sing in unison, in rounds, and in simple chorus with a natural and correct voice and with feeling; second, be able to express the emotion of a song according to musical terms and musical notation in singing; third, be able to read and sing simple rhythmic notation, and to model or sight-sing a simple melody; and fourth, be able to sing by heart four to six Chinese folk songs or fragments of Chinese operas each year.

For students in the third educational phase, encompassing grades 6 and 7, distinct academic expectations have been delineated for each grade level, with a moderate elevation in complexity from sixth to seventh grade. A synthesis of the academic requirements for both grades includes the following: Firstly, students are expected to perform solos, unison singing, rounds, and choruses with proper and natural vocal techniques, as well as to be knowledgeable about vocal health practices. Secondly, they should become acquainted with standard musical notation, demonstrating the ability to interpret and articulate it accurately during performances, adjust their renditions based on the conductor's directions, and propose innovative ideas for expressive delivery. Thirdly, students should be capable of articulating moderately complex rhythms through kinetic and verbal means and be proficient in sight-reading elementary musical scores. Fourthly, they should be empowered to critique their own and peers' vocal performances, utilizing constructive feedback for continuous improvement. Fifthly, an annual target has

been set for students to memorize and perform 4-6 excerpts from Chinese folk songs or operas.

For students in Key Stage 4 (Grades 8-9), there are five coursework requirements: first, the ability to participate in various forms of choral singing and to have good vocal performance skills; second, the ability to personalize singing according to one's own insights; third, the ability to use basic conductor's diagrams to conduct others' singing; fourth, the ability to evaluate singing and to improve singing; and fifth, the ability to read music and sight-sing, and each year, the ability to Sing 1-2 Chinese folk songs, Peking Opera or local opera clips by heart<sup>[15]</sup>.

## **5. The Teacher Education in Choral Curriculum**

### **5.1 United States**

Taking the music education major at Berklee College of Music in the United States as an example, the curriculum is composed of three main components: the core curriculum, the humanities curriculum, and the professional curriculum. The core curriculum primarily focuses on teaching music knowledge and skills, while the humanities curriculum imparts knowledge in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. The professional curriculum is divided into three categories: The first category consists of music education theory and practice courses, including choral and instrumental teaching methods, teaching internships, and seminars on music pedagogy. The second category aims to cultivate the ability to guide extracurricular activities and includes courses such as the study of instrumental works, orchestra rehearsal techniques, high school instrumental ensemble coaching, choral work analysis, and choral rehearsal techniques. The teaching materials for these courses are predominantly sourced from American primary and secondary school music textbooks. The third category comprises skill-based courses that support teaching activities, including choral and band conducting. Upon examining the curriculum of Berklee's music education program, it is evident that the school places significant emphasis on developing skills in choral and ensemble rehearsal, which is closely related to the music curriculum in American primary and secondary schools<sup>[16]</sup>. In the United States, when students reach the third or fourth grade, schools, in addition to offering comprehensive music classes, also provide specialized courses in choral, wind, or string ensemble rehearsals.

There are two types of music teacher certification in the U.S.: choral and instrumental. Teachers who are certified to teach instrumental music need to be certified to teach choral music, and vice versa. Pre-service music teachers need to complete a semester to year-long internship in addition to their college coursework. After completing the internship and passing the Praxis exam, they will be able to obtain a music teacher's license that is valid for five years, and will need to take the exam again to confirm the license when the five-year validity period expires. After the five-year period, you will need to take the exam again to confirm your license<sup>[17]</sup>.

### **5.2 China**

In 2022, Zhang Yanhan and Luo Yuanyu conducted a study on the effectiveness of music teacher education in some regions of our country. The study showed that the average rating of the importance of "conducting skills" in the work of in-service music teachers (M) = 4.06, and the average rating of the learning effectiveness received during higher education (M) = 3.37; the average rating of the importance of "music performance skills" in the work (M) = 4.04, and the average rating of the learning effectiveness received during higher education (M) = 3.80; the average rating of the importance of "organizing and coordinating extracurricular music activities" in teaching (M) = 4.23, and the average rating of the learning effectiveness received during higher education (M) = 3.34<sup>[18]</sup>. From the scoring results, the importance ratings of the above three abilities are quite similar, but the learning effectiveness of "choral conducting" and "organizing and coordinating extracurricular music activities" received during higher education is significantly lower than that of "music performance skills". This also indicates that some institutions, in the cultivation of teachers, have a phenomenon of valuing stage practice while neglecting the practice of choral conducting and music activity organization.

At the China Conservatory of Music, in addition to pedagogy and psychology, the required undergraduate courses in music education include courses in the history of ancient Chinese music and the history of modern Chinese music to deepen the understanding of the history of traditional Chinese music. In addition, courses are offered in World Ethnic Folk Music, History of Western Music, Studies in Music Pedagogy, and Traditional Chinese Music. Among the elective courses, students can take courses such as music communication, music management, music literature, history of music education,

principles of music education, music therapy, in addition to the more academic courses such as Principles of Music Education and Introduction to Educational Research. On the whole, the curriculum of the music education program at the China Conservatory of Music is more theoretical, and the curriculum is not in line with the needs of primary and secondary school music teachers<sup>[16]</sup>. In addition, there is a certain gap between the cultivation objectives of China's current master's degree students in music education and the actual employment demand.

China's music teacher qualification examination consists of a written test and interview two parts, the elementary school stage written test subjects for the "comprehensive quality", "knowledge and ability of education", the secondary school stage written test subjects in the above two subjects on the basis of the written test of the "subject knowledge and teaching ability", the written test of all those who have passed to participate in a structured interview. The interview includes lesson preparation, test presentation and defense, etc. After passing the interview, you can obtain a teaching certificate, which is valid for life.

## **6. The Textbook Resources for Choral Curriculum**

### **6.1 United States**

In the United States, there is no standardized music textbook or choral textbook for each state, but school districts do have a syllabus, which is usually based on the actual situation in the school district and the syllabus issued by the American Association for Music Education (AAME). School music textbooks are only a reference for music teachers in the U.S., and it is up to them to decide which textbooks to use. Therefore, music teachers in the United States do not need to follow the content and sequence of the textbook strictly. Teachers usually choose their own teaching materials based on the school district's curriculum, students' interests, teachers' own strengths, and the school's conditions.

In the United States, music textbooks are typically compiled by private publishing organizations in accordance with relevant laws and regulations. A wide array of textbooks is available for each subdiscipline, catering to diverse educational needs. For instance, in the realm of choral music education, the McGraw-Hill Company has published a comprehensive four-volume series titled "Experiencing Choral Music." This series is tailored to various choir types, including three-part and mixed choirs<sup>[19]</sup>. These materials have been specifically developed to meet the needs of different choral ensembles. Furthermore, there are specialized companies in the U.S. that focus on the research, development, and innovation of music teaching materials, games, and aids. The materials developed by these companies are engaging and are subject to regular updates, thereby continuously refreshing the landscape of music education in American primary and secondary schools. The abundance and variety of these teaching resources have significantly revitalized music education, ensuring that it remains dynamic and engaging for students.

### **6.2 China**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, with the rise of the New Culture Movement, many educators and musicians in China devoted themselves to the preparation of school music teaching materials, such as: the first modern music textbook in China, "Educational Singing Collection" (Zeng Zhiyi, 1904), "Singing Collection of the National Education" (Li Shutong, 1905), "Elementary School Singing Textbook Primary Schools" (Jin Gui Huazhen, 1905), "Elementary School Singing Collection" (Ye Zhongleng, 1907) and so on. 1907), etc. After the founding of New China, the State Education Commission announced in 1988: "Cancel the method of using unified music textbooks nationwide since 1981, and advocate the principle of writing textbooks with one syllabus and many books, so that each province can write its own primary and secondary school music teaching materials according to the actual situation and in conjunction with the syllabus". In 2011, China's Ministry of Education once again revised the music Curriculum Standards, People's Music, People's Education and other publishers have responded to the music textbooks written during this period are still used by many schools today. In 2011, the Ministry of Education revised the music curriculum standards again, and publishers such as People's Music and People's Education responded.

Here is a revised version for an academic context: Taking the music textbooks published by the People's Music Publishing House as an example, the elementary school music curriculum is divided across 12 volumes, which are available in two notational versions: pentatonic and staff notation. The textbooks are organized by "lessons," with each lesson comprising four to five sections: listening, singing, knowledge and skills, performance, and creative activities. The singing section of the entire series of

textbooks encompasses a total of 190 songs. Starting from the first textbook of the third grade, choral works are introduced, with a total of 37 choral pieces included throughout the series. Middle school music textbooks are organized into six volumes, with each volume structured around "units." Each unit consists of five components, including singing and appreciation, among others. Choral singing is integrated into the curriculum throughout the entire middle school education stage. In China, textbooks are primarily published by the People's Music Publishing House, the People's Education Publishing House, and some local publishers. Each region and school have the autonomy to select the textbook version that best suits their needs. However, within a single school, a uniform textbook is used to ensure consistency in teaching materials.

## 7. The Teaching Status of Choral Curriculum

### 7.1 United States

In 2008, two professors in the United States jointly launched a questionnaire, the questionnaire for the United States public and private high school music curriculum statistics. The results showed that 88% of the participating schools offered choral programs, a statistic that reflects the popularity of choral education in American elementary and secondary schools<sup>[20]</sup>. Take the city of Pittsburgh in the United States as an example, with a population of only 600,000, Pittsburgh has more than 1,000 churches, each with a choir of 10 to 30 members, and almost all of the city's schools and colleges have a choir, which organizes regular rehearsals, albeit at different levels<sup>[21]</sup>. However, some schools in poor neighborhoods also fail to provide a complete music education.

In 2002, the United States federal government enacted the No Child Left Behind Act, which stipulates that "all states in the United States must conduct annual tests of the reading and math skills of public school students in grades three through eight and at least one test for students in grades nine through twelve." In order to obtain funding, elementary and secondary schools in all states of the U.S. have reduced the amount of time spent on non-tested subjects, such as music, and increased the amount of time spent on tested subjects; according to 2006 statistics from the Center for Education Policy Research, the amount of time spent on music and other arts courses was reduced by 22%. Control of education was not returned to states and local school districts until 2015, when it was replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act.

The aforementioned studies have demonstrated that choral singing occupies a significant role within the U.S. educational system. Nonetheless, the unequal distribution of resources and the intricacies of policy formulation and execution impede some elementary and secondary schools from delivering a complete music education, necessitating the compression of their music class schedules<sup>[16]</sup>.

### 7.2 China

A review of recent research on the state of choral education in Chinese primary and secondary schools reveals a mixed outlook. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview to accurately depict the current state of choral education in these schools.

In a first-tier city, Cheng Kai-li (2018) in her master's thesis examined the choral teaching at Z Elementary School in Beijing, noting that while the school choir was emphasized due to its competitive participation, classroom choral instruction received less attention. Conversely, Yang Zihan (2024) in his master's thesis investigated the "Xinhang Choir" of Shenzhen Foreign Language School, highlighting its successful implementation of a dual-echelon rehearsal model that integrates student self-governance with strict management, leading to impressive achievements. Lv Xiaoyu (2024) in her master's thesis studied choral teaching at 11 elementary schools in Xi'an's Xincheng District, identifying significant improvements in teaching infrastructure but persistent deficiencies in professional staffing, teaching methodologies, and home-school collaboration.

In second-tier cities, Zheng Sua (2022) in her dissertation focused on the choral teaching status at Kunming's Guandu District Second Middle School, identifying issues such as poor teaching effectiveness and outdated methods. Similarly, Ma Zining (2024) through questionnaires and interviews, investigated seven high school choral clubs in Changchun, finding deficiencies in preparatory work, basic training, and post-rehearsal processing.

In third-tier cities, Qian Linlin explored choral education in a primary school in Zhoukou City, Henan Province, in her master's thesis, uncovering issues like lack of attention and teacher shortages. Zhang

Shujiao, in her dissertation, analyzed the choral teaching at Ganzhou A Middle School, noting a lack of student awareness and limited teaching capabilities.

In rural areas, Yang Lan (2020) studied choral education development in Xinzhou Township, Huangping County, Guizhou Province, noting the presence of rich musical resources alongside numerous developmental challenges for choral art. Luan Yiting (2020) examined attitudes and participation in choral education at Xi Liangzi Middle School in Jidong County, Heilongjiang Province, revealing achievements yet highlighting issues such as monotonous teaching methods and insufficient school investment.

Overall, the development of choral programs across various city tiers in China shows a range of conditions, from promising to concerning. While some schools excel due to external competitive pressures, classroom choral teaching often lags, constrained by factors such as teacher qualifications and pedagogical philosophies.

## 8. Conclusions

Comparative studies show that there are significant differences between China and the United States in the field of choral education in primary and secondary schools. Choral education in the United States focuses on individuality and diversity, aiming to cultivate students' musical interests and improve their musical literacy. In contrast, China emphasizes collectivism and unity, focusing on basic music knowledge and the development of choral skills. These differences are deeply rooted in the different cultural backgrounds of each country and reflect their respective educational philosophies and policies. Based on these observations, it is necessary to consider how to develop a more comprehensive, balanced, and responsive model of primary and secondary choral education that meets the needs of our country by drawing on historical experiences and contemporary practices.

In terms of development history, choral education in the United States has a relatively long history, originating from early church choirs and community music activities, reflecting its deep religious and community cultural traditions. China's choral education started later, and only in modern times did it begin to be systematically promoted in school education.

In terms of curriculum standards, the two countries have different divisions of school segments, but the overall coursework requirements are similar. The flexibility and diversity of the U.S. curriculum standards provide a reference for China, i.e., while adhering to the local cultural characteristics, it absorbs diversified educational concepts and methods. The systematic nature of the Chinese curriculum standards also provides a reference for American choral education, i.e., while pursuing individualized teaching, it is also necessary to pay attention to systematic music education and national music heritage.

In terms of teacher education, influenced by the curriculum, music teacher education in the United States focuses on the cultivation of practical abilities and the enhancement of professional skills, and the content of education is closely related to the content of teachers' work. China is gradually improving its teacher training model, with a view to promoting the simultaneous improvement of teacher skills and teacher literacy. The two countries can learn from each other and promote the comprehensive development of teacher competence through diversified training paths.

In terms of teaching materials and resources, the openness and innovativeness of the United States provides China with new ideas, that is, on the basis of adhering to uniform teaching materials, it stimulates students' interest in learning and creativity in learning through the introduction of diversified teaching resources and teaching methods. China's rigor and systematic approach to the content of teaching materials also provides a balanced reference for the United States, i.e., to ensure that students can receive comprehensive and in-depth music education on the basis of openness, innovation and diversity.

In terms of the current state of teaching and learning, both countries are currently facing challenges in terms of unequal distribution of resources and implementation of policies. Both countries need to continue to reflect and improve in practice, based on the actual situation, and actively adjust their educational policies and teaching methods, to explore a suitable path for the development of choral education in their respective primary and secondary schools.



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