

AI- enhanced Aesthetic Experience Teaching of Folk Songs in Junior High Schools: An Applied Study

Qiuyue Gong*

College of Teacher Education, Capital Normal University, Beijing 100048, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: Artificial intelligence and school education are now integrated. This brings new requirements for folk song teaching methods in junior high schools, as students' aesthetic taste and cultural cognition should be cultivated. From real music classroom practice, this work examines how AI can help improve students' aesthetic experience in folk song learning through scene construction, audio-visual presentation, interactive communication, and personalized learning guidance, and also summarizes the main problems in current AI teaching applications that teachers often face. Some optimization strategies targeting these issues are proposed. This work is expected to improve the appeal and emotional resonance of junior high school folk song teaching. It is expected to improve students' music aesthetic literacy. Also, feasible ideas are provided for AI-assisted aesthetic teaching in junior high school music education as a reference for future work.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; Junior high school music; Folk song instruction; Aesthetic experience; Teaching application

Online publication: April 26, 2026

1. Introduction

The Compulsory Education Art Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) put core literacy in first place and regard aesthetic experience as the base of art education, so attention is paid to cultivating students' aesthetic perception and cultural understanding^[1,2]. One problem in current junior high school folk song teaching is the lack of vivid learning scenarios, which makes it hard for students to achieve deep aesthetic engagement and form cultural and spiritual resonance in the classroom^[3,4]. With strong visual scene-building capabilities, AI image generation technology can help solve this long-standing teaching challenge^[5-7]. Research on AI applications in folk song aesthetic teaching can have practical value, as junior high school folk song teaching methods can be reformed and students' aesthetic development can be improved.

2. The practical significance

2.1. Requirements of the curriculum standards for aesthetic experience teaching

The 2022 Compulsory Education Art Curriculum Standards state that music teaching can be guided by core literacy cultivation. Also, it can focus on shaping students' aesthetic perception and artistic experience. It emphasizes that music learning can be carried out in authentic and specific situational contexts. Students can be guided to perceive musical works

and express their ideas, and they can experience the art form. Also, their aesthetic competence and cultural cognition can be developed through multi-sensory learning participation ^[8].

Folk song teaching is more than technical skills training. In fact, its core value should be aesthetic and cultural education. According to the new curriculum standards, modern music teaching should focus on students' real learning experience and teachers should adopt teaching methods that are vivid and accessible while also considering the student-oriented principle because this can help students get involved in the learning process. Artificial intelligence technology can be used to provide technical support for building a classroom context, and it can help optimize the learning experience. Also, aesthetic teaching can be implemented. This new teaching mode can fit the development trend of music education in the new era.

2.2. Challenges facing current junior high school folk song instruction

Folk songs are an important carrier of China's traditional culture and they play a key role in the junior high school music curriculum. However, the aesthetic teaching effect of current folk song teaching is not good in many cases. Junior high school students now listen to popular music in daily life, and this is different from the historical background, regional features, local customs and cultural context behind folk songs. So, there is a weak emotional connection between students and folk song resources ^[9]. In most traditional classrooms, students only learn to sing and remember melodies. They cannot understand the artistic conception and emotional connotation of folk songs. So, the aesthetic experience stays superficial for a long time ^[10]. In fact, the traditional teaching modes rely on listening and verbal interpretation. They also use imitative singing. So, they can only satisfy basic requirements. These methods are insufficient in creating a classroom atmosphere, and they cannot stimulate students' emotional resonance or build immersive learning scenarios. Thus, it is hard for students to get an in-depth aesthetic immersion. This can make the effect of folk song cultural inheritance worse in classroom teaching.

2.3. New possibilities offered by AI image generation technology

Generative artificial intelligence has been developing rapidly recently. This can help AI image generation technology in music teaching. By inputting text descriptions to the system, it can generate visual content based on them, and it converts the lyrical imagery and emotional tone contained in folk songs into visual presentations that are intuitive and easy to understand, while regional scenery is also included in the generated images. It transforms abstract musical content into observable learning resources. Students can enter the aesthetic situation of folk songs. With visualized teaching aids, they can get better situational immersion. Their learning initiative is expected to improve ^[11]. Current domestic studies on AI-assisted music education mainly focus on skill training and teaching evaluation. Also, music creation is covered. By comparison, research concerning folk song aesthetic experience and visual context construction remains insufficient. Such a research gap provides a solid theoretical entry point for our study.

3. Practical pathways

3.1. Using AI image generation technology to present the artistic conception and cultural background of folk songs

Folk songs have special artistic feelings and deep cultural meanings derived from regional traditions and daily life scenes with a historical background, so these elements are abstract and hard to understand. In fact, just listening in class and the teacher's explanation are not enough to help students understand the aesthetic connotations of folk music. This makes it hard to get a deep aesthetic experience in folk song teaching ^[12]. In daily teaching, teachers can extract typical lyrics and natural imagery with folk cultural elements from textbook folk songs and use AI tools to make visual images based on themes, including realistic local scenes and traditional folk activities.

Teachers can use these visual resources through every part of the classroom teaching. When doing the lead-in part,

really striking visual images can grab students' attention; they can also break down the fixed, boring impressions students have about folk songs before they focus on the formal teaching content. Blending audio and visual materials for music appreciation works well. Showing visuals that line up perfectly with the music lets students get a better grasp of how the melody works and what emotions it's trying to convey. This method seems to shorten the cognitive gap between students and traditional folk songs. It may also lower their sense of strangeness toward folk music. In a multi-sensory learning environment, students can pick up regional characteristics and humanistic heritage hidden in folk songs; this builds a solid base for them to explore aesthetics later and understand the culture on a deeper level.

3.2. Leveraging AI audiovisual tools to create aesthetic experience contexts for folk song teaching

Teaching activities of traditional folk songs depend too much on sound-based learning only, and this makes the classroom design dull. This common approach cannot engage multiple senses at the same time, so students cannot fully understand the artistic appeal and cultural essence of folk songs, which can reduce the teaching effect ^[13]. To fix this, teachers can focus on combining original song recordings, instrumental music, and AI-generated visual scenes to make full audio-visual teaching materials. These materials create an immersive atmosphere that fits the song's theme, especially during appreciation sessions where the matched audio-visual content wraps students in the mood tied to the song's main idea, letting them step away from the rigid listening pattern forced by textbooks. They get to experience the real scenes and emotional vibes the songs depict, instead of just hearing words without context. Teachers can prompt students to link their visual impressions and auditory feelings to the musical images in each song. Then students may start to notice how changes in rhythm and tone show different emotions; they can also learn how musical expression combines with visual art. Using multiple senses for learning doesn't just pull students out of passive listening; it also pushes them to take an active part in classroom activities. In these vivid learning scenarios, students can feel the artistic beauty and inner emotions of folk songs; this can lift the overall quality and effectiveness of aesthetic education.

3.3. Responding to the aesthetic perceptions of students through real-time AI generation

Musical aesthetic appreciation is highly subjective. Life experiences, aesthetic viewpoints, cultural background, and thinking habits can shape it. When students listen to the same folk song, they can interpret the artistic mood and emotional content in different ways, and this feature defines folk song aesthetic education. In conventional classrooms, teachers can observe that students' imaginative thoughts about music often stay internal and they have few ways to display and share their ideas in visual form. Therefore, teachers can struggle to learn about students' real feelings about music. Also, personalized learning demands can be overlooked and aesthetic instruction ends up following a single pattern.

AI has real-time generation capability. In fact, it can compensate for this deficiency. In classroom appreciation and interactive sessions, teachers can guide students to share intuitive feelings, mental imagery, and also emotional changes after listening to folk songs. Then, visual pictures can be generated according to students' verbal descriptions. Students can compare the difference between their inner imagination and AI-presented scenes, and they can expand their understanding of folk songs through group communication and teacher-student interaction. This real-time interactive teaching mode fully respects students' personalized aesthetic perceptions, can activate their thinking and willingness to express, and converts passive music appreciation into active aesthetic exploration with immersive characteristics. In the end, it helps students deepen their cognition and aesthetic appreciation of folk song works.

3.4. Providing differentiated visual support for students with varying aesthetic preferences

Junior high school students are in a key growing period. Their aesthetic understanding is becoming mature, and they show big differences in personal aesthetic preferences. In the classroom, every student accepts visual styles, moods from different colors, and different art forms in their own way. Fixed, standard visual teaching materials don't meet all these varied personal aesthetic needs. That can make students less eager to learn and leave their aesthetic feeling pretty shallow ^[5]. Then, teachers may use AI's different generation tools to make visual materials that fit each folk song's artistic traits—

like real-life scenes, traditional Chinese painting, and minimalist illustrations. During actual class activities, teachers might display several sets of these works and let students pick which materials to use based on what they like aesthetically. Visual stuff that matches a student's personal aesthetic habits can get their multi-sensory perception going. It seems to help them get into the emotional vibe and artistic mood of the folk songs. This new way of teaching doesn't stick to the same old style as traditional folk song lessons do; it respects each student's unique differences. And it gets around the narrow aesthetic range by using the same teaching materials for everyone. Each student can find a starting point that fits their taste to explore traditional folk music's unique charm; they'll also feel more connected to and accept folk song culture better. To some extent, this method can turn the junior high school folk song classroom into a student-centered, inclusive space for aesthetic teaching.

4. Issues and optimization strategies

4.1. Existing shortcomings

The integration of AI and folk song teaching in junior high schools can bring some benefits. However, it should be noted that there are still practical problems that can make it hard to improve the teaching quality further. First, many teachers superficially use AI technology. In fact, they do not align it well with core teaching objectives. Some teachers just want to follow the trend of intelligent education, and they use AI tools in folk song classrooms without deep thinking. They rely too much on AI-generated visuals. This happens even in teaching links that require no situational or visual assistance. Such rigid application leads to the phenomenon of "technology for technology's sake". It deviates from the fundamental goals, which include cultivating students' folk song aesthetic experience and inheriting traditional culture. Thus, it fails to improve students' full aesthetic competence.

Second, too much dependence on intelligent technology can weaken teachers' main guiding role in the classroom, and this problem deserves attention because the teacher's role is very important for learning outcomes in traditional music education, especially when considering the special nature of folk songs. In some teaching practices observed, AI resources cover almost the whole process, including curriculum lead-in, situational creation, music appreciation and classroom summary, so teachers have little space to show their own understanding. Too much technological substitution reduces teachers' space for emotional guidance and cultural interpretation, and it can also affect communication with students, which means the personal touch is lost. In fact, folk song teaching has its own aesthetic and humanistic characteristics, which means teachers should transmit musical connotations through emotional resonance and cultural explanation, and this requirement cannot be met by machines alone. If teachers rely too much on AI tools, classroom teaching can become rigid and mechanized. Also, the humanistic warmth of music education may be reduced, and emotional interaction between teachers and students can be hindered.

Third, AI-generated visual materials cannot fully ensure cultural authenticity. In fact, folk songs come from regional customs and ethnic features with specific historical backgrounds, and they carry local humanistic characteristics. Because AI content is trained from big data, it can produce inaccurate folk symbols, distorted scenes and cultural meanings that deviate from the original. If unfiltered AI resources are used in the classroom, they can mislead students' understanding of folk culture and make it hard to cultivate correct aesthetic judgment.

4.2. Recommendations for improvement

Junior high school folk song teaching has special characteristics. It is worth noting that some optimization strategies applicable to different dimensions are proposed. Schools and teachers should standardize AI application scenarios. Teaching should center on improving students' aesthetic experience and inheriting folk song culture. Teachers should abandon formalized tech-driven teaching behaviors. In fact, according to the key and difficult teaching points of different folk song works, teachers can arrange the application of AI technology. AI visual resources can be adopted for classroom atmosphere creation and cognitive gap filling. At the same time, cultural interpretation and emotional guidance should still

be dominated by teachers' professional instruction, and singing training also needs the teacher's direct involvement. In this manner, intelligent technology can serve classroom teaching and promote students' in-depth understanding of the aesthetic and cultural value of folk songs.

Second, teachers should keep their leading role and construct a human-machine collaborative model. AI is only an auxiliary tool and it cannot replace teachers in aesthetic guidance and humanistic education. During the whole teaching process, the classroom rhythm should be grasped by teachers and they can enrich interactive communication with students. When using AI to finish basic tasks like situational construction and visual presentation, core parts should be focused on by teachers, including emotional interpretation of musical works, folk culture analysis, aesthetic concept guidance and personalized evaluation. Combining tech tools with teacher-led instruction can yield complementary advantages by letting each part cover what the other can't do well. That's key. This builds a classroom for folk song aesthetic education that uses both scientific methods and humanistic care, and this makes the teaching feel more balanced than just sticking to one way.

5. Conclusion

AI image generation tools can help shrink the cultural gap that students often feel with folk songs. They turn abstract artistic conceptions into intuitive visual scenes, and they also show implicit cultural meanings directly so that students can capture the aesthetic charm and cultural connotation of these songs without too much difficulty. Also, cultivating students' aesthetic experience should be placed at the heart of teaching; AI auxiliary tools should not be used arbitrarily. Teachers' leading functions should be strengthened, and the overall quality of teaching resources improved. Only then can technology truly empower teaching.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Du H, 2022, Cultivating Students' Literacy and Educating People Through Music (I)—Interpretation of Music Standards in the Compulsory Education Art Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition). *China Music Education*, (5): 5–9.
- [2] Liu Y, 2025, Research on Practical Strategies of Artificial Intelligence Empowering Junior High School Music Teaching. *Junior High School Students Tutoring*, (16): 25–27.
- [3] Lv X, 2023, Practice and Reflection on Folk Song Teaching in Junior High School Music Classroom. *Qin Tong*, (3): 93–95.
- [4] Liu H, 2023, Teaching Exploration of Folk Songs in Middle School Music Classroom—Taking Songs of the Soil: Minor Tunes as an Example. *China National Exhibition*, (19): 128–130.
- [5] Zhang W, 2025, Application Analysis of Artificial Intelligence in Junior High School Music Teaching. *Smart Navigation*, (35): 140–142.
- [6] Huang J, Sun S, 2025, Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology Empowering Junior High School Music Classroom. *New Curriculum Guidance*, (22): 51–54.
- [7] Sun C, 2025, An Experimental Study on the Integration of AI into Junior High School Music Teaching. *China Teachers*, (20): 123–125.
- [8] Wang A, 2022, Study on Relevant Contents of Compulsory Education Art Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) (I). *China Music Education*, (7): 5–8.
- [9] Tian Q, Xiang T, 2026, Intelligent Transformation of Music Education from the Perspective of AI—Analysis from Three

Dimensions of Core Elements, Practical Dilemmas and Development Paths. *Musical Instruments*, (3): 62–64.

- [10] Zhao M, 2025, Brief Analysis on the Effective Application of Multimedia Technology in Junior High School Music Classroom Teaching. *China New Telecommunications*, 27(17): 242–244.
- [11] Hua X, 2021, Sowing Seeds of Passion for Ethnic Music: Practical Teaching of Chinese Ethnic Music from the Perspective of Cultural Confidence. *Jiangsu Education Research*, (16): 38–41.
- [12] Shi J, 2026, Digital Intelligence Empowerment: Practice of Integrating AI Technology into Junior High School Music Singing Teaching—Taking the New Seventh-Grade Music Textbook Published by People’s Music Publishing House as an Example. *China Educational Technology & Equipment*, (5): 53–57.
- [13] Li X, 2011, Investigation Report on Ethnic Music Culture and School Music Education in Wenzhou Region. *Voice of the Yellow River*, (6): 50–52.

Publisher’s note

Whioce Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.