

ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS)



ISRG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjahss>

Volume – III Issue -III (May-June) 2025

Frequency: Bimonthly



DEVELOPING MUSICAL COMPETENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH INTERDISCIPLINARY INTEGRATION

MA. Do Thi Linh Chi

Thai Nguyen University of Education

| **Received:** 27.05.2025 | **Accepted:** 31.05.2025 | **Published:** 04.06.2025

***Corresponding author:** Dr. ASSANA

Thai Nguyen University of Education

Abstract

The 2018 General Education Curriculum of Vietnam places strong emphasis on developing students' qualities and competencies. This development must be grounded in the application of innovative teaching methods and techniques that foster creative thinking and enhance students' learning outcomes. Competency development plays a crucial role in providing students with a solid foundation of knowledge, thereby promoting creative thinking and forming effective learning habits.

This article explores the approach of developing musical competence through multiple pathways by integrating music with other academic subjects. Such interdisciplinary integration helps students achieve a balanced psychological and emotional state, supports scientific and goal-oriented learning, and creates a dynamic and engaging classroom environment.

At the 4th-grade level, students are naturally curious and eager to explore. Therefore, integrating music with other subjects enables them to develop a holistic perspective on the topics they study. The development of musical competence through interdisciplinary connections with selected subjects aims to fulfill the objectives and expected outcomes outlined in Vietnam's 2018 General Education Curriculum.

Keywords: Competence, teaching, interdisciplinary, primary school students, literature, visual arts, physical education, mathematics, creativity, logic, holistic development.

1. Introduction

Developing musical competence in 4th-grade students through interdisciplinary integration with other subjects is an effective way to promote their holistic development. This combination is highly beneficial for primary school students, as demonstrated by the following examples:

Interdisciplinary integration of music with Literature: Students can learn about poetry and song lyrics to better understand language structure and the emotions conveyed in literature.

Interdisciplinary integration of music with Mathematics: Students can explore rhythm and tempo in music to enhance their analytical skills and logical thinking.

Interdisciplinary integration of music with Visual Arts: Students can create artwork based on the emotions evoked by music, thus developing their creativity and aesthetic sense.

Interdisciplinary integration of music with Physical Education: Students can practice movements in sync with music, improving their physical health and flexibility.

By combining music with other subjects, students will not only develop their musical abilities but also enhance their creativity, logic, aesthetics, and overall health.

2. Content

2.1 Content and Structure of 4th Grade Music

Elementary School Objectives: According to the 2018 General Education Curriculum, the music subject at the elementary level introduces students to basic knowledge of general music, the diversity of the world of music, and traditional musical values. It aims to help students develop initial musical skills [3], nurture aesthetic feelings, foster a love for music, and encourage participation in age-appropriate musical activities [5]. This contributes to the formation and development of key student qualities [6] (patriotism, kindness, diligence, honesty, responsibility) and general competencies (self-management and self-learning, communication and collaboration, problem-solving and creativity - Circular 32/2018/TT-BGDĐT.).

Thus, the Music subject in 4th grade focuses on helping students develop their ability to perceive, recognize, and express music through activities such as singing and playing simple musical instruments. Some key content in the 4th grade music curriculum includes:

Learning to sing folk songs, children's songs, and songs with simple melodies.

Learning to recognize and draw basic music symbols such as musical notes, note values, and musical rests.

Learning to use simple musical instruments such as horns, drums, flutes, and bells to represent rhythm and melody instruments.

Learning to recognize and differentiate between traditional and modern musical instruments.

Participating in musical activities such as performances, group singing, and expressing emotions through music.

The goal of this subject is to help students develop creative thinking, communication skills, and a spirit of collaboration through engaging with and expressing themselves through music. This shows that students acquire a variety of musical skills after

being exposed to and learning music in a more comprehensive way. [3] [4] [5] [6] [8].

2.2 Exploring Some Content Combined with Music Teaching Methods

2.2.1 Interdisciplinary Integration with Literature to Create Musical Emotion and Imagery

Integrating music with literature is a wonderful way to create emotion and imagery in music. By combining profound lyrics with subtle melodies, the listener can experience a creative and profound musical journey.

A song's melody is closely tied to the lyrics of the work. The lyrics of a song can be considered a small piece of literary work, where the composer expresses their emotions, feelings, and meaning through words and sentence structure. Through the lyrics, the listener can perceive the hard work and dedication that the composer has invested in the piece, resulting in a meaningful and deep musical experience.

- **I Love the Summer in My Hometown** – Composed by: Tran Minh Đàng
I love the pink sunshine of my hometown,
Love the sound of cicadas calling in the noon summer heat.
I love the vast green fields,
The water flowing in the cool breeze of the canal.
The dike road where butterflies flutter,
I love the distant kite in the sky,
Love the bamboo groves and the old buffalo,
I love the colorful kingfishers,
The bee hiding in the leaves.
Together, let's sing to welcome summer.
Summer comes with the waves of rice swaying gracefully (summer comes, swaying gracefully),
Summer comes with the white storks gliding quietly (summer comes, gliding quietly),
Summer comes in the afternoon, lighting up the bright red phoenix flowers,
Summer comes with me, in harmonious singing.

The song "I Love the Summer in My Hometown" is a vibrant and emotional depiction of summer in rural Vietnam. The lyrics are simple, easy to remember, yet rich in imagery, allowing young children to not only appreciate the beauty of nature but also develop a love for their homeland. In addition, the song is a musical work rich in literary quality, clearly expressing love for the homeland through vivid and emotional imagery. Through this song, elementary students not only develop their musical appreciation but also learn to observe, describe, and express emotions in writing – aligning with the current goal of interdisciplinary integration between Music, Vietnamese Language, and Visual Arts in education.

* **Imagery and Lyricism – Rich in Literary Qualities:**

The lyrics of the song are structured like a descriptive essay about nature, featuring many vivid images: "The vast green fields," "the canal with water flowing in the cool breeze," similar to the opening scene description in a 3rd-grade composition. Additionally, words in the song such as "bamboo grove," "old buffalo," "kingfisher," and "the bee hiding in the leaves" are familiar details of personification and depiction often found in children's literature. Especially, expressions like "swaying gracefully," "gliding quietly"

show a high degree of musicality and imagery, helping students appreciate literature through melody.

* *The Structure of the Song's Lyrics – A Descriptive Passage with Expressive Elements:*

Beginning: The lyrics describe the natural beauty of the homeland (pink sunshine, cicada sounds, the fields, the canal, the dike road, butterflies, flowers...). The opening takes the listener on a walk around the countryside, showcasing the simple beauty of a sunny, windy rural area with vast rice fields, alongside gently flowing canals.

Middle: The song emphasizes the emotions of the character "I" towards each image of nature. This is expressed through words such as "I love the fields," "the bamboo groves," "the old buffalo," "the bee..." These are elements that are familiar and close to the hearts of children, things they see every day. It even touches on the simple tasks children do to help their parents, such as herding the buffalo along the dike or sitting near the rice paddies.

End: The song expands the picture with the vibrant images of summer (the red phoenix flowers, the white storks, harmonious singing). It welcomes a summer full of childhood memories, inviting listeners to embrace the peaceful and joyful moments of life with ease.

* *Artistic Devices Similar to Literature: Use of Personification:*

The song employs personification, such as "the bee hiding in the leaves," which makes nature feel as if it were close to human experience. Similarly, it uses metaphor and simile, such as "the waves of rice swaying gracefully," which softens the imagery, making the scene appear delicate and lively. Furthermore, the song repeats the phrase "I love..." to emphasize emotion, creating a sense of recollection, much like in poetry.

* *Music Makes Literature More Accessible and Emotional:*

If students only read descriptive lines about the summer landscape, they may not fully appreciate the beauty of nature. However, when they sing, they can clearly feel the bright melody and gentle rhythm, allowing them to naturally absorb the language of literature. This is a wonderful tool for developing writing skills and nurturing emotions.

• **I Love My School**

I love my school,
With all my dear friends,
And the kind teacher,
Just like loving my homeland.
Carrying books to school,
In a world full of love.
Tables and chairs,
books and notebooks,
Ink, pens, chalk, and blackboard,
The joyful birds singing on high branches,
The flag with stars in the golden autumn light,
How much I love our school.
In the season of red phoenix flowers,
the yellow chrysanthemums bloom,
The white lilies, the pink peach blossoms,
Our school is like a beautiful garden,
Good people and good deeds,

just like Uncle Ho's children,
How much I love our school.

The song "*I Love My School*" by musician Hoang Van is not only a familiar musical piece for children, but also holds significant literary value—especially when approached from the perspective of lyrical text analysis in the Literature curriculum. "*I Love My School*" is a work rich in literary qualities, with pure content, beautiful imagery, and lyrics that are both simple and profound. From the viewpoint of the Literature subject, it serves as a lesson in sincere emotions, the beauty of school life, and an inspiration for students to cherish their school and feel grateful to their teachers.

Here are some key aspects of the analysis:

- * *Theme and lyrical emotion:* The song expresses a deep, pure love of students for their school—a place closely tied to childhood memories, teachers, and friends. The tone is innocent, joyful, and full of emotion, much like a gentle lyrical poem: "I love my school. With so many dear friends. And a kind teacher..." This love is compared to the love for one's homeland—a sacred image—which elevates the emotional and symbolic value of the school in the hearts of children.
- * *Imagery and literary symbols:* The song employs numerous symbolic images with aesthetic and educational significance.
 - School symbols such as "desk," "chair," "book," "notebook," "pen," and "blackboard" are not just concrete objects, but represent knowledge and personal growth: "Desks and chairs, books and notebooks..."
 - Familiar elements of nature like "joyful birds," "tree branches," "the star flag," and "golden autumn sunlight" help create a beautiful and poetic school setting, one that is close to nature and the homeland.
 - Floral imagery—flamboyant flowers, chrysanthemums, lilies, and peach blossoms—evokes the beauty of the seasons while also symbolizing school life and the passage of time: "Our school is like a blooming garden..."
- * *Stylistic devices:* The song features many familiar artistic techniques commonly found in literature:
 - Simile: "Like loving my homeland" emphasizes deep affection. "Our school is like a blooming garden" conveys the vibrancy and richness of school life.
 - Enumeration: "Desks and chairs, books and notebooks..." creates a lively, abundant atmosphere and expresses a close emotional connection to every detail in the classroom.
 - Repetition: "How much I love..." reinforces the intensity of the affection, becoming a heartfelt emotional refrain that runs throughout the song.
- * *Educational and humanistic values:* The song evokes love for school, teachers, friends, and nature. It nurtures a sense of responsibility in learning, the spirit of solidarity, and the tradition of "respecting teachers and valuing education." It also connects personal emotions with pride in President Ho Chi Minh, contributing to moral education and shaping students' ideals in life: "Good deeds and kind people are Uncle Ho's children..."

Thus, through the song's content, students can relate to many familiar images found in literature. The lyrics serve as a bridge that

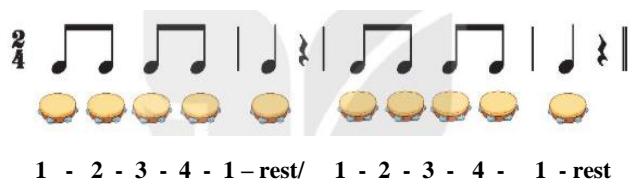
nurtures both a literary soul and a sensitivity to music in children. They help students develop a more refined and expressive use of language. Each lyric line is like a distilled sentence—conveying the essence of meaning in the most concise and poetic form. Therefore, music and literature are inseparable.

2.2.2 Interdisciplinary Integration with Mathematics for Cognitive Development

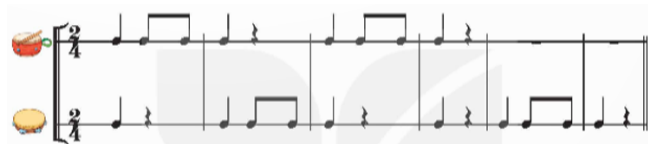
Integrating music with mathematics plays a vital role in developing thinking skills in primary school students. Music enhances creativity, perception, and logical thinking, and when combined with mathematics, it fosters more well-rounded development. This integration encourages flexible and creative thinking during the learning process. Mathematical thinking—characterized by logic and calculation—when paired with music, provides students with diverse and accurate approaches to learning music. Furthermore, it helps children better perceive rhythm and melody.

Guiding Rhythm Practice by Adding Numbers to Note Values
Instructing students to assign numbers to musical note patterns is an effective method for rhythm practice. By incorporating numbers into rhythm reading rules, students can organize their musical thinking and memory more efficiently, **resulting in faster learning and improved outcomes.**

Example 1:



Example 2:



- The rhythm line for the drum will be: 1-2-3-1-rest/ 1-2-3-1 - rest
- The rhythm line for the tambourine will be: 1-rest/ 1-2-3-1-rest/ 1-rest/ 1-2-3-1

Using percussion or melodic instruments, along with counting, helps students internalize and retain rhythmic patterns more effectively. Students need to think critically about subdividing beats, tempo (both fast and slow), and the rests, in order to maintain emotional balance in the music. By arranging counting numbers into beats and including rests, students create a rhythmic cycle of sound. Additionally, when playing in an ensemble, students need to start together accurately, play with precision, and harmonize to create a balanced, clear sound. To achieve this uniformity, students must develop a strong sense of rhythm and tempo from the beginning stages of practice, and the act of counting beats during rhythm exercises helps address the challenge of rhythm perception.

2.2.3 Interdisciplinary Integration with Visual Arts for Aesthetic Development

Music is enriched through vivid auditory imagery. Integrating visual arts facilitates a deeper emotional connection to music. Visual arts help develop the brain and foster creativity, as they enhance children's ability to think critically, observe, and critique,

thereby contributing to their cognitive development. Therefore, we should:

- Encouraging creativity in children: Learning visual arts helps children develop creativity and logical thinking. Expressing ideas and emotions through drawing, sculpture, or other artistic activities allows children to freely create and stimulate their cognitive development.
- Developing visual and aesthetic abilities: Through creating art pieces, children are exposed to various colors, images, and shapes, which helps them develop the ability to recognize and assess aesthetics.
- Enhancing spatial thinking skills: Drawing, shaping, and building in visual arts help children develop spatial thinking skills, understanding how different spatial elements, sizes, and proportions work together.
- Encouraging confidence and patience: Completing an art piece requires patience and careful attention. When children finish a work of art, they feel confident and happy with their accomplishment.

Music and visual arts both engage the senses of sight and hearing. Therefore, when students draw while listening to gentle, melodic background music, their emotions can be elevated, deepening their perception of space and time and boosting their artistic creativity. When music and visual arts are combined—for example, in theater, art videos, or multimedia performances—they can create a comprehensive artistic experience, stimulating both visual and auditory senses, and enhancing emotional expression and aesthetic impact.

Example:

Let students listen to the song “Mom, Do You Know?” by composer Nguyễn Văn Chung while coloring or drawing a picture of their mother, using the lyrics as emotional inspiration.

Mom, Do You Know How Much I Love You?

Mom, do you know how much I love you?

I just want to hug you and laugh out loud.

Mom, I know you love me so much!

Whenever I’m sad, you’re always by my side.

Your hair smells sweet, your eyes are so kind,

I love it most when you sing me to sleep!

When I grow up, I promise to be good,

To study hard—so you’ll be happy!

The lyrics describe a very ordinary mother, but to the child, she is an entire world of warmth. The child loves the scent of her hair, cherishes her gentle eyes, and feels her presence whether in sadness or joy. Therefore, when students draw based on the descriptions and emotions conveyed in the song lyrics, they can connect emotionally, enhancing their artistic creativity through the combination of music and visual arts.

In summary, learning visual arts not only helps children develop their brains and creativity but also fosters many other important skills throughout their growth. Therefore, integrating music with visual arts for primary school students supports a holistic perception of emotions, cognitive function, and the formation of new ideas. Additionally, it brings joy, excitement, patience, confidence, and allows students to comfortably express their emotions.

2.2.4 Interdisciplinary Integration with Physical Education to Develop Rhythm and Health

Integrating music with physical education is truly a wonderful way to combine rhythm development with physical well-being. Music and physical activity not only strengthen the body but also help relax the mind and uplift the spirit. It is a great way to enjoy life and maintain good health. Nowadays, exercising through dance to music or through traditional folk dance routines is widely practiced in many general education schools.

Exercising to lively music greatly enhances excitement and encourages active participation. It not only helps release energy but also improves flexibility and agility. Today, aerobic dances, rhythmic gymnastics, and various fitness routines are closely connected to music. This is because music naturally has a steady rhythm, which helps the body move in harmony, following both the musical and physical patterns of motion.

Mid-break exercises through music are also very common. The physical education teacher will teach movements coordinated with a specific song. Then, during recess, the entire school engages in group exercise activities. Everyone dances together to the same song they've previously practiced in class. Alternatively, basic sports dance routines can be used as collective physical exercises for the whole school.

Teachers can instruct each class in a simple dance routine, and then the entire school can come together to perform a synchronized dance to music. This creates an energetic and engaging atmosphere that attracts wide participation. It not only improves health and enhances rhythmic ability but also elevates the integration of sports and the arts to a new level.

Nowadays, folk dance (dân vũ) is highly popular in collective activities with large group participation. Taking part in folk dance not only improves physical health but also brings joy and relaxation to everyone involved. These activities help train the body while also creating opportunities for social interaction and mutual learning among participants.

Currently, folk dance is prioritized in many group events due to its ability to attract widespread involvement—especially in schools, where it is often organized between classes or grade levels, with participation rates reaching nearly 100%. The appeal of folk dance is broad and inclusive; anyone can perform alongside their teammates. These dances are commonly featured in events such as Vietnamese Teachers' Day (November 20th), Youth Union founding celebrations, and activities hosted by various professional sectors, drawing participants from all walks of life.

In reality, music and physical development are closely connected. Many other forms of art are integrated with music—for example, dance, folk dance, aerobics, and rhythmic gymnastics. This shows that music plays an essential role in both physical and mental development, which are key aspects of human growth and well-being.

3. Conclusion

Developing musical competence is increasingly essential in today's society—especially within the educational environment, where it plays a crucial role in fostering students' holistic development. To achieve a balanced mental and emotional state, learning the arts is indispensable. When music education is delivered with effective methods, it can yield highly impactful results.

Interdisciplinary integration between music and other subjects is truly remarkable, as it forms a perfect combination that brings

students closer to the arts, reduces stress, and stimulates creativity. Learning that incorporates subjects such as literature, visual arts, mathematics, and physical education equips students with comprehensive skills and nurtures well-rounded individuals who possess both strong character and competence.

For 4th-grade students learning in an environment rich in musical arts, they will gradually develop bold thinking, be able to showcase a variety of talents, and build trust and confidence in expressing their abilities. This is especially important in a society that needs talented individuals—those with both competence and character, confidence, and creativity to contribute to the nation.

Studying music also serves as a launching pad for thought and an explosion of intellect. Therefore, when music is integrated with other subjects, it allows students to be fully equipped with knowledge and skills in a holistic and natural way—not through rigidity or pressure, but with comfort and enjoyment.

REFERENCES

1. Nguyen Trung Kien (2014), *Methods of Vocal Music Pedagogy*, Music Publishing House.
2. Ngo Thi Nam (2007), *Singing*, Vietnam National University of Education Publishing House.
3. Pham Thi Hoa (2006), *Music Education*, Vietnam National University of Education Publishing House. [4]. Le Anh Tuan (2010), *Methods of Teaching Music in Primary and Lower secondary Schools*, Vietnam National University of Education Publishing House.
4. Department of Psychology (2018), *Educational Psychology Textbook*, Thai Nguyen University Publishing House.
5. Nguyen Anh Tuyet (2009), *Child Psychology in Preschool Age*, Vietnam National University of Education Publishing House.
6. Pham Thi Huyen (2017), *Staging Music Performance Programs for Lower Secondary School Students*, Doan Dao, Phu Cu, Hung Yen: Master's Thesis, Vietnam National University of Arts Education.
7. Ministry of Education and Training (2018), *2018 General Education Curriculum, Overall Program*.
8. Tran Hoai Phuong (2018), *Using Language Games to Develop Creative Competence for Primary School Students*, *Education Sciences*, 63(12), 21–28. <http://doi.org/10.18173/2345-1057.2018-0179>.
9. Vietnam Association of Psychology and Education Sciences (1997), *Scientific Conference: L.S. Vygotsky – Outstanding Psychologist of the 20th Century (1896–1934)*, p.84.
10. Nguyen Huy Tu (1966), *Introductory Psychology*, Education Publishing House.