

Application and Effectiveness of Situational Role-Play in an Elementary Bilingual Music Teacher Education Course

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Summary

Role-playing, which offers the benefits of contextualization of information, high interactivity, and immediate feedback, has been widely applied in teacher education, particularly for preservice teachers with limited teaching experience. In Taiwan, bilingual education has rapidly become more widespread. Taiwan has a focus on glocalization, which involves an emphasis on integrating global perspectives with local educational contexts and instructional practices. The present researcher, drawing from several years of experience in implementing a bilingual music teacher education course, has identified several ongoing challenges related to implementing such courses. These include considerable variation in preservice teachers' linguistic and musical backgrounds and difficulties in translating theoretical knowledge into effective teaching practice.

In consideration of these challenges and Taiwan's growing emphasis on glocalized bilingual education, the researcher developed situational role-play scenarios specifically focused on bilingual music instruction and examined their effectiveness in improving preservice music teachers' bilingual competence and teaching practice. Specifically, this study sought to strengthen preservice teachers' ability to apply bilingual teaching strategies and to improve their instructional performance in elementary music classes.

Using an action research design, this study was conducted at a university in northern Taiwan that has a well-known and long-established history of elementary teacher education. The bilingual music course of the current study was offered as a practice-oriented elective within the university's bilingual teacher preparation program. The study enrolled 24 preservice teachers from various

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departments—primarily the English and education departments—representing various levels of musical and linguistic proficiency. Approximately half of the participants demonstrated intermediate to upper-intermediate English competence; the participants' musical proficiency ranged from basic to advanced. The study systematically implemented its instructional design and investigated the effectiveness of the design through a 16-week bilingual music course structured into 3 iterative cycles of situational role-play activities.

The course followed a progressive three-cycle design. The first cycle focused on singing and rhythm instruction for third-grade music contexts, with the scenarios helping the participants practice basic classroom English and instructional commands. The second cycle involved a focus on recorder performance and music appreciation, with the scenarios emphasizing multimodal cues and cross-linguistic strategies. The third cycle centered on sixth-grade music composition, with the scenarios involving technology use and discipline-specific bilingual terminology. Each cycle incorporated teacher modeling, peer feedback, and role rotation to enhance bilingual instructional expression and pedagogical competence. Data were collected from multiple sources—including expert evaluations, observation notes, teaching reflections, and student satisfaction surveys—to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

The study developed five thematic situational role-play scenarios for bilingual music teaching that were refined through three iterative cycles. After a series of revisions, the final scenarios had a clear structure with well-defined contextual settings, explicit procedural steps, and integrated multimodal supports. The structured design offered a practical teaching script and provided the participants with an effective scaffold for developing their instructional competence. Implementing these role-play scenarios enhanced the participants' bilingual teaching abilities. The participants reported greater confidence and fluency in using English for classroom instruction, such as giving directions, asking questions, and offering feedback; they also showed improved ability to strategically alternate between English and their native language to facilitate student comprehension. They also made greater use of nonverbal methods—such as the use of visual aids, gestures, facial expressions, and physical demonstrations—to support their explanations; this skill is fundamental to content and language integrated learning.

The participants' classroom management and interactive teaching skills also improved. Through the authentic simulation activities, the participants were able to practice maintaining student engagement by using eye contact and movement to refocus attention, providing positive feedback, and responding calmly to unexpected student behaviors or errors. The role-play

setting—a safe and realistic approximation of a real classroom setting—enabled the participants to develop more adaptive teaching responses and expand their repertoire of classroom management strategies. The participants reported that the scenarios helped them transfer the routines and phrases they practiced into actual teaching contexts, which improved their readiness for real bilingual classrooms.

Notably, several challenges were also encountered. Many of the participants struggled to accurately explain musical concepts or to effectively demonstrate technical skills. Expert evaluators observed that some participants used musical terminology inconsistently or struggled with modeling appropriate techniques for singing and playing instruments. These results suggest that insufficient musical knowledge limited their effectiveness in bilingual music teaching, with instructional performance closely related to underlying musical expertise.

Another notable finding was the differentiated support that situational role-play offered to participants with diverse linguistic and musical backgrounds. Participants with stronger English proficiency and music skills used the activity to refine advanced teaching behaviors, whereas those with weaker abilities benefited from the structured scripts and multimodal cues that provided clear guidance and improved their confidence in using English. The flexible design of the situational role-play activity allowed for the activity to be adapted to individual levels, which ensured that all participants could meaningfully engage in the teaching process. Moreover, the iterative feedback mechanism, with feedback provided by peers and instructors, played a key role in promoting reflective practice; after each session, the participants incorporated feedback to improve their clarity, linguistic accuracy, and classroom management, leading to overall progress across the group.

This study demonstrated that situational role-play can effectively enhance preservice teachers' bilingual instructional competence, classroom interaction, and confidence in conducting bilingual music teaching. By engaging in repeated, scaffolded simulations, the participants of this study developed greater adaptability and reflective teaching practices. A need to strengthen preservice teachers' musical knowledge to ensure balanced growth in both linguistic and pedagogical domains was highlighted. These findings may serve as a reference for the design and implementation of future bilingual teacher education courses.