A/R/Tography in Chinese University Music Education: A Conceptual Analysis of Its Integration, Challenges, and A Localised Framework

Liu Yilin[1] , Mohd Syafiq Md Salleh[2]

[1]Southwest University, 400715 Chongqing, China

[2]City University Malaysia, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper examines how A/r/tography, an arts-based methodology that integrates the identities of artist, researcher, and teacher, might be integrated into Chinese university music education. It addresses two problems: the limited recognition of A/r/tography's pedagogical value in Chinese higher music education, and the misalignment between its process-oriented, inquiry-driven principles and the technically focused, assessment-driven structures of that system. Using an integrative conceptual analysis, the paper synthesises international literature on A/r/tography and arts-based research with scholarship and policy documents on music education and teacher education in China. The analysis suggests that A/r/tography can support reflective practice, creative pedagogy, and closer teacher–student collaboration, but that its uptake is constrained by evaluation regimes, conservatory traditions of transmission, teacher workload, and questions about methodological rigour. The paper sets out and responds to the principal criticisms of A/r/tography in the Chinese context, offers four propositions for future empirical testing, and proposes a phased, localised framework that gives concrete actions for curriculum designers, teacher trainers, and policymakers. No empirical data are reported; the framework is intended to guide subsequent empirical work, beginning with a planned qualitative study at Southwest University.

Keywords: A/r/tography; arts-based research; music education; Chinese higher education; teacher education; conceptual paper

INTRODUCTION

Music teacher education in Chinese universities has expanded rapidly over the past two decades, and national policy now places renewed emphasis on aesthetic education, creativity, and the professional quality of teachers (General Office of the CPC Central Committee & General Office of the State Council, 2020; Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China [MOE], 2018). Yet the dominant model of university music teaching remains organised around technical mastery, examination performance, and a separation between the roles of performer, scholar, and pedagogue (Ho, 2018, 2023). Music lecturers are frequently expected to sustain an artistic practice, publish research, and teach, but they receive little structural support for connecting these activities into a coherent professional identity.

A/r/tography offers one way of thinking about that connection. Developed at the University of British Columbia, it treats artmaking, researching, and teaching as mutually informing forms of inquiry rather than as separate jobs (Irwin, 2004; Springgay et al., 2005). Over two decades it has been adopted in art education, teacher education, and, to a lesser extent, music education across North America, Europe, Latin America, and Türkiye (Irwin, 2013; Yılmaz & Kır, 2025). Its application to Chinese university music education, however, has received little scholarly attention, and the cultural and institutional fit between the methodology and the Chinese system has not been examined systematically.

This paper is a conceptual paper. It does not report empirical data. Its purpose is to analyse, through an integrative review and synthesis of existing literature and policy, how A/r/tography could be integrated into Chinese university music education, what obstacles that integration faces, how the principal criticisms of the approach can be answered, and what a localised framework for implementation might look like. Specifically, the paper addresses three questions:

1. What pedagogical and professional benefits does the literature attribute to A/r/tography, and how relevant are these to Chinese university music education?

2. What cultural, institutional, and methodological challenges, and what criticisms, arise when A/r/tography is considered for the Chinese context?

3. What localised framework could guide curriculum designers, teacher trainers, and policymakers in integrating A/r/tography into Chinese music teacher education?

The paper proceeds as follows. Section 2 states the problem. Section 3 explains the conceptual analysis approach, including how literature was selected and synthesised. Section 4 reviews the literature. Section 5 presents the conceptual framework and a set of propositions for future empirical testing. Section 6 examines criticisms of A/r/tography in the Chinese context and responds to them. Section 7 concludes by presenting a localised implementation framework with practical steps for each stakeholder group.

Problem Statement

Music educators in Chinese universities occupy a complex position. They are expected to perform or compose at a professional level, to produce research that counts towards institutional rankings, and to prepare future school music teachers. Although Chinese music education has diversified in recent years, incorporating a wider range of musical traditions and some interdisciplinary teaching, the integration of these three roles remains largely unaddressed in policy and practice (Ho, 2018). A/r/tography, a framework designed precisely to integrate the roles of artist, researcher, and teacher, has been widely used in Western and other non-Chinese contexts (Irwin & Springgay, 2008; Yılmaz & Kır, 2025), but it remains largely unexplored in Chinese higher music education.

Two related problems follow. The first is a problem of recognition. A/r/tography is little known among Chinese music educators, and where it is known it tends to be treated as a research methodology for visual art rather than as a pedagogical stance relevant to music. Its potential contribution to reflective practice, creative pedagogy, and teacher identity is therefore under-recognised. The second is a problem of alignment. Chinese university music education has traditionally emphasised technical proficiency, teacher-led transmission, and standardised examination (Ho, 2018, 2023), whereas A/r/tography emphasises open-ended, process-oriented inquiry whose outcomes cannot be fully specified in advance (Irwin et al., 2006; Sinner et al., 2006). Professional development and evaluation systems for university teachers have, until recently, rewarded quantifiable research output rather than integrated artistic and pedagogical inquiry, although the 2020 national reform of educational evaluation has begun to challenge this (Central Committee of the CPC & State Council, 2020).

Without a clear conceptual account of how A/r/tography could be adapted to these conditions, attempts to introduce it risk being either superficial or rejected outright. This paper addresses that gap by developing such an account and translating it into a localised framework. The paper also prepares the ground for a subsequent empirical study, to be conducted at the School of Music of Southwest University, which will test the propositions advanced here. That empirical study is outside the scope of the present paper.

Conceptual Analysis Approach

Because this is a conceptual paper, it does not collect or analyse primary data. Instead, it follows an integrative conceptual analysis: a structured review of theoretical, empirical, and policy literature whose purpose is to synthesise existing knowledge into a new conceptual framework rather than to estimate effects (Leavy, 2015). The approach involved four stages.

Identification of Sources

Literature was identified through searches of Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar for English-language sources, and of the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) for Chinese-language sources. Search terms combined "a/r/tography" or "arts-based research" with "music education", "teacher education", "China" or "Chinese", and "higher education". Backward and forward citation tracking from foundational texts (Irwin, 2004; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Springgay et al., 2005) was used to locate further sources. National policy documents relating to aesthetic education, teacher education, and educational evaluation were retrieved from official Chinese government sources.

Selection Criteria

Sources were included if they (a) set out the theoretical foundations or quality criteria of A/r/tography or arts-based research; (b) reported or reviewed the application of A/r/tography in education; (c) analysed music education, creativity, or teacher education in Chinese or Chinese-heritage contexts; or (d) were national policy documents bearing directly on aesthetic education or teacher evaluation in China. Peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books and book chapters, and official policy texts were eligible. Sources were excluded if they could not be located and verified through a publisher, journal, or institutional repository, or if they mentioned A/r/tography only in passing.

Analysis and Synthesis

Selected sources were read in full and coded thematically. Codes were grouped into three analytic categories that structure the rest of the paper: (a) claimed benefits of A/r/tography; (b) contextual challenges in Chinese university music education; and (c) criticisms of A/r/tography and arts-based research. Within each category, sources were compared to identify points of agreement, tension, and gaps. The synthesis was then used to derive the conceptual framework in Section 5, the responses to criticism in Section 6, and the localised implementation framework in Section 7.

Scope and Limitations of the Approach

The analysis is interpretive, and the framework it produces is a reasoned proposal, not an empirically validated model. English-language literature on A/r/tography is far more extensive than Chinese-language literature, so the synthesis may under-represent Chinese scholarly perspectives. To mitigate this, the paper draws on Chinese-heritage music education research from mainland China and Hong Kong and on Chinese policy documents. The propositions in Section 5.4 are offered explicitly as claims for future empirical testing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A/r/tography: Origins and Theoretical Foundations

A/r/tography is a form of practice-based, arts-based educational research in which the practitioner's artmaking, researching, and teaching are treated as interrelated forms of inquiry (Irwin, 2004; Irwin & Springgay, 2008). The slashes in the term signal that the identities of artist, researcher, and teacher are held together rather than ranked, and that meaning emerges in the spaces between them. Irwin (2004) describes this as a "metonymic métissage", a blending of practices in which each identity informs the others. Springgay et al. (2005) characterise A/r/tography as "living inquiry", an ongoing engagement with the world through art and text, organised around renderings such as contiguity, openness, metaphor and metonymy, reverberation, and excess. Later work emphasises its rhizomatic and relational character: inquiry proceeds through connections among people, places, and practices rather than through a fixed, linear design (Irwin et al., 2006; Irwin, 2013).

A/r/tography belongs to the wider family of arts-based research, which uses artistic processes and forms to generate and communicate understanding that propositional language alone cannot easily capture (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015). It also draws on two well-established educational theories that are central to this

paper. Schön's (1983) account of reflective practice holds that professionals develop expertise by reflecting in and on action; A/r/tography gives that reflection an artistic medium. Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism holds that knowledge is co-constructed through social interaction; A/r/tography's emphasis on communities of practice and collaborative inquiry is consistent with that view.

Potential Benefits of A/r/tography

4Promoting Reflective Practice

A/r/tography integrates artistic creation with teaching in a way that makes reflection habitual rather than occasional. Irwin and Springgay (2008) argue that, because a/r/tographers treat their own artistic and pedagogical practice as a site of research, they continually question their assumptions and adapt their teaching. In a system where music teaching has traditionally emphasised technical skill (Ho, 2018), A/r/tography could encourage teachers to incorporate creativity and more personalised approaches to instruction, and so model for students the kind of reflective, creative musicianship that national policy now calls for.

Interdisciplinary Integration

A/r/tography is inherently interdisciplinary, bridging art, education, and research. Its multimodal approach can introduce richer content and methods into music education, including composition, improvisation, visual and written reflection, and collaborative projects, and in doing so can develop students' artistic literacy, critical thinking, and collaboration (Springgay et al., 2005; Irwin et al., 2006). For music educators, this offers a way to move beyond rigid subject boundaries and to connect performance, theory, and pedagogy.

Fostering Innovation and Cultural Engagement

In A/r/tography, artistic practice is both part of the research process and a means of dissemination. Through participatory and collaborative practice it can strengthen links between students, teachers, and communities, and so deepen students' social awareness and cultural understanding (Leavy, 2015). In China, this could support music education that engages with local and traditional musical cultures, an aim explicitly stated in national aesthetic education policy (General Office of the CPC Central Committee & General Office of the State Council, 2020). Evidence from Hong Kong, where teacher–artist partnerships in Cantonese opera teaching produced changes in students' engagement with a traditional art form (Leung & Leung, 2012), suggests that integrating artistic practice into teaching is feasible in a Chinese-heritage setting.

Limitations and Contextual Challenges

Cultural and Educational System Conflicts

A/r/tography originated in a Western, specifically Canadian, academic context, and it carries assumptions about learner autonomy and open-ended inquiry that may sit uneasily with established practice in Chinese music education. Chinese music education has long emphasised technical proficiency and standardised teaching, while A/r/tography emphasises exploratory, process-oriented learning (Ho, 2018, 2023). Classroom practice in Chinese music education has often been teacher-centred, and the one-to-one, master–apprentice model of instrumental and vocal tuition, which is also common in Western conservatoires, tends to position the teacher as the authority on interpretation (Gaunt, 2008). These features contrast with A/r/tography's collaborative, dialogic orientation.

Institutional and Resource Constraints

Chinese universities face institutional barriers to implementing A/r/tography. Teacher development programmes have tended to focus on teaching skills and conventional research output, with little support for educators seeking to integrate artistic, research, and teaching roles (MOE, 2018). Evaluation systems have historically counted publications and titles rather than integrated practice, although recent national reform explicitly seeks to reduce

reliance on such indicators (Central Committee of the CPC & State Council, 2020). Few music educators have direct experience of A/r/tography, and there is little Chinese-language literature to guide them.

Adaptation Challenges for Teachers and Students

A/r/tography asks teachers to combine strong artistic skill with research literacy and pedagogical reflexivity, a combination that many music educators have not been trained for. It also asks students to create and reflect rather than only to reproduce, which may initially be uncomfortable for students whose prior experience has been examination-oriented (Ho, 2023). Studies of creative music-making in Hong Kong secondary schools indicate that teachers need structured frameworks and support before they can confidently introduce creative activities (Leung, 2004).

Summary and Research Gap

The literature indicates that A/r/tography has well-theorised benefits for reflective practice, interdisciplinary integration, and cultural engagement, and that it has been adopted in a growing range of national contexts (Yılmaz & Kır, 2025). It also indicates real cultural, institutional, and capability barriers in Chinese university music education. What is missing is (a) a systematic account of how A/r/tography could be adapted to these conditions, (b) a direct engagement with the criticisms that the approach is likely to face in China, and (c) a concrete framework that stakeholders could act on. Sections 5 to 7 address these gaps.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework brings together the theoretical foundations of A/r/tography, its potential role in Chinese university music education, the challenges it faces, and the ways in which those challenges might be addressed. Its purpose is to bridge traditional music education practice and the more creative, interdisciplinary methods that A/r/tography promotes.

Core Components

Figure 1 summarises the core components. At its centre is the integration of three roles (artist, researcher, and teacher) supported by two theoretical foundations: reflective practice (Schön, 1983) and social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978).

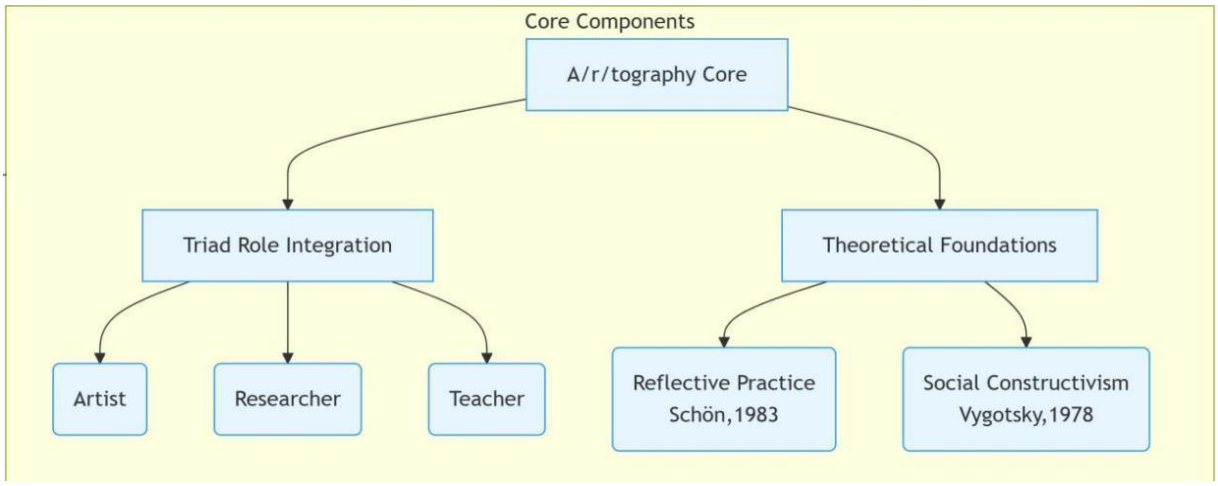

Figure 1. Core components of A/r/tography and their theoretical foundations

Integration into Chinese University Music Education

Traditional Chinese university music education has produced high levels of technical proficiency but has given less attention to creativity, critical thinking, and reflective practice (Ho, 2018, 2023). A/r/tography offers a way to address these gaps without discarding technical training. Rather than only transmitting technical knowledge,

teachers become creators and researchers who reflect on and innovate in their practice alongside their students. Three integration strategies follow from the literature:

- **Incorporating artistic creation into the curriculum.** Creative tasks such as composition, arrangement, improvisation, and artistic reflection are placed alongside technical training, so that students engage with music as both performers and creators.

- **Modelling the integrated role.** Teachers act as instructors, artists, and researchers, making their own artistic and inquiry processes visible to students.

- **Promoting reflective teaching.** Teachers engage in ongoing, documented reflection in which their artistic work informs and improves their teaching, creating a continuous cycle of professional development.

Key Constructs

Three constructs organise the framework and are intended to guide future empirical work:

- **Application of A/r/tography:** the extent and manner in which A/r/tographic practices are integrated into curriculum, teaching, and teacher development.

- **Teacher reflective practice:** the capacity of teachers to engage in reflection through artistic creation, and the influence of that reflection on their teaching.

- **Student creativity and critical thinking:** the extent to which students generate original musical ideas and evaluate their own and others' work.

Propositions for Future Empirical Testing

Consistent with the conceptual nature of this paper, the following statements are not tested here. They are offered as propositions derived from the literature synthesis, to be examined in future empirical research, beginning with the planned qualitative study at Southwest University and, subsequently, in studies that can operationalise the constructs above.

1. **Proposition 1.** Structured engagement with A/r/tographic practice will be associated with more frequent and deeper reflective practice among university music educators.

2. **Proposition 2.** Integrating artistic creation and reflection into the music curriculum will be associated with greater student creativity and critical thinking than technically focused instruction alone.

3. **Proposition 3.** The uptake of A/r/tography will be moderated by institutional conditions, particularly evaluation criteria, workload, and leadership support.

4. **Proposition 4.** Adaptations that connect A/r/tography to Chinese musical traditions and to national aesthetic education goals will increase teacher acceptance relative to unadapted implementation.

Criticisms of A/r/tography in the Chinese Context and Responses

Any proposal to introduce A/r/tography into Chinese university music education should anticipate and answer the criticisms it is likely to meet. Five criticisms recur in the literature and in the analysis above. Each is stated below, followed by a response grounded in evidence or reasoned argument. Table 1 summarises the criticisms and responses.

Criticism 1: A/r/tography Is a Western Import Incompatible with Chinese Educational Culture

Criticism. A/r/tography emerged from Canadian, largely Anglophone, academic culture and rests on assumptions about learner autonomy and individual voice. Critics may argue that it cannot be transplanted into an educational culture shaped by Confucian respect for authority and teacher-led transmission.

Response. This criticism has some force, and it is the reason this paper argues for localisation rather than adoption. However, three considerations weaken it. First, the integration of artistic practice, scholarship, and teaching is not alien to Chinese tradition: the literati ideal of the scholar who was also a musician, calligrapher, or painter, and the Neo-Confucian principle of the unity of knowledge and action (*zhi xing he yi*), both assume that cultivation in an art and intellectual inquiry inform each other. A/r/tography can therefore be presented as resonant with, rather than foreign to, Chinese educational values. Second, A/r/tography has already been adapted outside its country of origin; a meta-synthesis of studies in Türkiye found that it was taken up in local art education research and practice (Yılmaz & Kır, 2025), and its founding literature includes the work of Chinese-Canadian artist Gu Xiong (Irwin et al., 2006). Third, Chinese national policy now explicitly calls for creativity, aesthetic cultivation, and engagement with traditional culture in education (General Office of the CPC Central Committee & General Office of the State Council, 2020), aims that A/r/tography is well placed to serve.

Criticism 2: A/r/tography Lacks Methodological Rigour

Criticism. Arts-based research, including A/r/tography, has been criticised for ambiguity and for the absence of agreed quality criteria (Sinner et al., 2006). In Chinese academic culture, where research is commonly judged against positivist or quantitative standards, such work may be dismissed as subjective.

Response. Proponents of arts-based research acknowledge these concerns and have responded by articulating quality criteria suited to the methodology rather than borrowed from other paradigms, such as incisiveness, coherence, generativity, and social significance (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015). Sinner et al. (2006) recommend asking what arts-based work is "good for" rather than applying predetermined criteria. A/r/tography also does not need to replace other research approaches. Within the localised framework proposed here, A/r/tographic inquiry can be combined with systematic documentation (reflective journals, artistic portfolios, peer review of creative outputs) and, where appropriate, with conventional qualitative or mixed methods. This makes the work transparent and assessable while preserving its artistic character.

Criticism 3: Chinese Students Are Passive Learners and Will Resist Open-Ended Inquiry

Criticism. Because Chinese students are accustomed to examination-oriented, teacher-led instruction, they may resist creative and reflective tasks whose outcomes are uncertain.

Response. The assumption that Chinese learners are inherently passive is contradicted by research on the "paradox of the Chinese learner", which shows that practices that appear to be rote learning often coexist with deep understanding and high achievement (Watkins & Biggs, 1996). Resistance, where it occurs, is better understood as a response to unfamiliar expectations than as a cultural trait, and it can be reduced by scaffolding. Studies of creative music-making in Hong Kong (Leung, 2004) and of teacher–artist partnerships in Cantonese opera (Leung & Leung, 2012) show that students in Chinese-heritage contexts engage productively with creative work when it is introduced through clear structures and culturally meaningful material. The framework below therefore introduces A/r/tographic tasks gradually and links them to familiar repertoire.

Criticism 4: A/r/tography Conflicts with Technical Standards and Conservatory Tradition

Criticism. University music programmes must produce technically competent performers and teachers. Time spent on open-ended inquiry may dilute technical training, and the master–apprentice tradition may regard such inquiry as a distraction.

Response. A/r/tography does not require technical training to be reduced; it changes how practice is reflected on and shared. Research on one-to-one conservatoire teaching shows that the master–apprentice model, while

effective for transmitting technique, can limit student autonomy and the development of an individual artistic voice (Gaunt, 2008), a limitation that is not specific to China. Integrating structured reflection and creative tasks into technical study can therefore complement, rather than compete with, technical goals. The framework embeds A/r/tographic elements within existing courses (for example, reflective practice journals attached to performance modules) rather than adding separate content.

Criticism 5: Institutional Evaluation and Workload Make A/r/tography Impractical

Criticism. Chinese university teachers face heavy teaching loads and evaluation systems that reward publications and titles. A/r/tographic work is time-consuming and its outputs may not count towards promotion.

Response. This is the most serious practical objection, and it cannot be answered by argument alone. However, the policy environment is changing. The national *Overall Plan for Deepening Educational Evaluation Reform in the New Era* directs institutions to reduce reliance on paper counts and to give greater weight to teaching achievement (Central Committee of the CPC & State Council, 2020), and national teacher education policy calls for improved professional development for teacher educators (MOE, 2018). These reforms create space for institutions to recognise integrated artistic, pedagogical, and research outputs. The framework therefore treats evaluation reform as a necessary condition and assigns specific actions to policymakers and institutional leaders.

Table 1. Summary of criticisms of A/r/tography in the Chinese context and responses

Criticism	Core concern	Response (evidence or argument)
1. Western import	Assumptions of learner autonomy conflict with Confucian, teacher-led culture	Resonance with literati tradition and unity of knowledge and action; adoption beyond Canada (Yılmaz & Kır, 2025); alignment with national aesthetic education policy
2. Lack of rigour	Ambiguity; no agreed quality criteria (Sinner et al., 2006)	Methodology-appropriate criteria (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2015); systematic documentation; combination with other methods
3. Passive learners	Students will resist open-ended creative tasks	"Paradox of the Chinese learner" (Watkins & Biggs, 1996); Hong Kong evidence (Leung, 2004; Leung & Leung, 2012); gradual scaffolding
4. Technical standards	Inquiry dilutes technical training and conflicts with master–apprentice tradition	Limits of one-to-one model (Gaunt, 2008); embed reflection within existing performance modules
5. Evaluation and workload	A/r/tographic work is time-consuming and not rewarded	2020 evaluation reform; MOE (2018) teacher education plan; institutional recognition of integrated outputs

Conclusion and a Localised Framework for Integration

Summary of the Argument

This paper has argued that A/r/tography offers a coherent response to a persistent problem in Chinese university music education: the separation of the artistic, research, and teaching roles of music educators, and the corresponding neglect of reflective and creative practice. The literature suggests real benefits for reflective practice, interdisciplinary learning, and cultural engagement. It also identifies cultural, institutional, and capability barriers. Section 6 showed that the main criticisms of A/r/tography in the Chinese context can be answered, provided that the approach is localised rather than transplanted. The remainder of this section sets out what that localisation could involve.

The Localised A/r/tography Framework for Chinese Music Education

The proposed framework rests on four principles derived from the analysis:

1. **Cultural grounding.** A/r/tographic inquiry should draw on Chinese musical traditions, repertoire, and philosophical resources (for example, the unity of knowledge and action), so that it is experienced as an extension of Chinese educational values rather than a foreign import.

2. **Embedding, not adding.** A/r/tographic practices should be integrated into existing performance, pedagogy, and research courses rather than introduced as separate modules competing for curriculum time.

3. **Scaffolded progression.** Creative and reflective expectations should increase gradually, from structured tasks to open inquiry, to support students and teachers unfamiliar with the approach.

4. **Policy alignment and recognition.** Implementation should be explicitly linked to national aesthetic education and evaluation reform goals, and A/r/tographic outputs should be recognised in teacher evaluation.

These principles are put into practice through three phases, each with specific actions for curriculum designers, teacher trainers, and policymakers or institutional leaders (Table 2).

Table 2. Phased implementation framework and stakeholder actions

Phase	Curriculum designers	Teacher trainers	Policymakers and institutional leaders
Phase 1: Awareness and piloting (Year 1)	Identify two or three existing courses (e.g., performance pedagogy, music teaching methods) for pilot integration Design reflective-practice journal and creative-portfolio tasks linked to course outcomes	Run introductory workshops on A/r/tography using music-specific and Chinese examples Form a small community of practice of volunteer lecturers	Approve pilot status and protect participating staff time Fund Chinese translation of key A/r/tography texts
Phase 2: Embedding (Years 2–3)	Revise course learning outcomes to include reflective and creative competencies Develop assessment rubrics for creative and reflective work aligned with the criteria discussed in Section 6.2	Introduce peer observation and collaborative inquiry cycles Mentor pre-service teachers to document their own artist–researcher–teacher practice during teaching practicum	Recognise A/r/tographic outputs (performances, compositions, exhibitions, reflective publications) in staff evaluation, consistent with the 2020 evaluation reform Support partnerships with local artists and cultural institutions
Phase 3: Consolidation and scaling (Years 4–5)	Integrate A/r/tographic components across the music teacher education programme Share curriculum materials across institutions	Embed A/r/tography in continuing professional development for in-service teachers Train experienced participants as facilitators	Evaluate outcomes empirically (testing Propositions 1–4) Use the findings to inform provincial or national guidance on music teacher education

Practical Steps for Each Stakeholder Group

Curriculum designers should begin by mapping where reflective and creative competencies already appear, even implicitly, in existing course outcomes, and build A/r/tographic tasks onto those points. A practical starting design is to pair each performance assessment with a short reflective component, such as a written, audio, or visual commentary in which the student explains interpretive decisions and what they learned. Repertoire choices should include Chinese traditional and contemporary works, so that inquiry engages with students' own musical heritage. Assessment rubrics should describe the quality of inquiry and reflection, not only the final product.

Teacher trainers should model A/r/tography rather than only describe it. Workshops can ask participants to create a short musical work in response to a teaching problem, document the process, and share it with colleagues; this demonstrates in practice how artistic creation can become a form of pedagogical inquiry. Communities of practice of four to six lecturers, meeting regularly to share their artistic and teaching work, provide the social structure that A/r/tography's constructivist foundations require (Vygotsky, 1978). For pre-service teachers, the teaching practicum is a natural site for documenting the integration of the three roles.

Policymakers and institutional leaders should create the conditions that make the above possible. The most important measure is to recognise A/r/tographic outputs in staff evaluation and promotion, which is consistent with the direction of the 2020 evaluation reform. Leaders should also protect time for pilot participants, fund translation and resource development, and commission independent evaluation of pilots so that decisions about scaling rest on evidence.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As a conceptual paper, this study offers a reasoned framework rather than empirical findings. The framework's feasibility and effects remain to be tested. The first step will be a qualitative study at the School of Music of Southwest University, using interviews, classroom observation, and document analysis to examine how music educators understand and could implement A/r/tography, and to provide initial evidence on Propositions 1, 3, and 4. Later studies could use mixed methods to examine Proposition 2 and to compare institutions in different regions of China. Future research should also expand the Chinese-language literature on A/r/tography so that the approach can be developed by Chinese scholars on their own terms.

If it is localised thoughtfully, A/r/tography could help Chinese university music education develop teachers who perform, inquire, and teach as a single, integrated practice, and in doing so contribute to the creative and reflective music education that national policy now seeks.

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