

# **THE PRACTICE WORKS AND SUGGESTIONS OF VOCATIONAL PIANO TEACHING IN CHINA**

**Zhu Nan,<sup>1</sup> Nicha Pattananon<sup>2</sup>**

Faculty of Music, Bangkokthonburi University<sup>1-2</sup>  
China,<sup>1</sup> Thailand<sup>2</sup>

**Email:** 19711090006@163.com<sup>1</sup>

**Received:** July 1, 2024; **Revised:** August 6, 2024; **Accepted:** October 7, 2024

## **Abstract**

Piano practice works are specially constructed for preschoolers to practice basic piano skills and improve students' ability to play fingers and arrange piano music accompaniment. Starting from simple and easy-to-learn children's piano pieces, from shallow to deep, students can master the piano in a more regular and methodical way, so that students can practice in the right way to make their fingers more flexible, and their finger running ability more and more clear, natural and clean; skillfully arranging and matching the accompaniment of piano pieces. Let teachers teach students to recognize piano pieces, master them, and practice them more regularly. This article presented (1) current situation and existing problems of piano practice works, (2) practice works and suggestions of vocational piano teaching, (3) method of constructing piano practice works.

**Keywords:** Practice Works; Suggestion; Vocational; Piano Teaching

## **Introduction**

Since the new century, the upsurge of learning piano in China is one wave higher than another, and the number of people learning is also increasing. Many parents let their children learn piano from a young age, but with the piano boom, there are problems in practical piano practice. In order to adapt to the rapid economic development of our country, in order to improve the standards of secondary vocational schools and society, many majors have carried out

school-based curriculum development, and even trained according to the requirements of employers, it is necessary to improve the competitiveness of secondary vocational students. Moreover, the autonomy of vocational school curriculum is relatively strong, and it is imperative to develop school-based textbooks in combination with the characteristics of the school, the conditions of teachers and the basis of students, and it is very necessary to develop appropriate school-based textbooks.

In order to cultivate qualified preschool teachers as the goal, preschool teachers' music teaching activities and abilities are very important, highlighting practical operation and strain ability in piano performance and improvisation accompaniment, so music courses are very important for secondary vocational preschool teachers, especially piano teaching and the use of textbooks are very key. Piano class is a required basic course for art majors in secondary vocational schools. It is a basic course for art majors. It plays a positive role in promoting the learning of other specialized subjects. As an auxiliary subject in the teaching of art majors, the improvement of teaching methods and the selection of teaching materials are obviously especially important in view of the fact that the students are not solid, not interested, and the learning time is short, and many other factors.

At present, there are fewer comprehensive teaching materials on the market that are suitable for basic piano teaching in secondary vocational colleges. Most of them are works for piano majors, which requires the construction and integration of a set of comprehensive works integrating teaching content, teaching methods, skills, techniques, interests, hobbies, and ability cultivation.

## **Current Situation and Existing Problems of Pia Practice Works**

At present, with the development of China's market economy, the social demand for talents is constantly rising, and against this background, the cause of higher vocational education is booming. According to the statistics provided by the relevant departments, there are more than 500 higher vocational colleges and universities nationwide, showing a blowout development trend. As an important part of China's education, vocational education is of great significance to the

development of local economy, the promotion of social employment and the protection of social stability. In terms of its cultivation goal, it can provide a large number of professionally trained high-quality comprehensive talents for the development of social economy. Piano teaching in higher vocational colleges and universities as a new course, also has a profound social foundation. As an art course aiming at cultivating qualified musicians, it also aims at improving students' comprehensive quality in terms of curriculum, teaching materials and methodology, so as to provide the necessary support for them to master solid basic knowledge, strengthen the ability to use accompaniment and enrich their musical quality (Lin, 2014).

However, in these years of piano teaching practice activities found that the current higher vocational colleges and universities in the piano course teaching although made some progress, but there are still big problems. The lack of systematic teaching, the lack of unified standardized teaching materials, teaching and practical application of the detachment, teaching objectives are not clear, the quality of different sources of students caused by the uneven level of student piano. Combined with my own experience in piano teaching, I take piano education in higher vocational colleges and universities as the research object to explore the problems and countermeasures in piano teaching in higher vocational colleges and universities (Li, 2016).

**Reuse similar piano exercise books:** In the first decade of the 21st century, piano education has made rapid development. A large number of piano materials have been introduced in China, many of which are still in use today. Czerny and Hanon exercises are suitable for the primary stage. Since their publication, compared with other composers, the collection of etudes and public acceptance are relatively high, and it is still the first choice for many piano teachers to choose textbooks. Up to now, the commonly used advanced exercise courses in China, namely Czerny works, textbooks to step by step, from easy to difficult rules, with rigorous musical structure, harmony structure and fingering structure, is the ideal technical training materials for playing classical works. This series of teaching materials has become an important reference for the degree of basic piano technology performance in China, and has been widely used in piano teaching with different degrees, and become the standard to

measure the degree of candidates in amateur or professional piano examinations (Liu, 2003).

Nowadays, most piano practitioners and some educators still practice and teach in the series. Through visiting the classmates, students and some workers engaged in piano education, the author found that the piano students at any stage are highly familiar with the Czerny series of textbooks, and some teachers also prefer to choose the familiar textbooks they used in their children. Czerny tutorial has outstanding performance in training the basic technical ability of piano, but it is limited to use a kind of textbooks to solve all the problems in piano performance and teaching. Frequent use of similar teaching materials, from the perspective of teaching and learning, for beginners, especially younger piano children, may reduce their interest in learning the piano, but also affect the change and update of teachers' teaching ideas. Nowadays, with the increasing development of piano performance art and the continuous updating of modern educational concepts, the teaching mode also needs to keep pace with The Times.

**Too much selection of piano etudes that emphasize technical training:** In terms of the selection of textbooks for the primary stage of piano performance, Czerny 599 and 849 are the popular exercise textbooks of the public, and still enjoy an amazing circulation today. In foreign works, some people point out: " Czerny believes that we should first leave the music alone, and then let the skills finally serve the realization of artistic goals. Technology and music were the first clear and straightforward separation." Czerny pay more attention to finger technology training, the focus is mainly on the training of finger flexibility, independence and powerful, each etude technology topic is clear. For example, the textbooks frequently used in the primary stage mainly involve the types of technology: scale, chromatic, arpeggios, broken chord, double tone, decorative tone, etc.; including key touch methods: staccato, legato, non-legato, etc. These are the basic technical topics and playing methods that need to be mastered in the primary stage. Most piano teachers prefer to choose this kind of textbooks to solve students' technical problems quickly and effectively. Repeated use and practice will indeed effectively improve the technical level. These etudes contain a variety of techniques, but the musical style and type division of the repertoire are not obvious enough, specifically

manifested in the relatively single accompaniment texture, less melodic exercises, and the tonality of the works in major key. At this stage, beginners should strengthen basic technical training in order to show music more freely in the future, but too much selection of songs with strong skills may affect the development of students' comprehensive skills, such as establishing inner hearing and enriching musical imagination (Luo, 2015).

**Lack of systematic subject system in teaching:** In the current stage of piano classroom teaching practice in higher vocational colleges, a considerable number of piano teachers do not have a clear understanding of the teaching objectives of the subject, and do not formulate necessary solutions according to the outline requirements and combined with the technical problems in different stages. In the actual teaching process, there is no enough understanding of the specific situation of the teaching objects, the teaching skills is strong, and there is no complete and scientific teaching system, which is very detrimental to the improvement of students in their future life and work (Song, 2007).

**There is a lack of standardized piano exercise books in piano teaching:** In higher vocational colleges piano teaching did not choose the standardization of unified piano exercise book teaching material, on the choice of teaching material is larger randomness, most of higher vocational colleges are independent teaching materials and reference material selection, different colleges and universities choose teaching material also different, teachers recommend exercises purpose is also very different. The lack of standardized and annotated selection of teaching materials is not conducive to students' communication and the improvement of the overall teaching level (Luo, 2007).

## **Practice Works and Suggestions of Vocational Pia Teaching**

The pace of piano performance and teaching development has never stopped, and modern piano education should keep pace with The Times and conform to the trend of The Times. To cultivate a pianist or music lover, it is necessary to conduct all-round training on the technical basis of piano performance and the foundation of music, and put the art education of music in the first place of teaching. The repeated use of similar piano exercise books and the excessive selection of technical etudes have certain limitations in improving

students' comprehensive musical literacy. For example, some etudes have less multi-voice training, single tone and rhythm, and focus on the right hand. Learning piano needs not only to cultivate comprehensive technical ability, but also to develop students' musical perception ability, musical imagination ability and musical performance ability. Music aesthetic taste and art appreciation ability will gradually form in the initial stage of students' contact with art music. Teachers in choosing teaching materials, can try to choose different composers, different styles of etudes, the piano playing the important music elements, such as: phrases, voice, strength level, rhythm change, melody line into etude teaching, the cultivation of music comprehensive ability into the piano etudes, help to establish the original music appreciation and comment standard, so as to improve music literacy, expand music vision (Lin, 2014).

**Pay attention to the practicality of music teaching in preschool education majors:** Over the years, music teaching has been in a myth, that is the music teaching as a pure music learning, in terms of preschool education professional, the current music class specialized courses mainly have piano, vocal music, dance, etc., and in the actual teaching, most professional teachers have the "heavy light" phenomenon, one-sided pursuit of exam scores, emphasize the high level of professional level, but ignores the practicability of the future. We should know that the university is a base to directly cultivate all kinds of talents needed in social life, and preschool education is preschool teachers, not pianists, pianists, so we must pay attention to the combination of teaching content and the actual role in the future, should be targeted, targeted for practical teaching.

**Piano teaching should focus on accompaniment rather than skills:** Piano major is a required course in preschool education, but most students majoring in preschool education have not contacted the piano when they enter the school, even if some students have learned it, the degree is very low. So in the piano lessons, if according to the music professional students to request step-by-step to play the tutorial, play polyphonic, practice skills, after speed, a semester play one, two, not only a waste of time, and no practical value, because preschool teachers need is simple music demonstration playing and actual accompaniment ability, so in the piano teaching, such as focus, scientifically arrange learning progress, also can't in the limited hours achieve rapid, ideal effect, more can't achieve the purpose of adapt to the needs of the future work,

so according to the characteristics of students' professional, in the piano teaching.

China should emphasize "quick success" and "practical", that is, to quickly acquire the basic piano playing skills in a limited time. Through the practice of scale, arpeggios and chord, achieve the ability to relax and move fingers independently, and at the same time initially master the basic technical essentials of music performance. Through the cultivation and exercise of visual play ability, to achieve the purpose of getting familiar with the score, familiar with the keyboard. In the piano professional class, the basic practice, visual play practice and playing small children's songs or for children's songs configuration accompaniment organically combined, so as to achieve the practical purpose.

**Pay attention to the diversification of piano teaching in preschool education majors:** With the rapid development of science and technology in today's world, today's children's horizons are also increasingly broadened. With the gradual popularization of television, computer, the children are no longer block, they have already mastered a lot of knowledge and information, their thirst for knowledge is becoming more and more strong, involving also more and more wide, this requires the future preschool teachers to have rich knowledge and more comprehensive ability, so, I claim not profound in preschool professional music teaching, only diverse.

For preschool students, need to learn and master the course category is more, should add elective courses, for those who work hard, diligent or interested in a knowledge of students, students in terms of music in addition to the compulsory piano, vocal music, dance, can also open erhu, accordion, guzheng, pipa, electronic courses, make them understand and contact a variety of Musical Instruments, preliminary master a variety of instrument playing methods and performance, in order to better qualified for the future work (Sai, 2000).

Appreciating music can not only make children physically and mentally healthy, love life, feel the experience of music beauty, but also stimulate children's imagination and creativity, and finally enable children to penetrate all the "nutrition" of their beneficial experience in the music experience into their "every cell of life". And combine the love of music into their intelligence and emotion, Therefore, preschool majors should pay attention to the teaching of

music appreciation, This music appreciation class should be based on the principle of short, elegant, vivid, image, Choose the famous Chinese and foreign songs suitable for children's characteristics to learn, For example, Mendelssohn's Song of the Children, He Luting's piccolo, Ding Shande's Children's Suite, and Schumann's Children's Scene, They are both close to children's lives, And bright image, vivid, beautiful melody lines, natural, fresh, lively, In the appreciation class, we should pay attention to the analysis of musical image and the composer's life, Avoid the teaching of curve analysis and harmony in the professional appreciation course, These will effectively improve the music appreciation level of preschool professional students.

## **Methods of Constructing Piano Practice Works**

**Basic exercises should be strengthened in a gradual manner:** Piano learning three basic techniques: staccato, legato and skipping. To practice from a single hand, alternating hands to hands coordinated practice, from a single technique to a variety of techniques coordinated practice, in the tonal aspect of the C major should be put more time to consolidate the practice, for the transposition of the same practice transposition from the beginning of the actual needs of the work of early childhood teachers to highlight, and reflect the difficulty of the characteristics of the gradual progression. The decomposition of the three techniques and the comprehensive coordination of exercises and exercises, fingering, music and children's songs organically combine to reflect the characteristics of kindergarten teachers (Guo, 2004).

**The content of the work should emphasize the starting point:** The 1<sup>st</sup> year students of middle school kindergarten teacher majors basically have not received piano playing training before entering the school, and they have never touched the five-line score in terms of their ability to read music, and they are also very fuzzy about the rhythms and modes of the simplified score. Therefore, in the construction of this work in school, we must highlight the low starting point, pay attention to the basic exercises, and emphasize the standard of training, and carry out the detailed decomposition of the exercises on hand control, arm relaxation, and accuracy of the techniques (He, 2006).



**The selected exercises should be combined with children's songs:**

Most of the piano introduction textbooks for children and adults start from the boring basic finger exercises, but kindergarten professional students have some children's songs and simple music singing before learning piano. In order to reflect the interest and professional characteristics of piano learning, children's songs must be added in the basic exercises. From the basic hand-type staccato practice, you can play simple children's songs with one finger, and then transition to the convenient fingering method, highlighting the playing while singing, which is of great help to understand the staff and be familiar with the keyboard. After the ensemble study, we should highlight the musical sentences, and fully understand that lifting the wrist is the breathing point of the song. In the simple infiltration teaching of piano accompaniment, the theory highlights the practical effect of application, and the same children's song and the accompaniment tone practice highlight the cultivation of the practical application ability of drawing inferences from other cases (Wang, 2011).

**Practice methods in detail:** Piano textbooks are not only a simple pile of many exercises, but many piano textbooks do not have appropriate practice instructions, and completely rely on teachers to explain and guide students. Kindergarten students are close to adults, the understanding ability and independent practice ability is good, in addition, the piano class rarely focus on after-class practice, the school-based textbook is very important. First lies in the cultivation of correct practice habits, attach importance to the music before class without piano practice, for many elements of music to memorize and use, to break up in practice must be singing and lyrics, both sentences synthesis prominent coherent and slow practice, in repeated consolidation practice to highlight the focus is not a mechanical simple repetition, in the stage back to slow and decomposition practice. A detailed explanation of the key and difficult points in practice requirements is conducive to students 'self-study after class, and cultivate students' ability to guide each other in group learning the cultivation. (He, 2006).

**School-based works should be comprehensively selected:** Teacher primary piano teaching materials must first full reference to general piano preliminary textbook difficulty gradient arrangement, not just according to a book from beginning to end, in the difficulty of practice difficulty to more reference "John Thompson simple piano tutorial", "John Thompson modern

piano tutorial", "worship piano basic tutorial", "Piano preliminary tutorial works 599), combined with the Hanon piano practice, Shanghai music press piano basic tutorial, the children piano music set 55," children's song, children's songs piano impromptu accompaniment " teaching materials. With difficulty gradually advance for the teaching material arrangement system, with a variety of forms to strengthen foundation, outstanding ability, practical, professional characteristics, fully combined with the school student foundation, piano teachers, training conditions, class arrangement and after class practice elements, to improve training efficiency, let teacher students actively study the piano, experience the fun of piano learning and understand the charm of music.

## **New Knowledges**

Putting the artistic education of music at the forefront of teaching. Repeated use of the same kind of piano exercise book materials, too much selection of more technical exercises has certain limitations to improve students' comprehensive musical literacy, for example, some exercises have less polyphonic training, a single tone pattern and rhythmic pattern, and the technique favors the right hand, and so on. Learning piano requires not only the cultivation of comprehensive technical skills, but also the development of students' musical perception, musical imagination and musical expression. Musical aesthetic interest and artistic appreciation will be gradually formed in the early stage of students' exposure to art music. When choosing teaching materials, teachers can try to use practice pieces of different composers and styles, and implant important musical elements in piano performance, such as phrases, vocal progressions, intensity levels, rhythmic changes, melodic lines and so on, into the teaching of practice pieces, and incorporate the cultivation of comprehensive musical ability into the scope of piano practice pieces, so as to help students to establish the initial standard of music appreciation and comment, and to improve their musical literacy and broaden their musical horizons. This will help them to establish the initial standard of music appreciation and comment, thus enhancing their musical literacy and expanding their musical horizons.

## Conclusions

Starting from simple and easy-to-learn children's piano pieces, from shallow to deep, students can master the piano in a more regular and methodical way, so that students can practice in the right way to make their fingers more flexible, and their finger running ability more and more clear, natural and clean; skillfully arranging and matching the accompaniment of piano pieces. Let teachers teach students to recognize piano pieces, master them, and practice them more regularly.

## References

- Guo, L. (2004). **Analysis of Problems and Countermeasures of Teachers in School-Based Curriculum Development**, [Master's thesis]. Southwest Normal University.
- He, J. (2006). (2006). **School-based Curriculum Development in Secondary Vocational Schools**, [Master's Thesis]. Central China Normal University.
- Li, C. (2016). **Selection and use of children's elementary piano teaching materials of several issues to explore**, [Master's thesis]. Hubei Normal University.
- Lin, S. (2014). **Problems and countermeasures of piano teaching in higher vocational colleges**. Journal of Jilin College of Education, 2014(2), 117-119.
- Liu, L. (2003). **How to improve the quality of music teaching in preschool education**. Journal of Liaoning Teachers' College (Social Science Edition), 2003(6), 101-102.
- Luo, P. (2015). **On the Artistry of Czerny Piano Etudes and Its Significance in Piano Learning and Teaching**, [Master's Thesis]. Jiangxi Normal University.
- Luo, H. (2007). **The selection and use of teaching materials in elementary piano teaching**. Heilongjiang Science and Technology Information, 2007(22), 186.
- Sai, Q. (2000). **Basic training and selection of teaching materials for piano teaching in kindergarten teachers**. Journal of Guizhou University (Art Edition), 2000(4), 73-75.
- Song, Y. (2007). **Research on the Selection and Utilization of Teaching Materials in Children's Elementary Piano Teaching**. [Master's Thesis]. Northeast Normal University.
- Wang, J. (2011). **Survey on the Status Quo of Piano Teaching in Early Childhood Teacher Training Program of Secondary Vocational Schools and the Development of School-based Teaching Materials**. [Master's thesis]. East China Normal University.