

STRATEGIES FOR VOCAL MUSIC TEACHING IN UNIVERSITIES, CHINA

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Abstract

Nowadays, public vocal education in Chinese universities is constantly developing and deepening. Some domestic universities, represented by Beijing Normal University and South China Normal University, have drawn on the experience of Western art quality education development and established public art education research centers. They have purposefully and systematically incorporated vocal education into institutional management and organized the National Higher Normal Music Education Alliance to promote education and teaching experience on a large scale. Although seeing such impressive results, it must also be noted that there are still many higher education institutions that have not yet formed such systematic and organized artistic education achievements, and even lack educational awareness. Vocal education is an unavoidable part of higher education both domestically and internationally. We must make it clear that there is an indispensable relationship between the various educations under quality education. Science education, which focuses on cultivating people's logical thinking ability, and art education, which cultivates people's subjective consciousness, aesthetic ability, and creativity, should complement each other and cannot be lacking. Only in this way can we better stimulate the human potential, improve the quality of education, and cultivate qualified modern talents. This article presented (1) problems and countermeasures of vocal teaching in universities; (2) strategies for vocal music teaching in universities, and (3) vocal teaching practice.

Keywords: strategies; vocal music; teaching; universities

Introduction

In China, there is a long tradition of valuing music education. As early as the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the famous Chinese philosopher and educator Confucius established the "Six Arts" curriculum for cultivating disciples, namely ritual, music, archery, imperial music, calligraphy, and mathematics. Among them, music education was second only to ritual education and was placed in a second important position. In addition, he also put forward the discourse of "flourishing in poetry, standing in ceremony, and achieving success in music", which means that not only excellent talents need to have cultivation in other aspects, but also in music. Music education scholar Zhang Jun believes that the development history of public vocal education in Chinese universities in modern times has roughly gone through four stages: the embryonic stage, the initial stage, the development stage, and the deepening stage (Zhang, 2022).

In modern China, music elective courses have been offered since the Qiushi Academy (predecessor of Zhejiang University) in 1897. Tsinghua Academy (predecessor of Tsinghua University) has been offering music courses since 1916, and in 1931, the music teaching institution - the Western Music Department was officially established. In 1922, Peking University founded the Institute of Music, with Cai Yuanpei serving as its director and Xiao Youmei in charge of academic affairs. She put forward the famous proposition of "cultivating musical talents, teaching Western instruments while preserving ancient Chinese music, and promoting its development". At the same time, many higher education institutions, such as Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Beijing Yanjing University, and Fu Jen University, are also very active in their extracurricular music clubs (Fan, 2023). However, at that time, specialized management and educational measures for legalization had not yet been widely promoted, so this was only the basic enlightenment stage of the modern development of public music education in Chinese universities. Since 1978, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China has officially issued documents proposing corresponding and effective management measures, gradually putting China's public art education on the track of institutionalization and legalization.

Problems and Countermeasures of Vocal Teaching in Universities

At present, many universities have not fully grasped the connotation of public music education, nor have they made a relatively accurate definition of it. The influence of music education in universities is profound, and it is also a key component of higher art education and a major aspect of higher education. Music education can help students improve their self-cultivation, cultivate correct worldviews and values, and contribute to their comprehensive development. Therefore, higher education institutions need to pay close attention to the development of music education and carry out comprehensive and high-level music education. Cultivate students' level of music appreciation. The author found in the survey that many teachers and students believe that some single singing competitions and other artistic performances are key aspects of music education in universities. The true impact of music education on music education in ordinary universities has not yet been clarified. Now, the key issue is how to strengthen music education in ordinary universities (Fu, 2022).

The main reason why universities lag behind in public music education is due to outdated educational concepts, resulting in insufficient teaching staff, curriculum construction, and insufficient funding. In addition, there are loopholes in teaching management, with no unified and fixed teaching content, and students often self-learn in class. Secondly, music teachers are teachers with special technical skills, and schools have different emphasis on skills and education when selecting teachers, which limits the key points taught by teachers in the classroom and also limits the setting of music courses. Once again, the research and energy on music teaching and research in schools are relatively lagging behind, and many schools have relatively few teaching and research activities on public music education. In recent years, music teaching in ordinary universities has gradually received attention. However, through investigation, the author found that ordinary universities still use the original indoctrination teaching mode, which has significant shortcomings. Firstly, the teaching method does not align with the main purpose of current teaching. In music teaching, students can only blindly accept the knowledge imparted by the teacher and cannot unleash their imagination, which seriously inhibits the development of students' innovative thinking and greatly hinders their

comprehensive development. Therefore, relevant departments and teachers should also attach great importance to cultivating students' innovative thinking, and also attach importance to the role of students in public music education. Secondly, the teaching mode cannot keep up with the trend of the times. With the rapid development of society, if university teachers only use their original teaching plans, they cannot keep up with the development of the times, which is not conducive to the development of students' innovative thinking, and cannot promote the improvement of their comprehensive quality. This also goes against the original intention of developing public music education. Public music education cannot be achieved overnight, which requires the joint efforts of schools, teachers, and other parties. Only by fully leveraging the role of all sectors and keeping up with the trend of the times can we effectively do a good job in public music education and promote the comprehensive development of students (Yang, 2022).

Higher education institutions have not fully paid attention to the important role of public music education, so there is not much investment in public music education, which leads to a shortage of teachers in ordinary universities. This phenomenon greatly inhibits the progress of public music education in ordinary universities. Most universities lack a systematic teaching system, and many teachers focus on vocal, instrumental, or dance majors during their studies. Therefore, teaching only focuses on technical instruction, which cannot guide and stimulate students to value and love music from a practical perspective, resulting in students being hesitant about music. Among the four schools surveyed, there were very few music teachers, and some schools even chose some teachers who had not undergone professional music education for public music education in order to increase the number of music teachers. These teachers have low professional literacy and cannot improve students' music abilities in teaching. When conducting public music education, students cannot be taught according to their aptitude, and even when they have questions, they cannot be given good answers. Some music teachers in schools also hold multiple positions. For example, the employer where the author works is a music teacher who works in both administrative youth league committees and teaches music courses. After experiencing this phenomenon multiple times, students will not lose confidence and interest in music learning, which greatly hinders the development of public music education in ordinary universities.

Strategies for Vocal Music Teaching in Universities

In music teaching in universities, it is particularly important to cultivate students to have sufficient expressive power in music expression, which is also the basic principle for cultivating the comprehensive music ability of college students. This mainly includes the grasp of music rhythm and the formation of basic artistic cultivation, so that students can develop their performance ability and creativity in music. More importantly, the cultivation of musical expression must enable students to integrate their personal emotions into specific expressions, so that they can communicate with the audience through emotions. This way, students can fully perceive the beauty of music in music learning and also receive basic artistic education (Wang, 2022).

Music teaching is a crucial part of comprehensive quality education. By utilizing innovative public music education, students can greatly improve their overall quality and cultivate comprehensive college students who can meet the development of the new era. Public music education is also a key component of cultivating humanistic qualities, playing an important role in promoting the personal and psychological development of students. For the intellectual development of students, it also plays a positive role and is an important means of cultivating the comprehensive quality of contemporary college students. In the new era of ordinary higher education, while continuously improving students' aesthetic and practical qualities, it is necessary to carry out music and art learning. Therefore, public music education plays a crucial role in modern teaching (Liu, 2022).

Music teachers are one of the essential elements in university teaching. If public music education wants to take root and sprout in ordinary universities, the first thing it needs is a group of excellent music teachers. These teachers are not only technical talents, but also need to have certain theoretical and teaching experience. At the same time, in terms of educational concepts, it is necessary to cultivate innovative teaching concepts for teachers, broaden teacher recruitment standards, and recruit outstanding young talents who have graduated from professional art universities. These talents have innate advantages in music innovation awareness and talent. At the same time, an excellent music teacher team should be established, and the school teaching system should be reformed

to reasonably and effectively ensure the continuous improvement of music teaching quality (Yun, 2023).

Forms of Vocal Teaching

In Shao Ping's article "Analysis of Teaching Models for Vocal Music Majors in Normal Colleges", scholars conducted research from four aspects: firstly, by reading books and literature, they proposed that the teaching goal of normal colleges is to cultivate students' comprehensive abilities in playing, singing, and teaching; Secondly, a review of the existing teaching models in universities includes three modes: individual class teaching mode, group class teaching mode, and collective class teaching mode; Thirdly, based on the analysis, a reform implementation plan was proposed. Taking the School of Music at Yangzhou University as an example, a diversified teaching model of "size rolling" was proposed, and detailed suggestions were put forward for the curriculum teaching model from both macro and micro perspectives (Shao, 2019). Similar articles include Zheng Qingyuan's "Exploration of Diversified Vocal Music Teaching in Higher Vocational Education", in which scholars analyzed the current situation of vocal music teaching in higher vocational education from several aspects: student source, teacher strength, teaching methods, and teacher-student interaction mode. And suggestions were put forward for teacher training and textbook selection. Advocate diversified teaching modes in teaching, which can adopt project-based teaching, and also promote diversified teaching forms in the classroom, which can adopt a mixed teaching form (one-on-one, one to two, one to many); Modern teaching methods should also be utilized for auxiliary teaching. According to Hu Xianbo's "Exploration of Vocal Teaching Forms and Methods in the New Situation" (Zheng, 2020), scholars believe that vocal teaching should change the "master apprentice" teaching method and adopt diversified teaching modes, such as individual, group, and collective teaching modes (Hu, 2020).

The Functions and Characteristics of Vocal Teaching

Vocal teaching mainly aims to provide students with a good vocal experience by imparting scientific and systematic vocal techniques, aesthetic concepts, and work processing. Vocal teaching has a bidirectional function: from the perspective of students, the teacher's explanation can promote the acquisition of knowledge and skills, allowing students to fully immerse themselves in learning and enjoy learning. From a teacher's perspective, the classroom atmosphere and student feedback during the teaching process can inspire the teacher's teaching process, enabling them to continuously grow and achieve a mutually beneficial effect between teaching and learning. At the same time, vocal teaching has a transformative function, and the essence of vocal teaching is to guide students to understand the knowledge and skills of vocal art and transform the learned knowledge into their own abilities. The most obvious manifestation of the transformation function is the level of teacher's ability. If a teacher has excellent abilities, they can quickly adapt to the development needs of students in terms of transformation methods and time. Finally, vocal teaching also has a pleasurable function, mainly reflected in the relatively relaxed teaching methods and innovative teaching methods, which can effectively alleviate the tension of students in class and achieve the function of integrating education with entertainment (Wang, 2022).

Due to the fact that a large part of vocal teaching cannot be taught intuitively, in order for students to achieve good results, vocal teaching must have vivid and vivid metaphors, such as breathing like smelling the fragrance of flowers, and breathing with the abdominal cavity as full as a balloon. Teachers should be more adept at using intuitive and vivid metaphors to help students understand the concept of singing, and make vocal teaching easier. Emotional perception is also an important feature in vocal teaching, which is the core characteristic of vocal art and runs through the entire process of vocal art. Therefore, emotionality should be reflected throughout the entire teaching process. Teachers should handle emotionality from various aspects such as the rhythm, melody, and lyrics of the work during the teaching process, so that students can deeply feel the significance of emotionality in vocal works, and bring their own emotions into the processing of the work, fully demonstrating the meaning of the work.

Basic Content of Vocal Teaching

Single private class: Single private class is the most common teaching form in Chinese vocal music teaching, mainly conducting one-on-one teaching to cultivate students' scientific vocal methods and fully understand the thoughts and emotions of works. Firstly, single person classes are highly targeted, and teachers can provide targeted solutions based on the problems that students encounter; Secondly, single person classes also have ample time for teachers to solve the problems encountered by each student; Finally, single person classes have differences, and due to the differences in vocal conditions of each student, the vocal exercises and song processing for each student are also different. Teachers should understand the characteristics of each student and use different teaching methods to explain vocal theory, in order to better conduct vocal teaching. The disadvantage is that due to the rapid expansion of the number of students, there is a great demand for the teaching staff of the school. Due to the inconsistent levels of students, some students find it difficult to keep up with the pace of single person classes, resulting in unsatisfactory teaching outcomes and a waste of teacher resources (Cheng, 2022).

Group classes: The teaching format of vocal group classes is relatively free, with 2-8 students attending classes simultaneously. The class format is relatively free, allowing for both learning vocal theory knowledge and practicing vocal production together, as well as individual training. In the vocal teaching process of group classes, students can understand and learn from each other, listen to the teacher explain the vocal problems of different students, and also hear some methods for dealing with songs they have not sung before. Vocal group lessons can allow teachers to inspire students with more detailed and comparative methods to stimulate their enthusiasm. In group class teaching, the focus is on explaining theoretical knowledge of vocal music, solving common problems in students' vocal practice, and processing vocal works. The establishment of group classes is conducive to mutual supervision and encouragement among students, and can improve their enthusiasm (Yu, 2023).

Collective classes: The establishment of vocal collective courses in Chinese universities is also very common. The teaching of vocal collective courses adopts a "one to many" teaching model, which means that a vocal teacher teaches 15 or more vocal students. At present, there are generally two forms of theoretical teaching in vocal collective courses in Chinese universities. The first is to practice speaking first, and then process the work; The second type is to teach theoretical knowledge, such as breath, resonance, and vocal methods. There are also shortcomings in the establishment of collective courses: in many universities, the teaching method of vocal collective courses is an extension of individual courses, which is inconsistent with the teaching content and objectives of large courses, and therefore the teaching quality is not high; Due to the uneven number and level of students in vocal collective classes, most vocal collective classes only address common issues among students and cannot effectively address their individual issues (Zhao, 2023).

Vocal Teaching Practice

Construction of practical courses: In Liu Jing's article "On the Systematic Construction of Stage Practice Courses for Music Performance Majors in Universities," scholars analyzed the current situation of stage practice courses in universities, which mainly include low emphasis and strong arbitrariness in course settings. Furthermore, scholars have proposed solutions such as increasing students' emphasis on stage practice courses, enhancing the professional level of teachers, expanding the teaching staff, reforming traditional teaching models, and developing corresponding stage practice teaching plans. In Gong Yahong's article "Exploration of the Construction of Vocal Performance Professional Stage Practice Curriculum System - Taking the Music College of Sichuan Normal University as an Example" (Liu Jing, 2020), scholars first analyze the significance of establishing a professional stage practice curriculum system. Secondly, scholars propose that the construction of a stage practice system should mainly focus on three aspects: backbone, element, and comprehensive operation. The construction of backbone courses refers to the integration of vocal lessons and artistic guidance throughout the stage practice curriculum system; The construction of elemental courses refers to the establishment of auxiliary courses such as dialogue, physical performance, choir directing, and stage practice; In the construction of comprehensive courses,

scholars believe that in order to establish a vocal rehearsal course, stage practice should be considered as a part of the graduation exam (Gong, 2022). Cai Wei's "Research on Strategies for Expanding the Path of Stage Practice Courses in the Direction of Music Performance in Chinese Universities - Taking Vocal Performance as an Example" proposes three solutions based on the current problems in stage practice courses in China: allowing stage practice to enter the classroom, promoting the development of stage practice teaching in the form of projects, and establishing practice platforms based on competitions (Cai, 2023).

Reform of Vocal Teaching Practice

In Bai Jiahui's article "Research on the Improvement of College Vocal Teaching in Stage Practice Teaching", scholars first analyze the importance of stage practice: stage practice can not only cultivate students' performance awareness, but also improve their performance level. Secondly, scholars have found the following problems through analysis of its current situation: in most universities, vocal teachers and students have not truly attached importance to stage practice, and teachers have not played a good exemplary role. Finally, scholars have proposed directions for improving vocal music in universities: schools and teachers should play a positive role in stage practice to ensure the quality of stage practice implementation. In the article "Practical Teaching Reform of Project based Stage in Higher Vocational Performance Arts" by Luo Manli (Bai Jiahui, 2019), scholars also start from the analysis of the current situation and propose implementation paths: strengthening the establishment of stage practice curriculum system, utilizing available resources to establish a good practice platform, establishing a good teaching staff, and establishing a scientific evaluation mechanism (Luo, 2021).

New Knowledges

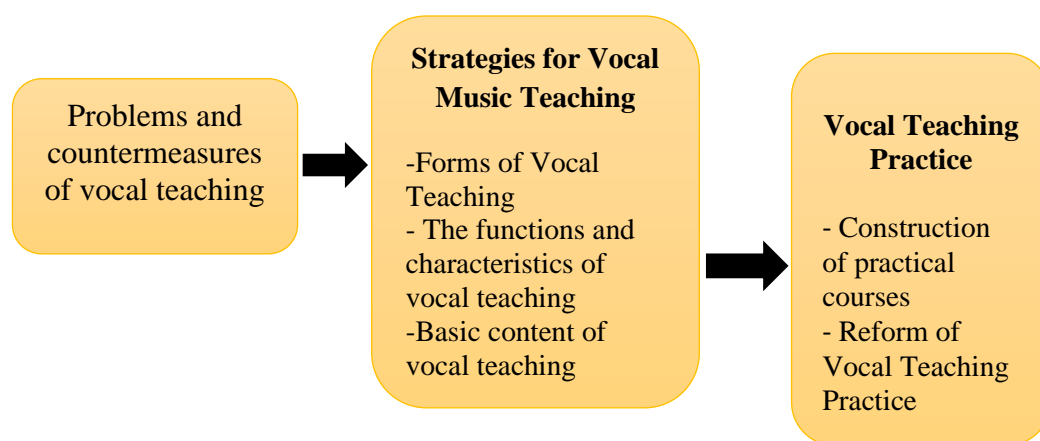


Figure 1: Diagram of New Knowledges of Strategies for Vocal Music Teaching

Conclusions

Higher vocal education has not fully paid attention to the important role of public music education, so there is not much investment in public music education, which leads to a shortage of teachers in ordinary universities. This phenomenon greatly inhibits the progress of public music education in ordinary universities. Most universities lack a systematic teaching system, and many teachers focus on vocal, instrumental, or dance majors during their studies. Therefore, teaching only focuses on technical instruction, which cannot guide and stimulate students to value and love music from a practical perspective, resulting in students being hesitant about music. Among the four schools surveyed, there were very few music teachers, and some schools even chose some teachers who had not undergone professional vocal music education for public music education in order to increase the number of music teachers. These teachers have low professional literacy and cannot improve students' music abilities in teaching. When conducting public music education, students cannot be taught according to their aptitude, and even when they have questions, they cannot be given good answers. Some vocal teachers in schools also hold multiple positions. For example, the employer where the author works is a music teacher who works in both administrative youth league committees and teaches music courses. After experiencing this phenomenon multiple times, students will

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