

The Development of Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for First Year Students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art, China

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Abstracts

The research objectives were 1) to study the current situation and state of problems in Basic Western Music Theory teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art, 2) to propose Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art based on Carl Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze's approach, and 3) To study the effect of Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art. This research was a mixed method. The participants were 20 first-year students.

The results showed that 1) Six themes of challenges and trends in Basic Western Music Theory teaching are as follows: 1. Engagement of professional music theorists in designing and teaching the core 2. Focus on analysis and repertoire, somewhat less on part-writing 3. Integration of aural and written skills and increased time devoted to aural training 4. Increased use of technology in teaching 5. Remedial classes are growing, and 6. Two challenges: improvisation and music outside the Western canon Music theory are difficult to grasp because it uses visual methods to describe what we hear. That's a big problem for music theorists because our brains interpret music hundreds of times faster than it takes to explain it. The aspects with the lowest average score that should be developed are formative assessment and summative assessment in instruction ($M=3.40$, $S.D.=0.60$). The music theory course has appropriate content ($M=3.50$, $S.D.=0.69$), and Teaching methods are consistent with content and assessment ($M=3.50$, $S.D.=0.69$). In addition, problems encountered include the content of music theory is quite large. And the learners arranged the steps incorrectly and lack of teaching materials. 2) First-year students learning by basic western music theory learning activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art based on Carl Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze approaches had the student mean score of the posttest on basic western music theory achievement was higher than the pretest mean score at the significant level of 0.01. Students are satisfied with the field. Knowledge of the instructor's ability in teaching, and teachers consider the differences between individuals and develop students to their full potential at the highest level ($M = 4.70$, $S.D.=0.47$). Evaluation is appropriate for the content, and learners are the least average ($M = 4.20$, $S.D.=0.41$) but still very satisfied. Suggestions from students are a development of the game and various assessments.

Keywords: Development of western music theory, learning activities, Shanxi Vocational College of Art, China

Introduction

Music theory is an important part of the foundation for any musician for several reasons. First, it deepens our ability to understand the structure of music. Let's pretend you had to give a speech in a foreign language. How important would it be to understand the meaning of the words? It would be impossible to give the speech with the appropriate inflection and pacing without a thorough understanding of the meaning and structure of the speech and all of its words. Music theory, like language, enables us to understand the structure and meaning behind a musical composition. Secondly, music theory allows us to speak with other musicians in a common language. It is a shorthand for referring to important points in the music (Cliff, 2021 : online).

The pilot study found that Teaching Western music theory by using only narration cannot make students understand the clear content and apply it in the profession. Especially in Shanxi Art Vocational College is approved by the Shaanxi Provincial People's Government and the Ministry of Education for the record of a public full-time high art institution. It is Northwest's first public art college and university and the only one of the Qin cavity talent education colleges and universities. The college is outstanding in the field of Visual art and Performing art. The college focuses on a professional career, so music theory and skills are important for music students.

The Kodaly approach is a way of developing musical skills and teaching musical concepts. This method uses folk songs, Curwen hand signs, pictures, movable-do, rhythm symbols, and syllables. It was introduced in Hungary but is now used in many countries, either alone or in combination with other methods (Estrella, 2019 : online). The Orff approach is a beneficial teaching methodology that helps to successfully implement improvisation and better teach composition. It also promotes active participation in musical activities that will aid students in applying the skills in later musical experiences (Long, 2013 : online). And the Dalcroze approach incorporates the basic elements of music, such as rhythm, melody, and harmony with body movement, to provide a multi-dimensional approach to music learning. Unlike most traditional methods, improvisation is a major component of the Dalcroze approach (Butera, 2012 : online). Applying the Kodaly, Carl Orff, and Dalcroze approaches in learning activities can make various and interesting music theory learning activities.

This study may lead to providing students with a variety of activities. Consistent with the content of Western music theory. Students have improved knowledge of basic Western music theory, which is important for musicians. Western Music Theory can help students play more accurately and transcribe music. It can be applied in the profession.

Related Literature

Prapansak Pum-in (2014 : 72) studied The Creativity of the Basic Keyboard Method Using the Kodaly Methodology. It was found that the Basic Keyboard Method of Kodaly Methodology in music study is as follows: (1) Pitch (2) Rhythm (3) Melody (4) Harmony, and (5) Musicianship. The research shows that the Kodaly method can teach basic music instruments. It also can make students understand the music symbol and notation, how to read the notes, and the concept of creating music, such as Rhythm, Pitch, and Phrasing. These methods help students understand music literature besides, which helps students to have fun and have a good attitude. However, the psychology of teaching musical heritage through music

education of the Kodaly concept is particularly useful in developing music education in the future.

Türkmen and Göncü (2018 : 39-45) studied The Challenges Encountered in applying the Kodaly Method in Turkey. It was found that Kodaly is a method used in many countries, particularly in Hungary. The method is based upon the introduction of singing and the applied aspect of music to children at early ages, by which they are ensured a more qualified and permanent music education. This research focuses on possible actions to be taken to increase the quality of music education and the opportunities offered by the Kodaly method within this framework. With this in mind, the question "What are the challenges encountered in applying the Kodaly method?" is tried to be answered. This study aims to point out the difficulties in applying the Kodaly Method, which is effectively applied in many countries, in Turkey, and provide suggestions regarding its utilization. The study is based on descriptive methods and has been conducted using reviewing the relevant literature. Besides, opinions of an instructor using this method for five years have been consulted, and several problems have been identified in line with these opinions. The research is considered significant in terms of identifying difficulties in applying the Kodaly Method in Turkey and suggesting solutions to them. It is also believed to shed light upon those willing to apply this method. In that sense, this study is believed to serve as a guideline in music education.

In Turkey, music teachers are trained in different units such as Conservatories, Faculty of Fine Arts, and Faculty of Education. Those trained in the first two may become teachers upon the fulfillment of a pedagogical program. This requires questioning teachers' competency levels on teaching methods even if they are from other faculties and have finished the pedagogical program. Because on the one hand, some have been trained as teachers throughout their education, while others had the option of teaching at the bottom of their lists and yet became teachers due to circumstances. On the other hand, it is not possible to generalize; the challenges caused by the education system also affect the students' choice of schools. Another problem caused by the teachers' reluctance to learn and apply new teaching methods is another problem. This reinforces the importance of teacher training. Efficacy of the curriculum or the quality of course books is highly dependent on teacher quality. The presence of qualified and productive teachers can increase the quality of course books and programs. Otherwise, it is not likely to mention a successful education, no matter how qualified the books and programs are.

The education system-based problems in the application of the Kodaly Method in Turkey are mentioned that the method is not adopted enough in Faculties of Education and pedagogical programs. When the education system-based problems are analyzed, the most prominent problem is the insufficient time allocated for music classes. Therefore, effective methods are required. Teachers may take necessary actions in this regard, depending on their conditions. When the repertoire of Turkish school songs and the structure of folk songs are analyzed, it can be concluded that the ones containing tonal structures are fewer than those with modal and maqam features. Based on the participants' comments on the Traditional Music System towards implementing the Kodaly Method in Turkey, it is understood that it can be adapted to children's songs composed in simple maqams. And the voices are not stabilized, and the "relative do" notion can be adopted easily. It is important to pay the necessary attention to music within the education system. Music education widely contributes to the upcoming generation's healthy growth, socialization, and participation. Therefore, the adoption of effective teaching methods is vital. Where Kodaly Method offers substantial contributions in

this regard, it is understood that Turkish school songs and folk songs can be used by adapting to the Kodaly method. Music teachers should search for new methods and integrate their applications into their professional backgrounds. While doing so, avoiding prejudices and considering different applications is important.

Gutierrez (2019 : online) studied *An Enactive Approach to Learning Music Theory? Obstacles and Openings*. It was found that, while music theory learning remains at the core of traditional music education, calls for more embodied and enactive approaches to music instruction rarely address theory pedagogy directly. This paper reconsiders theory teaching through a 4E lens by (1) clarifying the obstacles that attend a legacy of Cartesian thought underlying conventional theory curricula and (2) introducing an affordance-rich curricular tool that promotes embodied and enactive sense-making in the music theory classroom environment. The tool is an adaptation of *Conduction*®—a lexicon of signs and gestures created by jazz artist Butch Morris as a flexible alternative to notation, allowing Morris to compose in real-time with an ensemble of any type, size, or background. In a theory-learning context, students bring their instruments to class, form an ensemble, and take turns using signs and gestures to conduct their peers, guided through processes aligned with learning objectives (e.g., harmonic minor scales, Neapolitan chords, or polytonality), as well as to more freely experiment with musical structure in situ, with minimal or no reliance upon notation. Listening skills, structural knowledge, analytical proficiency, and performance technique are all enacted in students' three roles: individual performer, ensemble member, and conductor. As students are placed in contact with the conceptual metaphors that scaffold a sense of musical structure, the cumulative effect is a deeply embodied sense of musicality and an experience of music theory not just as an abstract exercise but as theorizing in the present through bodily action.

Niyomsuk (2019 : 54) studied *The Music Learning Management Based on Dalcroze's Concept to Develop Practical Music Skills for Early Childhood*. The research finding was summarized as follows: 1) After the experiment, an experimental group had an average score of learning achievement before and after learning based on Dalcroze's concept result higher than before the experimental at.01 levels of significance. 2) After the experiment, an experimental group had an average score of practical music skills higher than before the experimental at.01 levels of significance. And 3) After the experiment, an experimental group had an average score of the student satisfaction the music learning based on Dalcroze's concept was a high level and higher than the standards at the statistical significance at.01 level.

Meté and Dündar. (2020 : 2053-2073.). Studied *The Effect of the Kodaly method on preservice teachers' musical knowledge and skills*. As a result of the study, a statistically significant difference was found in favor of the experimental group for the melodic success sub-dimension of the Musical Hearing Test. When the changes within the groups were examined, the melodic and musical pitch success scores of the experimental group increased significantly. When the "Basic Music Knowledge Test" results were examined, a statistically significant difference was observed in favor of the experimental group in terms of all dimensions.

Huiqi Quan. (2021 : 63-76) studied Innovative Music Education in China: Theory and Practice. It was found that educational innovation is the method and method of implementing innovative education, and it is a dynamic process. This study uses questionnaires, interviews, and observation methods to investigate the current situation of primary school music teachers' classroom teaching. The author selected 14 primary schools with a total of 56 music teachers; each school selected different classes in the 2nd and 5th grades, with 50 students in each grade as the survey subjects, to obtain the validity and comprehensiveness of the data. As an educational concept, innovative education is essential to improve the innovative quality of students and teachers. The implementation of innovative education and music education innovation has become a new growth point for quality education. Innovative teachers are the driving force of music education innovation. Innovative teaching methods and methods are not only the external manifestation of music education innovation but also the focus. To adapt to the requirements of the new era, music education innovation is a strategic choice facing the 21st century.

Research Objectives

1. To study the current situation and state of problems in Basic Western Music Theory teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art.
2. To propose Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art based on Carl Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze's approach.
3. To study the effect of Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities on first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art.

Research Methodology

This research implemented a mixed-method approach. The research population is divided into 3 groups:

1. Music theory experts and music theory teachers
 2. Music teachers at Shanxi Vocational College of Art
 3. First-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art
- The samples that are key informants are divided into 3 groups:
4. Two Music theory experts and Three music theory teachers
 5. Three Music teachers at Shanxi Vocational College of Art
 6. Twenty students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art
7. In addition, the researcher studied documents related to Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities and Carl Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze's approaches.

Research tools

1. A questionnaire for First-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art about the current situation of instruction and state of problems in Basic Western Music Theory teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art
2. An interview form about the current situation and state of problems in Basic Western Music Theory teaching for Music teachers at Shanxi Vocational College of Art
3. An interview form about Music Theory Learning Activities for Music theory experts and music theory teachers

4. A test form: Basic Western Music Theory Pre-test and Post-test for First-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art
5. An analysis of documents related to Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities and Carl Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze's approach.
6. A Satisfaction questionnaire for Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art

Data collection method

This research has a data collection method divided into 3 steps as follows.

Step 1: To study the current situation and state of problems in Basic Western Music

1. Theory teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art
2. Study on documents, concepts, theories, and related research with Music Theory teaching and analyzing conceptual framework.
3. Study the current situation and state of problems in Basic Music Theory teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art using questionnaires with 20 students and interviews with 2 teachers.

Step 2: To propose Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art based on Carl Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze's approaches

1. Study Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze's approaches and integrate them with Basic Music Theory teaching.
2. Study guidelines for Basic Music Theory development of first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art using interviews with music theory experts selected by purposive sampling.
3. Sketch on Learning activities for Basic Music Theory development of first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art
4. Inspect the preliminary quality of the draft design to examine the model's suitability by 5 experts in music theory teaching.

Step 3: Study the effect of Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities on first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art.

1. Learning activities for Basic Music Theory development of first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art will be used for 20 participants that are first students in the second semester, the year 2021.
2. The researcher will assess the learning outcome of first-year students and summarize the effect of Learning activities on the Basic Music Theory development of first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art.
3. The researcher will study first-year students' satisfaction with Learning activities for Basic Music Theory development at Shanxi Vocational College of Art.

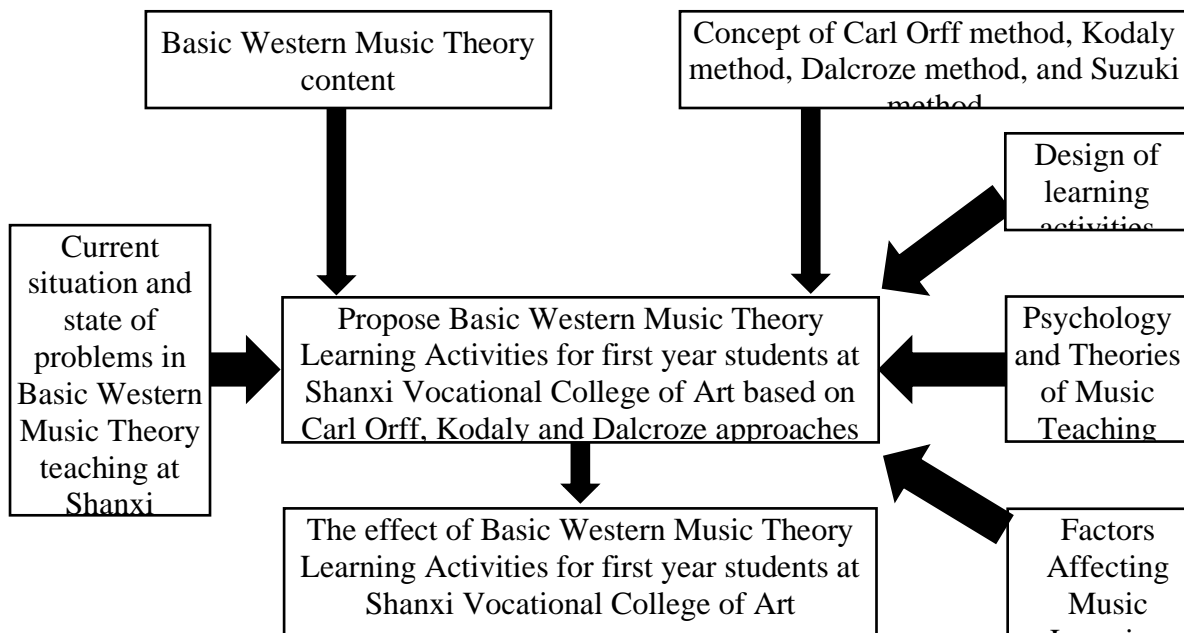
Data analysis method

A Mixed method analysis will be employed for data analysis. The content analysis will be used to analyze the interview data. The questionnaires will be analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics (SPSS). The data will be analyzed by Analytic induction, drawn conclusions, and presented the results of the data analysis in a Descriptive analysis.

Research Scope

In this research, the scope of content is 1) Western Music theory content: Introduction to Western Musical Notation, Notation of Notes, Clefs, and Ledger Lines, The Keyboard and the Grand Staff, Half- and Whole-steps, Accidentals, and The Black Keys of the Piano, Other Aspects of Notation (dynamics, expression marks, etc.), Rhythmic and Rest Values, Simple Meter and Time Signatures, Compound Meter and Time Signatures, Other Rhythmic Essentials, Major Scales, Scale Degrees, and Key Signatures, Minor Scales, Scale Degrees, and Key Signatures, Intervals, Triads 2) Concept of Carl Orff, Kodaly and Dalcroze approach 3) Design of learning activities 4) Psychology of Music Teaching 5) Factors Affecting Music Learning 6) Shanxi Vocational College of Art 7) Current situation and state of problems in Basic Western Music Theory teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art, and 8) Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art.

Research Conceptual Framework



Results

The current situation and state of problems in Basic Western Music Theory teaching at Shanxi Vocational College of Art

Music theory are difficult to grasp because it uses visual methods to describe what we hear. That's a big problem for music theorists because our brains interpret music hundreds of times faster than it takes to explain it. The aspects with the lowest average score that should be developed are formative assessment and summative assessment in instruction (M=3.40, S.D.=0.60). The music theory course has appropriate content (M=3.50, S.D.=0.69), and Teaching methods are consistent with content and assessment (M=3.50, S.D.=0.69). In addition, problems encountered include the content of music theory is quite large. And the learners arranged the steps incorrectly and lack of teaching materials.

Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art based on Carl Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze approaches.

1. Essential Music Theory Contents

- 1.1) The fundamentals at the core of music theory are melody, harmony, and rhythm.
- 1.2) The rudiments of music theory, rudiments are music theory in practice. The rudiments of music theory are scales, chords, keys, and notation.
- 1.3) Reading music notation, music notation is how you analyze music theory concepts. Understanding how the language of music is written provides the foundation for growing theory knowledge. Every element of musical notation was developed to help students make sense of what they heard.
- 1.4) Chords are how notes work together. Once you have the basis for building theory knowledge, you can dive into the pillars of musical practice. Chords are the individual units of harmony.
- 1.5) Scales are the basis for any melody. Scales are the next major rudiment in music. Scales are the raw material for melodies.
- 1.6) Keys and key signatures in music, A musical key defines the group of pitches that will be used in a musical composition.
- 1.7) Rhythm is the pulse of a song. Rhythm is a basic aspect of music and a deep subject in its own right. Standard straight rhythms are the basis for most beats and grooves, but polyrhythms are how you take your rhythmic sense to the next level. Polyrhythms are hybrid grooves that combine different rhythmic patterns.
- 1.8) Music theory exercises

2) Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art based on Carl Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze approaches.

There are 5 lesson plans to organize learning activities. Each lesson plan takes 2 hours per lesson. Each plan has continuity of content and is a regulation system. The instructor must therefore know in the preparation of learning activity plans. The nature of the learning activity plan consists of seven key elements: 1) Concept 2) Objectives 3) Contents 4) Activities 5) Teaching materials 6) Evaluations, and 7) Note

3) Effect of Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art

It was found that after using the activity, all students had higher Post-test scores after using learning activities than on the Pre-test. The Post-test average score is 29.8 percent.

First-year students learning by Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art based on Carl Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze approaches had the students' mean score of the post-test on Basic Western Music Theory achievement was higher than the pre-test mean score at the significant level of 0.01.

In this study, the researcher analyzed students' satisfaction with Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art. This questionnaire is divided into 2 parts: Part 1 General information of respondents, and Part 2 Students' satisfaction with Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art. It was found that students are satisfied with the field. Knowledge of the instructor's ability in teaching, and teachers consider the differences between individuals and develop students to their full potential at the highest level ($M = 4.70$, $S.D.=0.47$). Evaluation is appropriate for the content, and learners are the least average ($M = 4.20$, $S.D.=0.41$) but still very satisfying. Suggestions from students are the development of games and various assessments.

Discussion

Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities for first-year students at Shanxi Vocational College of Art based on Carl Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze approaches are by Yanderm (2015: 21-31), explorations of the conceptual theory of music teaching are as followings. This was conformable Dalcroze developed core music learning on the Eurhythmic Method and Solfege Methods (Butera, 2012:online). The eurhythmic Method is to experience music through body movements to build good rhythmic perception, while Solfege Method is to intone fixed tonic (fixed-do) to apprehend pitches together with movements.

Recommendation

Recommendation for applying the research results

1) Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities based on Carl Orff, Kodaly, and Dalcroze's approaches can be applied to different learners' ages.

2) Basic Western Music Theory Learning Activities can be used by sorting the content from easy to difficult, emphasizing the development of music theory with individual students.

3) Learning activities should be integrated with other subjects such as Dance, Movement in Drama class.

4)

Recommendation for future research

1) Should develop learning activity plans for music skills and attitude.

2) Should be used other music teaching methods to develop students' potential.

3) Should be developed music knowledge and music skills for individual students.

4) Should be applied Chinese music in instruction.

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