

# **The study of Piano Basic Course Teaching for undergraduate students' Performance Majors in Southern China**

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## **Abstracts**

This study aimed to study piano basic course teaching for undergraduate students' Performance Majors in Southern China. This study adopts mixed research methods, qualitative and quantitative research methods. In the research, interview, and questionnaire survey were used. The questionnaire survey selected 50 teachers from 3 universities as research samples, distributed 50 questionnaires, and recovered 50 questionnaires, of which 45 were valid questionnaires, with an effective rate of 90.0%; A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to students majoring in performance in music colleges of 3 universities, and 192 questionnaires were recovered, of which 188 were valid questionnaires

The research findings found that the teaching reform of basic piano courses for music education majors in colleges and universities should be closely related to the actual work of music teachers in primary and secondary schools and be problem-oriented. In the teaching reform of the new era, more attention should be paid to the problem of whom to train and how to train people. The training goal orientation of platform, stage, and desk integration, the teaching reform path planning of performance, accompaniment and creation and performance integration, and the training strategies of practical ability with different grades, classifications, and layers are all reform schemes put forward in close connection with the current development of the times and the actual needs of music classrooms in primary and secondary schools.

**Keywords:** Piano Basic Course; Undergraduate Students; Southern China

## **Introduction**

Piano basic course for music performance majors in colleges and universities is a very important compulsory course. It is a basic course that all music majors must master skillfully, closely related to other courses. Colleges and universities often pay more attention to characteristic and professional courses and need more research and investment in important basic courses (Chen, 2019 : 148-149).

At present, the teaching forms of basic piano courses are generally divided into two forms: one-to-many traditional and digital piano teaching classes. Comparatively speaking, there are some differences in the content and form of the two forms of teaching, each with its strengths and weaknesses. Currently, most of the traditional piano lessons offered by music majors in colleges and universities adopt the teaching method of one lesson to four. According to the 45-minute lesson, each student's practice operation is only 11 minutes. Students should finish the homework assigned before, and then they can directly enter the technical practice in class. Otherwise, the practice in class could be more effective. Therefore, the short classroom learning time, students in class alone with teachers exchange opportunities less, and the

insufficient amount of learning is the traditional piano teaching class deficiencies. However, the traditional piano teaching class has some advantages, such as strong pertinence and teaching directly according to each student's characteristics and actual situation, which can teach students to their aptitude (He, 2021 : 204-205). The collaborative teaching of a digital piano is just the opposite, every student can guarantee 45 minutes of practical piano practice time, but a teacher can only give teaching guidance to more than a dozen or even dozens of students at the same time, which can only be unified and generally guided, while point-to-point targeted teaching is not enough to take into account the practical problems of every student. This is also the main problem in the current basic piano curriculum. In piano teaching mode in many colleges and universities, the form is single, the content is monotonous, and the teaching practice reform of basic piano courses has become a new hot spot in the teaching reform of music majors in recent years. How to make students "have a good class and a good class" in basic piano courses and let teachers do a good job in class is also a new problem that educators should constantly discuss and deeply study (Lin, 2021 : 1).

Through the analysis of the present situation of the basic piano course in colleges and universities, this paper finds out the corresponding reasons, finds out the solutions in a targeted way, and makes a more in-depth study on the teaching form and evaluation system, aiming at fundamentally analyzing the problems that need to be solved urgently and providing more basis for the development of the basic piano course in the future (Wang, 2021 : 66-67).

### **The Importance of Teaching Reform of Piano Basic Course for Music Performance Majors in Colleges and Universities**

The basic piano course is compulsory in music performance majors in colleges and universities. It is also a basic performance skill course that students of a music performance major need to master. The purpose of carrying out this course in colleges and universities is to strengthen the cross-penetration among various disciplines of music. Through the study of basic piano courses, we can strengthen the training of music functions such as rhythm, pitch, tonality, and harmony, further broaden our music horizons, improve our comprehensive music quality, organically integrate the study of piano basic courses with our professional courses, and finally realize the further improvement of professional ability (Chen, 2021 : 148-149).

#### **(1) It is conducive to improving students' professional quality**

Piano basic courses face different groups of students, except piano students, who can learn. The teaching purpose of this course is to cultivate students' basic piano-playing skills while cultivating students' musical comprehension ability and analytical ability of musical works. As the king of Western musical instruments, the piano has incomparable advantages over other musical instruments in terms of range span, rhythm, tonality change, and harmony accompaniment. In piano learning, students should be familiar with intonation and tonality and pay attention to controlling the rhythm and sound changes. Therefore, in the teaching process, it is necessary to continuously improve the dual cultivation of students' basic knowledge and applied skills to strengthen students' comprehensive ability and enhance their professional quality (Yan & He, 2022 : 178-179).

#### **(2) It is conducive to improving the teaching quality of colleges and universities**

The quality of teaching in colleges and universities is directly related to students' comprehensive quality. The higher the students' comprehensive quality, the higher the teaching quality in colleges and universities, and vice versa. The teaching quality in colleges and universities needs to be improved. The level of teaching depends not only on the advanced hardware teaching equipment but also on the consistency between the formulation of the

teaching plan and the needs of personnel training. Therefore, college teachers carry out teaching reform according to the actual situation of students. It is beneficial to integrate the learning characteristics of students majoring in music performance into the curriculum construction planning, make up for the weak links in the learning process of different students using group cooperation, exchange training, and team ensemble, help students improve their sense of rhythm and expand their music storage, and then reflect the teaching quality of colleges and universities from the overall learning state of students (Wang, 2021 : 32-33).

(3) It is beneficial to save and optimize teaching resources

The teaching reform of piano courses for music performance majors in colleges and universities is conducive to saving and optimizing teaching resources. When facing students of different majors, teachers can teach simple problems with the help of multimedia technology. For the more difficult course contents, teachers can teach in groups, combined with teaching video drills and students' actual rehearsals, such as ensemble, four-handed joint play, ensemble, and other various courses. Teachers can teach by performing program rehearsal activities and simplifying the performance process. This not only effectively saves classroom time but also maximizes the role of classroom teaching. In this way, teachers can use the saved time to consolidate students' basic knowledge, develop collective teaching courses and make piano MIDI courseware to promote piano courses to become excellent courses and greatly optimize teaching resources in colleges and universities (Liu, 2017: 84-85.).

## Research Objectives

To study of Piano Basic Course Teaching for undergraduate students Performance Majors in Southern China

## Research Methodology

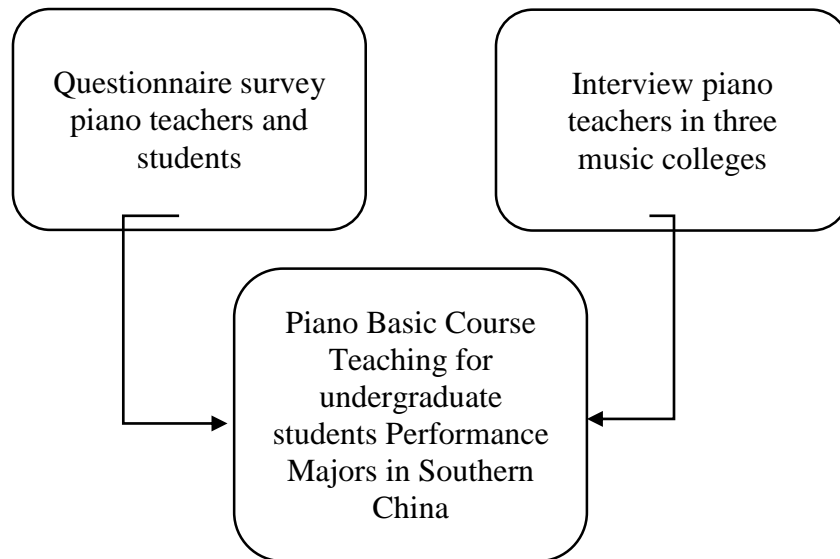
The questionnaire survey selected 50 teachers from 3 universities as research samples, distributed 50 questionnaires, and recovered 50 questionnaires, of which 45 were valid questionnaires, with an effective rate of 90.0%; A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to students majoring in performance in music colleges of 3 universities, and 192 questionnaires were recovered, of which 188 were valid questionnaires, with an effective recovery rate of 94.0%. After the necessary examination of the questionnaire, all the data obtained were saved and sorted out, and the data were analyzed by SPSS22.0 statistical software. This study also carried out an interview survey at the same time. The survey school selected the managers, teachers' representatives, and students' representatives of music performance majors. It conducted freestyle interviews, expert discussions, and in-depth exchanges on various aspects of music performance courses in their respective schools. In addition, The researcher also visited several experts in curriculum theory and music education and listened to their views and opinions extensively.

## Research Scope

**Area:** Southern China

**Time:** May 2022-April 2023

## Research Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1** Research Conceptual Framework

## Research Reselts

### Problems Existing in Basic Piano Courses for Majors in Colleges and Universities

#### 1) Inflexible teaching form

Most of the music performance courses in colleges and universities adopt the way of "one-to-one" teaching alone. Even in the teaching courses of two people, only two people share 45 minutes equally and teach separately. Although this teaching mode can find students' problems in time to solve them in class, the long-term use of this teaching mode makes students not know the progress of other students' practice, and it is difficult to introspect their problems, which is not conducive to students' self-improvement. In addition, students' short classroom study time is also one of the problems caused by too rigid teaching forms. Students rarely have the opportunity to communicate with teachers alone in class. They are busy with other courses after class, which leads to insufficient learning of piano courses and becomes a deficiency in traditional piano teaching classes.

#### 2) Lack of advanced teaching equipment

Colleges and universities must be equipped with perfect teaching equipment to improve the quality of piano teaching. However, due to teaching conditions and other reasons, there are only a few old pianos in piano teaching in some colleges and universities, which can only be divided into several large groups in normal teaching. Students take turns performing piano operations, and even some students still need to turn, and this class ends, which causes great inconvenience to students' studies. In addition, many colleges and universities need to be equipped with special music classrooms. Usually, students can only practice in public classrooms, and the sound insulation effect of public classrooms is poor. In order to avoid affecting students of other majors, they can only practice in the morning and evening self-

study, and the schedule is tight. Therefore, the imperfection of teaching equipment is an important factor that leads to the low quality of students' learning.

### 3) Lack of rationality in the arrangement of teaching materials and teaching contents

As we all know, teaching materials are an important part of piano teaching. Good teaching materials should not only conform to the law of discipline development but also keep pace with the times and adapt to the requirements of the times. This is a problem that college teachers and students need to discuss together. However, in the process of piano teaching in some colleges and universities, the content arrangement of teaching materials needs more rationality, which is not conducive to students' learning and reference. In the survey of three universities, most students think the current curriculum content design is unreasonable.

The reason is that, on the one hand, the content is too broad due to too many versions of the current teaching materials. In teaching practice, different versions of teaching materials have their strengths, but they cannot be included in the teaching plan, resulting in students' piano learning being more one-sided. On the other hand, In the aspect of teaching content arrangement, for students who teach in small classes, Teachers can repeat and demonstrate constantly. Although it can ensure students' teaching quality, teaching efficiency has declined relatively. Students need help understanding the learning situation of students in other classes, which gradually weakens their learning enthusiasm and comparability. For students in big classes, the different learning levels restrict the content of teaching materials (Wang & Zhai, 2019 : 53-55).

### **Guiding Ideology of Teaching Content Reform**

(1) Teachers' leading role: Teaching and educating people is the teachers' duty. Teachers play a leading role in the teaching process and are the fundamental guarantee for improving teaching quality. Teachers play a vital role in the process of teaching content reform. At the commendation meeting of the first "Award for Famous Teachers in Colleges and Universities," Zhou Ji, Minister of Education, said in his speech that teachers all over the country should "love teaching, carefully teach and innovate teaching." Only teachers who understand the latest trends and achievements of today's scientific and technological development and have innovative spirit and consciousness can point out the way forward for students.

(2) According to the teaching content framework of the piano specialty, the teaching content of the basic piano course should be reformed according to four parts: basic practice, polyphony, sonata, and Chinese and foreign works. This is the basic framework of piano teaching content, the basic framework of piano examination content in China, and the basic framework of professional piano competition. Therefore, in the integration and renewal of piano basic course content, we should highlight the professionalism of piano majors, standardize the teaching framework of basic piano courses, clarify the teaching direction, and put forward higher standards and requirements for teaching objects to improve the teaching quality.

(3) Linking up related courses and making overall plans: the basic piano course and its parallel basic music theory and solfeggio courses promote and influence each other; It has a strong supporting effect on vocal music class; It is a prerequisite for impromptu piano accompaniment; It is the keyboard foundation of theoretical courses such as harmony, polyphony, and small musical instrument writing. This shows that the teaching process of basic piano courses should be closely related to related courses. The basic piano course is very important, requiring teachers to do this course well.

### **Teaching Reform Measures of Piano Basic Course**

Teaching reform path planning integrating "playing," "accompaniment," and "creating performance." Regarding the current reality of music education majors in colleges and universities, the curriculum in disciplines needs more connection and integration between them. Some scholars believe "various disciplines and courses are often divided into unrelated fragmented parts, showing no fragmented organic sand."

In the previous teaching mode, the basic piano courses often only pay attention to teaching basic piano theory knowledge. The application content, which is closely related to the training of playing skills and the teaching of music courses in primary and secondary schools, is often seldom involved. This leads students to ignore the career-oriented learning objectives of music teachers in primary and secondary schools and need a more basic awareness of piano teaching applications. The basic path of the reform of basic piano courses for music education majors in colleges and universities should be that students should not only have certain piano playing abilities but also have teaching practice abilities with piano as the medium instead of simply applying the "high, fine and sharp" training mode of music college to train professional musicians. Professor Guo Shengjian believes: "We should clarify that our teaching objects are future music teachers in primary and secondary schools. In the future, they will go to the podium, not the stage. Our teaching methods need to apply the training methods for training professionals on the stage. Teaching must be applied. Both the knowledge and skills learned, and the teaching methods used can be applied to music teaching practice in primary and secondary schools. " Therefore, the teaching of basic piano courses should be based on the reality of music education majors. Starting from the training of piano technical skills, students can further expand their comprehensive abilities such as "accompaniment," "playing and singing," and "creating" based on having certain piano playing abilities to stand firm on the "platform" in the future teaching work of primary and secondary schools and meet the needs of music teaching in primary and secondary schools. From the surface logical point of view, the previous training scheme for music education professionals in colleges and universities, which first carried out basic piano skills training, then carried out cooperative piano skills training such as "accompaniment" and "ensemble," seemed to conform to the basic logic of gradual curriculum teaching. However, in real teaching, the basic piano courses are generally offered for two academic years, and then the practical application courses such as "accompaniment," "playing and singing" and "editing and creating" are expanded, which often leads to the lack of students' application ability in piano teaching due to the short teaching cycle and short teaching time of the follow-up connecting courses. The basic piano course needs the leading teaching practice application ability training content. However, the follow-up practical course teaching can make students complete a few designated teaching tracks, and the ability to use the piano for teaching practice in music course teaching is not strong. Curriculum design aims at music teachers' professional orientation in primary and secondary schools. It is necessary to introduce the guiding content aiming at the cultivation of piano teaching practice ability, break through the barriers between various courses in the discipline, and integrate the teaching contents of "playing," "accompaniment," and "playing and singing." While training students' basic playing skills, "accompaniment," "playing and singing," and "editing and creating" should be taken as the leading contents and integrated into the teaching of basic piano courses. First of all, it is necessary to select the applicable piano repertoire in the teaching materials so that students can master the basic piano playing theory and skills; It is also necessary to make

students further understand the cultivation of keyboard harmony and texture through the teaching of mode, scale, and harmony in piano keyboard, which can not be carried out only after completing all the learning contents of basic piano courses. There are many piano adaptations based on songs and instrumental music in piano teaching materials. They are guided in cultivating cooperative ability regarding repertoire difficulty and texture level. However, it is necessary to strengthen the guidance of cooperative, practical ability such as "accompaniment" in teaching through reform, select appropriate songs or instrumental accompaniment tracks, and guide the teaching contents such as "piano sketch," "positive accompaniment" and "impromptu accompaniment" adapted from songs, to enable students to have preliminary piano application ability step by step. At the same time, it is necessary to integrate the teaching content of cultivating stage practice ability and make students have preliminary stage practice ability through the training of performance forms such as "solo," "ensemble," and "playing and singing."

## **Conclusion**

The teaching reform of piano basic course for music education major in colleges and universities should be closely related to the actual work of music teachers in primary and secondary schools, and be problem-oriented. In the teaching reform of the new era, more attention should be paid to the problem of who to train and how to train people. The training goal orientation of platform, stage and desk integration, the teaching reform path planning of performance, accompaniment and creation and performance integration, and the training strategies of practical ability with different grades, classifications and layers are all reform schemes put forward in close connection with the current development of the times and the actual needs of music classrooms in primary and secondary schools. The proposal of this reform scheme tries to solve the problems that the original teaching form of piano basic course is single and the connection between course teaching and music course teaching in primary and secondary schools is not close enough. At the same time, on the basis of inheriting the achievements of previous teaching reform, we not only pay attention to the cultivation of piano performance ability at the practical operation level, but also pay more attention to the cultivation of piano teaching application ability, so that the teaching of piano basic courses can return to its own actual discipline orientation.

## **Recommendation**

### **Theoretical Recommendation**

Piano teaching in colleges and universities in China is incompatible with teaching mode, teaching content, and training specifications. The contradiction is embodied in the lack of exploration of scientific principles and universal laws in piano teaching and playing and the lack of training in students' overall quality. Therefore, this study aims to put forward the development of college students in line with the overall quality of the piano curriculum. The text first elaborated on the necessity and feasibility of the piano basic theory curriculum through the analysis of the present situation of piano education in colleges and universities in our country, proposing that piano education in our country, both subjectively and objectively, has the problem of emphasizing skills and neglecting theory.

### Practical Recommendations

We must reform the piano curriculum and set up the piano basic theory course to change this situation. Secondly, according to the modern curriculum theory, the article discusses the piano basic theory curriculum scheme. It discusses constructing the piano basic theory curriculum from curriculum objectives, curriculum content selection, teaching materials, and teaching staff construction.

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