

# Teaching Contents and Teaching Methods of Basic Piano Courses in China

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## Abstracts

In China, with the continuous development of preschool education and the country paying more attention to preschool education, many policies have been issued to support the expansion of preschool education majors in colleges and universities. This increases the reserve of preschool teachers, but it brings great challenges in teaching professional courses. Among them, the basic piano course is one of the important courses in preschool education because more and more students with zero basic piano are admitted, which brings difficulty to teaching the basic piano course. In recent years, society has placed higher expectations on the quality of preschool education. National and local governments have not only increased their investment in the field of preschool education but also pointed out that we must attach great importance to the development of preschool education. However, although colleges and universities attach great importance to cultivating students majoring in preschool education, piano teaching has also progressed. However, at the present stage, due to the late start of preschool education majors in colleges and universities, the piano teaching curriculum of preschool students in different regions could be better. In addition, a series of enrollment expansion policies lead to more and more students with weak or even no foundation, which brings great difficulties and tests to the piano teaching of preschool education. This article presents the teaching contents and teaching methods of basic piano courses in China.

**Keywords:** Teaching Contents; Teaching Methods of Basic Piano Courses; China

## Introduction

The major of preschool education in colleges and universities is one of the important teaching units for training preschool teachers, an important place to train teachers for children's enlightening teaching, and the base for the development of preschool teachers. In the past, preschool teachers were basically trained in normal secondary schools, and their academic qualifications were technical secondary schools. Since the 1990s, with the deepening of the country's attention to preschool education and the increasing expectations of society for preschool teachers, the original kindergarten teachers with technical secondary school qualifications have yet to be able to meet the needs of the country and society. All over the country, many higher vocational colleges have set up preschool education majors to train preschool education teachers at the college level. On the other hand, with the rapid growth of China's economy, education and cultural industries have developed and prospered one after another, and children's education has become every family's top priority. Kindergartens are springing up like bamboo shoots after spring rain all over the streets, and excellent preschool teachers have also become scarce resources in short supply. Today, when it is generally difficult for college students to obtain employment, the major of preschool education goes against the current, and the employment situation of students is very good.

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<sup>1</sup>Received: April 1, 2023; Revised: April 11, 2023; Accepted: April 19, 2023

Piano teaching is one of the main art courses for preschool education majors in colleges and universities and an important course for students' skill training. Piano lessons can enrich the teaching materials of preschool education and promote the design level of preschool education activities. It is an important skill to improve students' music literacy and aesthetic ability (Tang, 2018:1). The main purpose of piano teaching practice in preschool education is to train early childhood educators who have strong playing and singing skills and can be competent for related teaching tasks in kindergarten teaching practice (Zhang, 2018:6).

Nowadays, most students majoring in preschool education at Chaoyang Teachers College are exposed to the piano for the first time and have yet to be exposed to the basic knowledge of playing the piano, let alone the basic ability to play it. Therefore, the basic piano course is the key to completing impromptu accompaniment and self-singing courses in the later stage. It is also the most important course in the piano courses of preschool education.

### **The teaching content of basic piano course**

"Basic piano and Children's Song" was originally called "basic piano. " It is a must in the art category of preschool education major. Take one of the courses. The basic piano and Children's Song is a comprehensive course, the professional certification of preschool education—the achievements of school curriculum reform under the guidance. The course takes the foundation of piano and the basic theory of music as the teaching starting point. Give preschool education students the ability to play and sing children's songs to carry out teaching (Li, 2021:1).

The basic piano is offered in the first year of preschool education. Learning basic music theory and mastering certain piano-playing skills can improve students' ability to read music, sight play, and music appreciation. The teaching of this course is closely related to vocal music, children's song accompaniment, and other related courses. Students should have sung and game accompaniment abilities to lay a solid foundation. The teaching content of the piano course consists of two parts: basic knowledge of music and piano playing skills. The basic knowledge of music is to help students better understand music scores, analyze music scores, and develop independent music reading habits. The study of playing skills is to improve students' playing ability and enhance the emotional expression of music. We should be okay with the choice of teaching content and firmly train the basic skills of piano playing from shallow to deep and step by step. Such as the basic knowledge of music, it is necessary to introduce the pitch of the notes and the corresponding playing position, the time value of the notes, the commonly used rhythm, and musical expression terms. The training of playing skills starts with the sitting posture and hand shape of playing, to the basic playing techniques of staccato, legato, jump, double tone, and chord practice, and then to the etude training of three kinds of accompaniment texture—finally, the contrast of single-two, single-three structural works. The selected works should be mainly children's songs, and they should be as short as possible, with various music styles, which can enhance students' interest in learning and bring students a rich aesthetic experience (Wang, 2018:4).

The piano course is one of the compulsory professional skills courses for preschool education majors. Training qualified and practical preschool teachers is the goal of preschool education majors in normal colleges and universities. At present, a considerable number of graduates we train cannot adapt to the needs of work well, the ability to play the piano could be better, while playing and singing cannot come immediately. The reason is that we do not fully play the "cornerstone" role of piano lessons in music teaching in teaching practice.

Judging from the current situation of piano teaching, there are some problems to be solved urgently in the formulation of the syllabus, the choice of teaching content, and the reform of teaching forms and methods (Gao, 2008:4).

Piano teaching in preschool education has unique professional characteristics, significantly different from the teaching of art piano courses. The piano teaching of preschool education major is to equip students with the skills to carry out early childhood music education in kindergarten rather than professional music performance. In addition, most students majoring in preschool education have zero piano foundation at the time of admission, and the level is generally low. Teachers' understanding of the characteristics and characteristics of piano teaching in this major affects their teaching concepts and teaching methods to a great extent. Due to the influence of art piano teaching, the relationship between the content of piano courses in preschool education and the actual needs of preschool teachers is weak, the setting is generally unreasonable, and the distribution of key points and difficulties needs to be more balanced. For example, there are too many technical exercises, such as the Czerny piano course series and sonata series, but they seldom involve simple music teaching, self-playing, and singing. Mastering skilled piano playing skills does not mean having skilled accompaniment ability. The latter is acquired through much practice based on the former. Due to the limited teaching hours and more professional courses that students need to learn, it is very difficult for many students to master piano skills and have the ability to impromptu accompaniment in a limited class hour. This kind of teaching is not suitable for students majoring in preschool education (Qiu & Xie, 2021:4).

In actual piano teaching, there is no scientific and unified standard in teaching, and there are great problems in teaching, teaching methods, and teaching design. The teacher or department decides the learning and set of piano courses, which is highly arbitrary. In addition, piano teaching materials are not unified, so adapting to the actual teaching needs is difficult. Naturally, it is impossible to achieve satisfactory teaching results. In this case, the students of preschool majors have different levels, and their knowledge and technology are both strong and weak, and there are also great problems in future educational work (Wei, 2014:23).

## **The teaching methods of basic piano courses**

Based on the uneven current situation of music quality and the learning level of students majoring in preschool education in higher vocational colleges, it means that the teaching of basic piano courses in preschool education majors in higher vocational colleges is facing great challenges. However, at this stage, although the number of students majoring in preschool education is increasing, teaching facilities still need to meet the practical needs of students. In teaching basic piano courses, although teachers have realized that the contradiction between the needs of preschool students and teaching methods is increasing daily, they can only use classical teaching methods to achieve the teaching task. That is, teaching method, model law, and practice method.

### **(1) Lecture method**

The teaching method is one of the classical teaching methods of basic piano courses for preschool education majors in higher vocational colleges. Teachers explain the theoretical knowledge of basic piano courses in the form of teaching. Many students majoring in preschool education needs to be at a higher-level regarding music literacy and skills. In the teaching method, teachers can help students form an impression of the nature, style, technical types, and

characteristics of music or etudes and then combine them with explanation and demonstration to make students more aware of music-playing skills.

### (2) Modelling

The Modelling is also one of the common teaching methods of basic piano courses, which mainly uses demonstration performance to cultivate students' piano skills and music literacy. When teachers demonstrate music playing, they also focus on the key skills and essentials of piano playing so that students can master the theoretical knowledge of music more intuitively and lay a foundation for their piano practice. At the same time, teachers can also let students watch the performances of some celebrities in the basic piano course, help students understand and master piano playing skills, and constantly accumulate music knowledge. In addition, when some higher vocational colleges adopt the demonstration teaching method, they will guide students to evaluate the piano performance of other students by demonstrating each other's performance. Students are encouraged to find their strengths and weaknesses in basic piano courses' learning process and stimulate their interest in exploring music knowledge through complementary advantages.

### (3) practice method

The so-called practice method is a teaching method that focuses on piano training for students. In contrast, the more common practice methods include slow practice, decomposition practice, back practice and performance practice, and so on. Through the above ways, students majoring in preschool education in higher vocational colleges can gradually improve their piano skills after continuous practice when their piano playing skills are relatively weak. In this process, their musical expression can also be improved to a certain extent. For example, slow practice can help students better familiarize themselves with music and avoid mistakes in the initial stage of piano practice while considering the cooperation of both hands and the practice of piano fingering. Through recitation practice, students have to look at music symbols, expressive symbols, and emoji, which also plays a certain role in improving the music memory of preschool education students and gradually appreciating the essence of music scores (Shang, 2021:2).

First of all, group cooperation can be carried out to improve students' learning efficiency. In the process of teaching, teachers can make good use of the way of helping others. Students with solid receptive ability, high music learning ability, and good skills help students with poor ability to accept. By forming support groups, students can learn from each other, help each other and learn from each other's weaknesses. This can cultivate students' cooperative ability and greatly help improve learning quality. Secondly, modern technical means can be used to strengthen the learning effect. Due to the lack of piano lessons, the chance of practical operation in class is also slight and old. The playing methods and skills teachers demonstrate in class are easy to forget after class, and modern techniques such as telephones and computers can be used. Equipment, record the repertoire and fingering played by the teacher in a class by telephone, download the repertoire that needs to be practiced through the computer, then watch and imitate the recorded video repeatedly, and record the problems in the process of practice in time. Communicate with classmates or teachers to gradually improve their piano playing ability (Wei, 2014:23).

Currently, the piano teaching mode of preschool education majors in higher vocational colleges is generally backward and single, and the teaching method is mainly solo. This teaching model is difficult to cultivate students' collaborative learning ability, and students are rarely able to communicate and communicate on a certain method, which could be more

conducive to the growth of the learning experience. The classroom time is limited, the communication time between teachers and students is less, and students need more teachers' guidance and help in piano playing exercises after class, resulting in many technical problems that need to be corrected, delaying the progress of skill upgrading. Such a backward teaching mode can not improve teachers' teaching quality and promote the basic piano courses in higher vocational colleges to move forward. With the rapid development of Internet technology, China has put forward the "Internet + education" strategy, and curriculum reform is closely integrated with information technology. Piano teachers can use information technology to enrich teaching content, such as finding piano teaching audio and video on the Internet or adding more popular songs to basic piano courses to enhance the interest in learning. Teachers can encourage students to use piano playing software, let students upload their works to the cloud, everyone uploads work to discuss, timely find problems in playing, and improve students' professional skills. Teachers can also find live playing videos of pianists online so that students can deeply watch and feel the beauty of the piano performance, stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning and improve their enthusiasm for learning. The innovation of teaching mode has injected new vitality into the basic piano courses, which can improve students' professional level, enhance the professional skills level of preschool education students, and promote the all-round development of students (Jiang, 2021:2).

The scientific teaching method is a powerful measure to improve the effectiveness of basic piano course teaching. Teachers must actively explore the reform and innovation of teaching methods and fully use advanced science and technology. Information technology is used to infiltrate the teaching of basic piano courses, stimulate students' interest in learning, and improve their comprehensive quality. For example, when carrying out music teaching activities, teachers can use electronic, physical projection, multimedia courseware, and electronic blackboard writing to show the artistic beauty of piano intuitively, vividly, and omnidirectional to achieve the optimization of teaching so that the professional level of students can be significantly improved in this teaching atmosphere. Solid basic skills are the basis of playing the piano works, so it is necessary to teach students the methods of piano practice so that students can play independently and will be able to meet the job requirements in the future. Training basic skills need to be accumulated for a long time, lay a good foundation, do not act in haste, master basic skills under strict guidance, and then strengthen the training of etudes, paying attention to the training of students' piano playing skills. Encourage students to communicate with each other in group study so that students gradually master piano playing skills. Due to the short enlightening time for students majoring in preschool education in higher vocational education, it is easy to difficult to control the actual process of playing. Teachers need to pay attention to this and strictly require students to complete the practice of required etudes (Jiang, 2021:7).

The project teaching method is widely implemented in various professional fields in higher vocational colleges. It has achieved good teaching results, but in the field of piano teaching in higher vocational colleges, the implementation of project teaching is still relatively rare. As a piano educator, the author makes a careful comparison, starting from the actual situation of students, student-centered, boldly implementing the project teaching method in teaching.

According to the basic characteristics of the "project teaching method," it is integrated into the basic piano lessons:

- student-centered
- 8-9 people in groups
- the same teaching content: the content is the project and task.
- the important and difficult points of the teaching content: it is divided into several teaching items, and once these items are solved, the important and difficult points in teaching will be solved, and the music played by students will be formed when the teaching purpose is achieved.
- practice method: students directly participate in the whole process of these projects, and the most important basic method of piano classroom teaching.
- Teachers guide students: that is, teachers play the role of facilitators, guides, or participants in students' practice, guiding students to find ways to solve problems.

In the piano teaching of preschool education major, it is feasible to adopt the teaching form of group class and "project" teaching (Ye, 2010:6).

Under the teacher's guidance, the project teaching method is to hand over a relatively independent project to the students themselves, and the students are responsible for the collection of information, the design of the scheme, the implementation of the project, and the final evaluation. Understand and grasp the basic requirements of the whole process and each link. The most prominent feature of the "project teaching method" is "taking the project as the main line, teachers as the guide and students as the main body," which is embodied in the multiplicity of goal orientation, short training cycle, quick effect, good controllability and paying attention to the combination of theory and practice. *The project teaching method* is a method in which teachers and students complete the project together and progress together.

The basic piano course is a required course for preschool education majors, a necessary skill for preschool education majors under the background of the new era, and a necessary quality education course for training future preschool teachers. Through the actual investigation and literature research, the author knows that the new students majoring in higher vocational preschool education generally enter through the college entrance examination or classified enrollment examination (that is, single entrance examination), and more than 90% of the students have no basic piano. Moreover, the curriculum goals must be completed in two to two and a half years, reaching the level of children's songs. In the face of students majoring in preschool education in higher vocational colleges, Alexander's teaching method provides scientific methods and ideas to help higher vocational students get effective training in the primary stage of piano finger practice to meet the needs of future career development. In other words, Alexander's teaching method provides a scientific way for adult students with zero foundation in piano to solve the common problems of finger stiffness (Wang, 2021:1).

Alexander's skill is an educational method to rebuild the coordination of body and mind, based on the principle that "physiology" and "psychology" are inseparable, to stop and change bad habits in daily life by cultivating correct physical perception, to indirectly achieve the effect of jumping out of the mode, rebuilding the state of body and mind, and developing potential. Most of the courses are conducted in individual classes. Qualified teachers with training put their hands on the students to guide them to experience more possibilities of the body through appropriate words and touch so that each student can find the ideal way to use the body step by step. The skills developed by Frederick Matthias Alexander with excellent observation and perseverance still benefit tens of thousands of people worldwide. His discovery is the basic

control principle for human beings (and all vertebrae) to use their organizational structure correctly: when the relationship between the head, neck, and torso shows a dynamic balance, the human body, and mind can achieve the best efficiency in its natural state. In addition to the prevention and relief of chronic pain and various psychosomatic diseases, performers and athletes who have high requirements for physical use and psychological quality are also important abilities to improve the stability of skills and prevent occupational injuries.

Professional piano lessons are compulsory for preschool education majors in colleges and universities. Based on the teaching concept of teaching students by their aptitude, layered teaching methods are carried out. In piano teaching in colleges and universities, the layered teaching method shows good adaptability, which can make students become the main body of piano learning and practice, give full play to their potential, and improve their comprehensive literacy. Students can give full play to their advantages in the learning process and finally improve the overall quality of teaching. The hierarchical teaching method can not only respect students' differences but also make students make corresponding progress through piano teaching. Hierarchical teaching according to the actual situation of students is of great significance to teaching work. According to the concept and related characteristics of hierarchical teaching, this paper explores the problems and advantages existing in the current piano teaching to study how to use hierarchical teaching methods in collective piano courses in colleges and universities. to lay a relevant foundation for future teaching work (Yang, 2021:5).

The hierarchical teaching method is one in which teachers implement hierarchical teaching pertinently in the case of obvious differences in students' knowledge base, intellectual factors, and non-intellectual factors to achieve the teaching goals of different levels. The layered teaching method can not only enable all students to meet the basic requirements stipulated in the curriculum standard but also further develop the students who are good at mathematics and improve all students in terms of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Hierarchical teaching enables students at every level to have a successful experience. This happy mood greatly improves the relationship between teachers and students, thus improving the efficiency of cooperation and communication between teachers and students.

## Conclusion

As the foundation of each student's piano and the speed at which they finish their homework are different, it is necessary to teach according to people and adopt this special piano teaching method to combine group, group, and individual lessons. Group class. It mainly teaches the common problems in piano learning, such as the theoretical knowledge of music, the basic skills of piano playing, the analysis of piano works, and the introduction of the author's life, which not only saves the unnecessary repetition of teachers' teaching to each student but also can be taught more systematically and systematically—group class. Due to the differences in the potential quality, receptive ability, and learning level of each student, there is a certain distance between the students in the learning progress. The students can be trained in groups according to their learning progress. From the current teaching situation of preschool education majors in higher vocational education, piano group lessons can be a more effective way to implement piano teaching efficiently. The advantage of this teaching method is that students learn from each other, supervise and encourage each other, improve their courage, enhance their psychological quality, absorb their advantages, avoid mistakes, save time, and

improve the effect of piano practice. At the same time, it can avoid a one-size-fits-all approach, focus on cultivating students' abilities, and greatly mobilize students' enthusiasm for learning. Individual classes. Those students who "do not have enough to eat," that is, those who have a high level of theoretical and operational skills and study hard, can be tutored individually to give full play to their talents, improve their learning efficiency and let them make faster progress. For individual students who accept slowly, they can give (her) key counseling and let them build up confidence by eating small stoves. Explain the problems in each student pertinently, solve individual problems individually, and teach students according to their aptitude step by step. This increases the timeliness of teaching and achieves a good teaching effect. The three teaching forms combine, arrange the teaching time scientifically and rationally, give full play to the characteristics of several teaching modes, give full play to their strengths and circumvent weaknesses, and complement each other to make it the most effective and professional teaching method.

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