

Methodological Foundations of Pedagogical Support for Musical Training in Piano Class for Students of Chinese Universities

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Abstract: As higher education reform in China continues to advance, universities are paying more attention to the comprehensive development of talents, which has led to a gradual rise of piano teaching in Chinese universities. However, since university piano education in China is still in its developmental stage and influenced by various factors, there are still many issues to be addressed, such as outdated teaching concepts. Therefore, this article, based on a thorough discussion of the background of piano teaching in China, explains the importance of piano education in universities, deeply analyzes the current situation of university piano teaching, identifies the existing problems, and finally proposes suggestions for improving the level of piano teaching in Chinese universities, aiming to provide a reference for promoting the development of piano education in Chinese higher education.

Keywords: High School, Music Education, Piano Teaching, Countermeasure, Current Situation.

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1 ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF COLLEGE PIANO TEACHING

Although most universities in our country have already started offering piano courses and they are quite popular among students, they mainly exist as an elective course for non-music majors, so development has been relatively slow. The current situation can be seen in two main aspects:

college students' basic piano skills need improvement. With our country's economic growth and ongoing educational progress, the number of students taking piano courses has been steadily increasing. College students' piano abilities have improved, and some have even attended piano tutoring classes, so they do have a certain foundation. However, this only means they have learned piano techniques and are just getting started. It's enough for developing an interest or practicing fingerings, but if they want to make greater progress in piano learning, college students' current basic skills are not sufficient; they need to further improve their knowledge and technique practice[1].

piano teaching needs to keep up with the times. Higher education reforms require that all course systems adapt to the needs of the times and make corresponding changes. We can't just use traditional piano teaching methods to develop

college students' piano skills; we need to change teaching methods and content to meet students' current learning needs and help improve their learning abilities[2]. At the same time, with the current approach to piano teaching, there's more focus on developing college students' piano skills, while basic knowledge is often overlooked, not to mention cultivating their musical aesthetic and emotional appreciation.

1.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF PIANO EDUCATION IN COLLEGES

Looking at the reality of higher education in China, although piano education isn't offered as a required course for non-piano majors, it still plays an important role in improving the quality of university education and promoting the overall development of college students. Specifically, offering piano courses in universities has three main benefits:

It helps students develop a sense of self-directed learning. After entering university, unlike in elementary, middle, or high school, students aren't constantly monitored by parents or teachers, so self-directed learning becomes really important. At the same time, college students have some distinct advantages when it comes to learning piano. There are two main points: firstly, having gone through middle and high school, students' learning abilities have improved quite a bit, and their life experiences are richer, allowing them to quickly get into piano learning; secondly,

college students tend to be more proactive in piano studies, with teachers more in the role of guides. Through this process, students gradually develop their self-directed learning mindset. In this way, interest in piano can efficiently foster students' independent learning skills, which they can then apply to their major courses.

It helps college students tap into their learning potential and promotes overall development. For college students, learning piano well requires solid foundational skills, which take time to build up. This process can effectively train finger flexibility, which is not only good for physical health but also gradually boosts learning potential. At the same time, since college students are no longer facing major exams like the high school entrance exam or college entrance exam, they have more time and energy to study other courses they're interested in and cultivate their artistic sensibilities, thereby supporting well-rounded development.

It helps college students develop their musical aesthetic emotions and reduce the stress of studying major courses. College students take piano courses either to enrich campus life or simply out of interest. So, piano teachers not only need to train students in finger techniques but also focus on cultivating their sense of aesthetics and music appreciation skills to nurture their temperament, which can somewhat relieve the stress that comes with major courses.

1.2 ANALYSIS OF COLLEGE PIANO EDUCATION AND ITS PROBLEMS

Weak Teaching Staff. Currently, as schools gradually expand their enrollment, the number of teachers being hired is also increasing, which has led to some teachers being of low quality, causing a decline in the overall level of the piano teaching team. For example, some piano teachers, despite having piano skills, lack practical teaching experience, cannot fully understand students' characteristics, and fail to interact well with students, which lowers the quality of classes. At the same time, in piano teaching, some teachers focus too much on students' piano-playing abilities and neglect creativity. This not only affects the effectiveness of piano teaching and fails to cultivate students' independent creativity, but also limits students' future career development, going against the goals of piano teaching under the core competencies framework[3].

Lack of professional teaching materials. Although universities offer piano-related courses, many of them still use teaching materials from art schools. This makes piano materials too standardized, lacking both the unique characteristics of the specific major and the school. Moreover, art school materials are extensive and complex, but some university students haven't received systematic piano training, which limits their musical foundation and makes learning more difficult. Generally speaking, piano teaching has two main goals: one is for entertainment, mainly to pass time and allow students to learn some simple playing skills without in-depth teaching; the other is for work-related skills, aimed at

students who want to pursue music professionally, improving their overall musical abilities. Therefore, when selecting piano teaching materials, if the teaching objectives aren't clearly defined, it's not only impossible to choose materials that match the goals, but it also fails to showcase the core value of piano literacy and can't effectively cultivate students.

Neglecting Interest Development. From the perspective of piano teaching, teachers shouldn't just focus on straightforwardly imparting piano skills; they should fully stimulate students' interest. Regardless of which instrument is being learned, interest should be the top priority. However, some teachers often overlook this, which leads many students to practice passively. Nowadays, colleges have gradually equipped themselves with some electronic teaching tools to make learning more interesting. But in piano teaching, some teachers don't make use of them, so the nature of teaching doesn't really change, and it fails to spark students' interest. In the new era, educational concepts have also started to evolve, with deeper thinking about the essence of teaching. During piano lessons, if college students' interest can be stimulated, it can both encourage them to actively engage in piano practice and promote a more orderly teaching process. But in current teaching practices, there's often a neglect of scientifically cultivating interest, leaving students in a passive environment where proactive learning doesn't happen[4][5].

2 THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT TRENDS OF COLLEGE PIANO EDUCATION

Looking at teaching philosophy, a lot of teachers don't really focus enough on developing students' core artistic skills. Their lessons aren't very targeted, and after the course ends, many students only have a basic appreciation of their piano pieces without truly understanding them. The teaching objectives at different stages of piano education just aren't being met. Also, the curriculum doesn't really take into account the cognitive development needs of different students at different stages, so lesson planning and organization often miss the mark. In practice, many teachers just play the piano themselves without really checking students' understanding, going over theories and literature in detail without considering what the students can actually grasp, which can hurt their artistic growth. Lastly, delays in bringing in teaching facilities impact the quality of education, and there's not enough teacher-student interaction in class, making the atmosphere dull and lessons less effective[6].

2.1 NEURAL CORRELATES: PLASTICITY SHAPED BY SPECIFICITY

The piano course is designed as a semester-long program with 32 sessions, each lasting 45 minutes. Students can practice on their own without any time restrictions. Piano classes are usually taught one-on-one, where the teacher guides students in playing pieces of various levels, types, and

styles, whether for concerts, final exams, or accompanying vocal, dance, or instrumental works. This helps students gain a deep understanding of piano performance, keyboard harmony, and improvisation. In other words, this training model is quite comprehensive because it not only introduces students to the piano but also to other forms of piano art. Moreover, this training is practical, providing students with skills they can use in their careers after graduation, preparing them to become well-rounded professionals. The main goal of the piano performance training course is to help students master techniques at multiple levels, eventually allowing them to progress from beginner to more advanced performance levels. During the teaching process, teachers use methods like demonstrations or music analysis to help students intuitively and vividly understand piano pieces. Additionally, these approaches aim to spark students' interest in playing the piano and gradually teach them to understand musical terms and piano artistry[7].

The goals for mastering piano performance can be outlined as follows:

1. Understand the basic theory of piano playing.
2. Get familiar with the styles of piano works from different eras and genres.
3. Master basic piano techniques and fundamental musical sense.
4. Develop strict habits for reading music and practicing.
5. Learn music terminology and improve musical expressiveness.

The course's teaching content and methods (Table 1), according to the goals of piano teaching and students of different levels, use different teaching methods at each stage based on student grading exams.

TABLE 1

Stage	Teaching content	Teaching Materials and Repertoire
Basic Level (1-3)	Correct playing posture; basic techniques of staccato and legato; playing simple pieces.	Mainly using the Bayer Piano Method and Czerny Op.599; complemented with beginner pieces from the Piano Basics tutorials, like 'Pastoral' and 'Innocence' from the Burgmüller Piano Collection.
Technical Enhancement Phase (Levels 4-6)	The extension of the fingers and the transfer of finger weight during legato; accurately grasping the	Focus on 'Czerny 849'; combine it with intermediate pieces from 'Piano Basics Course', like Bach's beginner

	rhythm and phrasing of the music; learning to distinguish different dynamics and tones.	piano pieces, little sonatas, and so on.
Art Expression Stage (Levels 7-10)	A deep understanding of the music and artistic expression; the ability to perform large suites.	Focus mainly on advanced études like Czerny 740 and Chopin études; combine this with performing classical sonatas and modern works. Once you can play these proficiently, you can start learning high-difficulty pieces by Liszt, Beethoven, and others.

The prerequisite for students to do well is that they should be interested in it. Therefore, we must effectively improve piano education. The key is to spark students' interest in learning the piano. The goal of piano education is not just to manipulate the keys, but to help students understand music. To make students truly love music, teachers should help them choose good learning materials; otherwise, students won't be able to express the music. Without the help of a teacher, students can't really learn the piano well. First, the materials selected by teachers need to be digestible for students. If the materials are too difficult, students will waste time and gain nothing[8]. Over the long run, students will lose motivation and interest in learning. Second, during piano lessons, teachers should guide students to learn pieces in different styles and forms of expression, which effectively improves their performance skills and musical literacy. If students focus on just one thing for too long, they won't pay attention to other things. How are the students' expressive abilities? Their understanding of music is shallow. Finally, teachers should get to know students more and create more opportunities for them to express themselves as much as possible. Students are sensitive and have wide-ranging interests. They want to show themselves and gain recognition. Therefore, teachers should understand the difficulties students face in piano learning, help them solve problems, assist them in overcoming psychological, cognitive, and technical challenges, and prevent students from getting stuck in their own little world. Piano teaching courses should not only include instructional segments but also practical concert sessions, allowing students to feel their involvement in artistic activities and stimulating their motivation to improve their performance abilities[9]. It is also very important to cultivate students' musical sensitivity and auditory acuity; for this reason, it is necessary to offer courses in sound recognition and music dictation. When developing students' technical skills and aesthetic awareness, it is

essential to maintain a balance. Following this principle, students can consciously perceive the works, study the details of pieces in depth, and understand the deeper meanings expressed by composers. In training piano fundamental techniques (such as scales, arpeggios, octaves, thirds, and chromatic scales), a significant amount of time must be invested. Only by mastering correct playing techniques and consistent practice can students truly grasp piano performance. Throughout the history of music education, piano teaching has always held an important position. It is not only a cultivation of personal musical literacy but also an exercise in willpower, patience, and concentration. With continuous innovation in teaching concepts and rapid development in teaching technology, piano teaching methods are also constantly improving. In piano education, the role of teachers is changing; they are no longer merely transmitters of skills, but facilitators guiding students to create their own educational paths. Therefore, the basic principle of contemporary piano teaching should be tailored instruction, emphasizing interaction and communication with students, respecting their individual characteristics, and guiding them to develop their musical potential. Through these methods, students can not only improve their performance skills but also find more joy and a sense of achievement in the world of music[10].

3 CONCLUSION

All in all, building a piano curriculum system for university music majors requires finding balance and breakthroughs in many areas, like the basics versus specialization, theory versus practice, and personalization versus diversity. In today's fast-paced educational environment, we still need to keep exploring and thinking about how to further optimize course content, add modern works, integrate local cultural elements, and use innovative methods like multimedia. Only through ongoing reforms and practice can the piano curriculum truly lay a solid foundation for training the next generation of music talent.

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