

Practical Problems, Teaching Strategies and Educational Values of Integrating Piano Improvisation Accompaniment into Vocal Music Training for Music Education Majors

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Abstract: The music education major undertakes the task of cultivating primary and secondary school music teachers. Its curriculum construction should not stay at single-skill training but respond to the practical needs of composite capabilities in primary and secondary school music classrooms. Integrating piano improvisation accompaniment into vocal music training takes song learning and teaching application as the link to promote students to establish internal connections among singing, listening, harmony, keyboard performance, musical expression and teaching transformation. Based on literature analysis and induction of teaching situations, this paper sorts out the existing problems in current integrated teaching, such as separated curriculum objectives, differences in students' foundations, fragmented teaching contents, single teaching methods, backward evaluation mechanisms and insufficient teacher collaboration; puts forward teaching strategies including objective reconstruction, content integration, task-driven approach, layered teaching, teacher collaboration, diversified evaluation and practical transfer; and explains its educational values from the dimensions of musical expressiveness, teaching practice ability, comprehensive music literacy, cooperative awareness, aesthetic education and ideological and political education in courses.

Key words: Music Education Major; Vocal Music Training; Piano Improvisation Accompaniment; Curriculum Integration; Teaching Strategies; Educational Values

1. Introduction and Problem Statement

The music education major aims to cultivate music teachers for basic education. Different from performance majors, students of music

education not only need to possess singing, playing and music comprehension abilities, but also be able to transform professional skills into classroom teaching, chorus rehearsal and art activity organization capabilities. In the field of basic music education, teachers often need to complete tasks such as demonstration singing, accompaniment, observing students' singing status, and adjusting tempo and tonality simultaneously. Therefore, curriculum construction should shift from the logic of single-skill training to the logic of composite ability cultivation.

In recent years, the reform of vocal music teaching in college music education majors has received continuous attention. Traditional vocal music teaching tends to focus on vocal techniques, repertoire completion and stage presentation, resulting in a gap between teaching contents and students' future teaching positions. Meanwhile, piano teaching in some colleges still follows the path of skill training and work performance, paying insufficient attention to improvisation arrangement, classroom accompaniment and teaching application capabilities. Against this background, integrating piano improvisation accompaniment into vocal music training has clear professional rationality. Vocal music training requires stable intonation, rhythm, breath and musical expression support, and piano improvisation accompaniment can provide immediate references for tonality, harmony, rhythm and emotion.

This paper focuses on three questions: Firstly, what practical constraints exist in integrating piano improvisation accompaniment into vocal music training? Secondly, how to design strategies for curriculum objectives, teaching contents, classroom organization, practical training and evaluation methods? Thirdly, what value does this integration have for students' professional growth and the realization of educational goals in music education? This

paper is positioned as a study on theoretical construction and teaching strategies, adopting the methods of literature analysis, theoretical deduction and induction of teaching situations.

2. Theoretical Framework

This paper constructs a three-level progressive framework of "Practical Problems-Teaching Strategies-Educational Values" (as shown in Figure 1). The bottom layer is the diagnosis of practical problems, the middle layer is the construction of teaching strategies, and the top layer is the realization of educational values. The framework integrates practice-oriented teacher education theory, holistic learning theory, collaborative learning and differentiated teaching theory, providing systematic theoretical support for analyzing and solving problems.

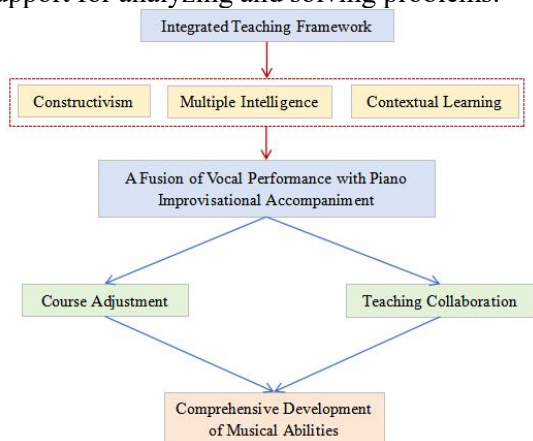


Figure 1. Analysis Framework of Integrating Piano Improvisation

Accompaniment into Vocal Music Training

As shown in Figure 1, starting from theoretical support, the analysis framework takes integrated teaching as the core, and finally achieves the goal of cultivating comprehensive music abilities through two paths: curriculum integration and teaching collaboration. The framework emphasizes that problem diagnosis is the premise of strategy design, strategy implementation is the way to realize values, and a progressive relationship is formed among the three levels, providing structural guidance for subsequent analysis.

2.1 Definition of Core Concepts

Vocal music training refers to the systematic courses and practices for undergraduate students of music education to cultivate their singing skills, musical expressiveness and teaching application abilities. Piano improvisation accompaniment refers to the ability of performers to instantly arrange and play accompaniment parts according to song melody, mode and tonality, harmonic logic, stylistic features and on-site situations without relying on complete accompaniment scores. Curriculum integration is not a mechanical combination of vocal music courses and piano courses, but a systematic integration in teaching objectives, content organization, classroom processes and evaluation methods.

2.2 Theoretical Basis

Practice-oriented teacher education theory emphasizes that teacher training should be closely connected with real educational situations, enabling students to form professional abilities in task completion and situation judgment. Holistic learning theory of music education holds that music learning is not a fragmented training of melody, rhythm and harmony, but a comprehensive experience of the overall structure and aesthetic significance of music. Collaborative learning and differentiated teaching theory provide support for the organizational form of integrated teaching, which is usually organized in the forms of peer accompaniment, group arrangement, cooperative presentation and simulated teaching.

3. Analysis of Practical Problems

Integrating piano improvisation accompaniment into vocal music training has professional rationality, but it will not occur naturally in practice. The difficulties result from the joint effect of curriculum system, teaching organization, evaluation system and teacher resources. This paper systematically sorts out the main problems faced by current integrated teaching from six dimensions (as shown in Table 1).

Table 1. Analysis of the Main Challenges Faced by Integrated Teaching

Problem Dimension	Specific Manifestations	Main Causes	Impacts
Curriculum Objectives	Vocal music focuses on singing, piano focuses on playing, and the goal of combining singing and playing is unclear	Insufficient requirements for classroom accompaniment and self-playing and self-singing in training programs	Students find it difficult to form comprehensive professional abilities

Students' Foundations	Obvious differences in vocal music, piano, music theory and listening foundations	Diverse enrollment sources and insufficient layered teaching	Problems such as "unstable singing, unsmooth playing and inaccurate listening" occur
Teaching Contents	Insufficient training in textbook songs, transposition and harmony arrangement	Independent curriculum materials	Difficult to adapt to the needs of classroom accompaniment in primary and secondary schools
Teaching Methods	More demonstration and imitation, less collaborative arrangement and situational training	Strong inertia of traditional skill courses	Insufficient transfer ability and on-the-spot adaptability
Evaluation Mechanism	Focus on final singing or prescribed work performance	Imperfect diversified evaluation system	Students ignore procedural and creative training
Teacher Resources	Insufficient collaboration among vocal music, piano, theory and teaching method teachers	Detailed professional division and insufficient cross-curricular teaching research	It is difficult to promote integrated teaching sustainably

As shown in Table 1, there are internal correlations among the six problem dimensions: separated curriculum objectives are the root cause of fragmented teaching contents and single teaching methods; differences in students' foundations increase the difficulty of unified teaching arrangement; backward evaluation mechanism makes integrated teaching lack effective incentive orientation; and insufficient teacher collaboration restricts the promotion of systematic reform from the perspective of human resources and resources. Therefore, the design of integrated teaching strategies needs overall consideration and collaborative promotion.

3.1 Separated Curriculum Objectives

At present, vocal music courses mainly focus on vocal methods, work singing and stage performance, while piano courses focus on playing skills and etudes. The two types of courses operate independently in objective expression, training materials and evaluation requirements. When the training program does not clearly put forward capacity requirements such as "self-playing and self-singing", students tend to regard improvisation accompaniment as an additional task rather than a necessary part of professional ability.

3.2 Obvious Differences in Students' Foundations

Students of music education major come from diverse backgrounds. Some have received systematic piano training, while others have weak piano foundations. Piano improvisation

accompaniment is a comprehensive ability that needs to mobilize music theory, harmony, musical form, listening and keyboard skills. If students have not mastered the connection of basic triads and are directly required to complete self-playing and self-singing, it is easy to cause learning anxiety. Differentiated teaching theory suggests that teachers should adjust learning tasks according to students' readiness.

3.3 Evaluation Mechanism Focuses on Summative Results

The evaluation of existing vocal music courses is usually based on final singing, sound quality and stage performance, failing to cover the procedural, creative and teaching adaptability abilities required for improvisation accompaniment. If evaluation still focuses on single examinations, students will ignore training in listening, transposition, arrangement and cooperation. Piano improvisation accompaniment is characterized by instant generation, and evaluation should focus on the rationality of harmony configuration, the support of accompaniment texture for singing, the accuracy of prelude cues and the effectiveness of classroom organization.

4. Construction of Teaching Strategies

In response to the above problems, this paper puts forward seven teaching strategies, and clarifies the basic ideas of strategy implementation from the comparative perspective of traditional separate teaching and integrated teaching. Traditional separate teaching is carried out through two independent

paths of vocal music courses and piano courses, where students focus on singing skills in vocal music courses and playing skills in piano courses, making it difficult to organically integrate the two abilities. Integrated teaching centers on the process of song learning, integrating singing training, harmony configuration, accompaniment arrangement, teaching design and classroom practice, enabling students to develop multiple abilities simultaneously in the same learning task, with a more complete learning experience and more holistic ability development.

4.1 Reconstruct Integrated Teaching Objectives

Curriculum objectives should point to the comprehensive ability of "using piano to support singing and using singing to guide classrooms". The objectives are divided into three levels: skill collaboration objective-completing stable singing with piano support; music comprehension objective-analyzing song mode, musical form and emotion to select appropriate accompaniment texture; educational application objective-transforming vocal music works into classroom teaching materials. The significance of this objective reconstruction is to force the integration of curriculum objectives with professional tasks.

4.2 Integrate Teaching Contents

Integrated teaching should reorganize teaching contents around the process of song learning, establish a cross-curricular content chain of "vocal music-harmony-keyboard-teaching", and follow the principle of "from simple to complex, from fixed to improvised, from individual training to teaching application". In lower grades, textbook songs with regular structure and clear harmonic functions can be selected; in middle and higher grades, national mode songs, chorus rehearsal fragments and classroom introduction music are gradually added.

4.3 Implement Task-Driven and Layered Teaching

The key to integration is to enable students to connect singing, playing, analysis and teaching organization in specific tasks. Task design should be progressive: primary task-configuring basic harmony for melody and self-playing and self-singing; intermediate task-designing preludes and interludes according to lyric emotions and accompanying peers' singing;

advanced task-completing complete classroom fragment presentation. Faced with differences in students' foundations, a dynamic stratification mechanism should be established, dividing students into basic consolidation type, ability improvement type and comprehensive expansion type, and adopting heterogeneous grouping to promote complementarity.

4.4 Strengthen Teacher Collaboration and Evaluation Reform

Integrated teaching requires the joint participation of vocal music, piano, music theory, harmony and teaching method teachers. Colleges can establish a cross-curricular collective lesson preparation system, set up "Vocal Music and Improvisation Accompaniment Integration Workshop", and build a digital shared resource library. Evaluation reform should shift from single result evaluation to procedural, diversified and application-oriented evaluation, with evaluation indicators covering five dimensions: vocal music performance ability, improvisation accompaniment ability, singing-playing integration ability, teaching application ability and educational literacy performance.

5. Analysis of Educational Values

The value of integrating piano improvisation accompaniment into vocal music training is to promote talent cultivation from "single-skill compliance" to "generation of comprehensive educational ability". It is mainly reflected in the following aspects: improving musical expressiveness-students need to perceive harmonic colors, rhythmic rhythms and changes of accompaniment texture in singing, so as to understand the shaping effect of different accompaniment treatments on song emotions; strengthening teaching practice ability-directing skill learning to educational practice and avoiding the problems of "being able to sing but not accompany" and "being able to play but not teach"; promoting the development of comprehensive music literacy-enabling students to apply theoretical knowledge in real music tasks; cultivating cooperative awareness and classroom collaboration ability-helping students understand the mutual support relationship in music activities through role transformation; expanding aesthetic education and cultural understanding-improving students' aesthetic identification ability of different music styles; reflecting the value of ideological and political

education in courses and professional education-students also understand the historical emotions and educational significance behind works when designing accompaniments for red songs and national folk songs.

6. Conclusion

This paper constructs an analysis framework of "Practical Problems-Teaching Strategies-Educational Values". The main obstacles to current integrated teaching focus on separated curriculum objectives, differences in students' foundations, fragmented teaching contents, single teaching methods, backward evaluation mechanisms and insufficient teacher collaboration. From the perspective of practical paths, promotion can be carried out from seven aspects: objective reconstruction, content integration, task-driven approach, layered teaching, teacher collaboration, evaluation reform and practical transfer. Integrated teaching can improve students' musical expressiveness, teaching practice ability, comprehensive music literacy, cooperative awareness and aesthetic judgment ability, and promote talent cultivation from "single-skill compliance" to "generation of comprehensive educational ability". This study is mainly based on literature and teaching logic analysis, and can be further verified through action research and quasi-experimental research in the future.

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