

Exploring the Piano Teaching of Preschool Education Majors in Higher Vocational Institutions: A Case Study of Shaanxi Arts Vocational College

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Abstract: With the vigorous development of preschool education, the theory and practice of preschool education is becoming more and more mature and valued, in which music in the field of art is a discipline that is more difficult for preschool students to master, and the piano is a necessary skill for the preschool education profession. This paper explores the teaching methods of its music profession by discovering the problems of piano teaching in the current higher vocational school of learning and education profession, in order to provide references for the better cultivation of preschool professional competence.

The preschool education program in colleges and universities is designed to train preschool teachers who serve all types of early childhood institutions. With the prosperous development of contemporary education and cultural industries, education has become the focus of attention of society and families. Therefore, the program is centered on the five major fields of health, language, society, science and art, forming a more perfect and comprehensive theoretical system and practical approach.^[1]

Among the five major fields, art occupies an important position. The Guideline for Kindergarten Education was issued by the Ministry of Education, which clearly states: "The main way to implement aesthetic education should give full play to the emotional education function of art and promote the formation of sound personality in young children. It is necessary to avoid the tendency to emphasize only the performance skills or the results of art activities, while neglecting the emotional experience and attitude of young children in the process of activities." It can be seen that the importance of art in preschool education cannot be ignored.^[2]

Piano, as an indispensable instrument in music teaching, is a skill that must be mastered for preschool education students. Therefore, the teaching of music, especially the teaching and training of piano, should be given enough attention and concern in preschool education majors in colleges and universities.

1. Survey on the current situation of piano teaching in preschool education colleges of higher vocational colleges

In recent years, the preschool education majors in higher vocational colleges pay more and more attention to music education, of which piano teaching has become an important part. However, in the actual teaching process, there are still many problems. In order to better understand the current status of piano teaching, I have investigated and analyzed the piano teaching in the preschool education college of Shaanxi Art Vocational College.

1.1. Analysis of students' learning situation

Pre-school students are divided into two sections: senior and middle school. In the survey, we found that 80% of the students in the pre-school of the current higher vocational colleges have zero foundation in piano, and only 20% of the students have a foundation, but the foundation is relatively weak, and not many of them can reach the level of "Czerny 599". Therefore, students enter the school generally lacking in basic knowledge of music, especially in piano. In addition, there are differences in students' interest and motivation in piano learning, some students may just want to cope with exams, while some students study for employment.

1.2. Analysis of Teachers' Teaching Situation

Teachers play a vital role as one of the key factors in piano teaching. At present, in piano teaching, teachers mainly use two teaching methods, namely, the professorial method and the practical method. The form of teaching is mainly in the form of large classes, group lessons and individual counseling. The teaching content mainly focuses on the three aspects of basic exercises, children's songs and examination tutorials.^[3] Among them, the basic exercises are mainly trained through the materials of Khanun, Beyer and the basic piano course, aiming at improving students' basic playing skills and music literacy. The children's songs are aimed at pre-school children, and the repertoire is not only educational, but also stimulates children's interest in music and hobbies. The Examination Tutorials are mainly for students who need to take the examination, providing piano playing skills and repertoire teaching of different levels and difficulties, helping students to improve their piano playing level and obtain the corresponding certificates.

1.3. Analysis of Teaching Environment and Facilities

According to relevant surveys, the piano course for preschool education majors in Shanxi Art Vocational Colleges scheduled for two class hours per week for four semesters. There are two types of piano teaching places for this course: first, ordinary classrooms equipped with pianos, which mainly use upright pianos; and second, digital piano classrooms, which are equipped with digital piano interactive systems and 25 digital pianos.

2. Problems of Piano Teaching in Higher Vocational Colleges and Schools of Pre-school Education

2.1. Problems at the level of students and teachers

Students and teachers are two closely related groups in teaching activities, and they influence and promote each other. Specifically speaking of students, according to the situation of preschool education majors, up to 80% of the students are in a zero-basic state in terms of exposure to

specialized piano training, so their musical foundation is obviously weak. Nonetheless, the majority of students' interest and motivation are quite positive, and they show a high level of initiative and interest in learning. However, there is still a certain percentage of students (some of them) who are inaccurate in their own orientation, and their learning initiative and commitment could be improved.

At the teacher level, they are with professional piano subject background and their professional ability is trustworthy. However, there are still certain deficiencies in the teaching force in terms of understanding the current concept of vocationalized education in China, which leads to a certain discrepancy between the teaching content and the needs of students' career development.

2.2. Problems at the level of teaching content and talent cultivation

The current mainstream mode of piano teaching tends to be traditional teaching methods, but in the children's song playing and singing, singing and dancing piano accompaniment and practical exercises and other aspects still need to be strengthened. A recent study of kindergarten teaching shows that children's songs and song and dance piano accompaniment play a crucial role in early childhood teaching. However, due to the fact that current kindergarten teachers' basic skills in this area are generally not solid and lack of practice, they need to spend a lot of extra time to make up for this in actual teaching, which may lead to insufficient time for teaching children's songs and piano accompaniment for songs and dances, and the assessment mechanism is not perfect, and the students' attention to these important aspects may also be affected. At the same time, the lack of opportunities for students to apply what they have learned in practice is also an important problem.

3. Third, the path of piano teaching in higher vocational colleges of preschool education to explore

3.1. Strengthen students' basic teaching

3.1.1. Strengthen students' piano foundation

Piano is a skill that requires systematic and long-term training to master. For students majoring in preschool education, although their foundation in piano may be relatively weak, and the learning time is relatively short, but still should pay attention to students' basic teaching, such as finger flexibility, arpeggios, scales, and a variety of playing skills practice, in order to better protect the improvisation accompaniment and children's song playing and singing the quality of teaching.^[4]

3.1.2. Strengthen the teaching of basic music knowledge

Music theory is the basis for mastering the piano and technical art skills, many students, despite continuous efforts to practice, but the meaning behind the music is often a limited understanding. Therefore, strengthening the teaching of music basics can improve students' musical literacy and help them to understand and express musical works more accurately.

3.2. Optimize the teaching content around the cultivation of vocational ability

3.2.1. Strengthen the teaching of playing and singing, improvisational accompaniment

Pre-school education majors of higher vocational colleges should pay attention to the deep integration of industry and education, and take the cultivation of vocational ability as one of the important teaching goals. Playing and singing children's songs and improvisational accompaniment are the core skills necessary for preschool education majors to engage in kindergarten teaching in

the future. Therefore, it is necessary to optimize the allocation ratio of different teaching sections, especially to increase the teaching ratio and assessment standard of children's song playing and singing and improvisational accompaniment. In this way, students' practical ability and professional quality can be better cultivated to meet the needs of future professional positions.

3.2.2. Kindergarten teaching materials into the classroom, strengthening practical teaching

Preschool education students are responsible for training professional kindergarten teachers, so it is crucial for them to prioritize professional development and talent cultivation to meet the demands of the rapidly-growing Kindergarten sector. In recent years, the number of kindergartens has been increasing, leading to a corresponding rise in the need for skilled teachers. Traditional teaching methods such as singing “Two Tigers” and “Little Star” are no longer sufficient; modern-day teachers require a broader range of teaching and singing skills to engage and inspire young minds.

To address this growing need, it is essential to expand the selection of songs in kindergarten teaching materials and integrate them into the curriculum of preschool education students. By doing so, students can gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter and develop a more comprehensive skillset that caters to the evolving needs of Kindergartens.

Furthermore, to enhance students' practical abilities and improve their teaching proficiency, it is advisable to introduce park-based learning activities in every semester. By engaging in such practical experiences, students can gain hands-on experience and learn from the teachings of experienced Kindergarten teachers. This authentic teaching environment allows students to apply theory into practice, enabling them to identify their own shortcomings and make timely improvements to their teaching techniques.

By integrating practical teaching experiences into the curriculum, students can develop a more rounded understanding of the teaching profession and identify areas for personal growth. This park-based learning approach not only enhances students' theoretical knowledge but also equips them with the practical skills necessary to become effective teachers in the Kindergarten setting. By prioritizing professional development and integrating practical experiences into the preschool education curriculum, students can better prepare themselves to become outstanding kindergarten teachers.

As China's preschool education career enters a rapid development period, piano proficiency assumes a highly significant position, whether in the student's school stage or career. As a piano teacher of preschool education majors in higher vocational colleges and universities, the following measures should be taken:

Firstly, we need to comprehend the fundamental essence of vocational education. Vocational education aims to cultivate students with professional skills and knowledge for their future careers. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the development direction of vocational education and the requirements of professional talents.

Secondly, we should optimize the curriculum structure and teaching content. We need to adjust and improve the current curriculum structure and teaching content to better meet the needs of preschool education. We should also introduce more practical teaching methods and modern teaching tools to enhance students' practical ability and innovation ability.^[5]

By taking these measures, we can provide a solid foundation for the cultivation of Chinese preschool education professional talents, thus enabling them to better adapt to the development of the preschool education career and make greater contributions to the promotion of education.

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