

Analysis of Teaching Reform of Harmony Teaching in Chinese Normal Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: “Harmony” course plays a very important role in the talent training system of Normal universities and colleges in China. In order to continuously improve the teaching quality of the Harmony Course, many predecessors and colleagues have made great efforts. This paper briefly analyzes the reform of harmony teaching in the past 40 years, both from the existing achievements and the existing problems.

Keywords: Normal universities and colleges; harmony; teaching reform

“Harmony” is a required course for the normal universities and colleges musicology major prescribed by the Ministry of Education. It is not only the basis for follow - up theoretical courses in work analysis, polyphony, and song writing, but also an important pillar of follow - up skills courses such as piano improvised accompaniment and choral command . Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that the teaching quality of harmony is directly related to the quality of talent training in the musicology major. Due to its importance, teaching research on harmony courses has begun with the boom of normal universities and colleges since the 1980 s.

I. Existing Achievements

After nearly 40 years of exploration, to today, China’s normal universities and colleges harmony teaching reform has achieved a series of achievements, which can be briefly summarized from the two aspects of theory and practice.

First, from the perspective of theoretical understanding, the results mainly appear in the following three aspects :

A. It establishes the basic purpose of high teacher harmony teaching.

As early as 1984, the “National Normal universities Harmony Teaching Seminar” put forward the basic purpose of “senior teacher harmony teaching must reflect the ‘normal nature’ “. This purpose highlights the essential characteristics

of teacher harmony teaching, and provides a basic foothold and starting point for the harmony teaching research of various kinds of normal colleges and universities in China.

B. It clarifies the course orientation of normal universities harmony teaching.

In the “ National Polyphonic Harmonic Teaching Seminar” held in 2010, the curriculum positioning of “ ‘harmony teaching’ is a sub - project of harmony teaching” proposed by Mr. Du Xiaoxi, deputy editor of People’s Music Press, professor and doctoral supervisor of Capital Normal University, was unanimously recognized by the participants. The proposal of this certain position points out the practical path for the senior teacher harmony teaching. It first follows the basic rules of general harmony teaching, then finds out its own characteristics, and finally forms its own unique curriculum character.

C. It builds the basic concept of teaching normal universities harmony.

By summarizing the teaching and research results in the past forty years, we can find that the basic concept of harmony teaching of normal universities in China gradually learned from the original “partial theoretical” and “partial practical” binary opposition mode, and finally formed the now recognized integration mode of “theory and practice and heavy” .

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The above theoretical understanding of the teaching purpose, curriculum orientation and teaching concept jointly constructs the top - level design of normal universities harmony teaching in China, and many explorations of implementing these top - level design into the teaching practice have formed the existing practical results. Specifically including:

A . It establishes a comprehensive teaching mode with “composing, reading, listening, playing” as the basic structure. “compose” , “Read” , “Listen” , “Play” are four parts of harmonic compose, harmonic analysis of works, discrimination of harmonic sound , and playing chord on the keyboard respectively. Such a teaching mode, integrating rule teaching and practice training, is the embodiment of the teaching concept of “paying equal emphasis on theory and practice” .

B. Many scholars have published a number of harmonic textbooks for normal universities . Most of these harmony textbooks can adhere to the purpose of “normal nature” and follow the general harmonic teaching rules. Therefore, it plays a certain role in promoting the development of the harmony teaching of normal universities in China.

C. Some colleges and universities have introduced modern teaching methods such as multimedia and MIDI classrooms. At the end of the last century, the expansion of Chinese colleges and universities led to a sharp increase in the number of students. In order to adapt to this reality, the harmony teaching form has also changed from the original group class of a dozen people to a theoretical class that often varies between 40, 50 or even 80 or 90 people. In order to ensure the quality of teaching, many teachers began to use multimedia teaching means to enrich the students ‘ audio - visual experience. Some teachers also try to move the regular classroom to the MIDI classroom, using computer music technology to help students participate in harmonic compose practice, experience harmony learning fun, and thus improve the quality of harmony teaching. These measures should be said to have some reference significance for today’s normal universities harmony teaching research.

In general, China’s normal universities harmony teaching research has made many remarkable achievements in both the theoretical and practical level, providing a good foundation and reference for the future research.

II. Existing problems

As mentioned above, the teaching reform of Chinese normal universities harmony has indeed achieved many results. In the background of today’s normal professional certification,

we will find that the past research obviously has four problems, including “more ideas but less practice” , “ high level but unbalanced ” , “ inaccurate positioning ” and “ unsystematic planning” .

A. More ideas but less practice.

Through combing the results of previous research, we can find that most of the reform methods or measures mentioned in the articles on normal universities harmony teaching are “ ideas” . It is rare to put those imaginations into teaching practice and gain some experience. Here’s a set of numbers to illustrate this problem - Searching academic journals by “ Harmony teaching in normal university” as key words on CNKI, there are 163 results available, its years span from 1985 to 2020. When we removed 32 articles which unrelated or duplicates, there are 131 related articles remains. In the 131 articles, only 50 based on practical experience, 38 . 17% of the total literature, while the remaining 61 . 83% of the literature mostly belongs to ‘ suggestion ’, ‘ outlook ’ or ‘ status analysis ’. If we considered the originality of the practical experience, then the number have been halved, even less than 20%. The cause of this problem is mainly due to the “ idea” proposed . For example, each class considers writing, reading, listening, playing or often giving all students homework approval. They are too idealized to ignore complex practical conditions such as teaching conditions, teaching objects, and time limits. Therefore, the “ idea” can only be “ vision” , should not be implemented.

B . High - level but unbalanced.

If we carefully examine the 38 . 17% of the empirical exchange literature mentioned, we will find many problems. Most of the real original practical experience comes from Capital Normal University, Shandong Normal University, Shenyang Normal University, Inner Mongolia Normal University and other universities above the provincial level or well - known music institutions such as Sichuan Conservatory of Music, and Guangxi Academy of Arts . The excellent student source conditions, perfect teaching facilities and sufficient teachers all provide an important prerequisite for the implementation of their teaching reform. In most local senior colleges that do not fully meet these conditions, it is difficult to learn directly from these successful experiences. This leads to the overall research and reform of harmony teaching showing a high - level but unbalanced situation.

C . Harmonic teaching positioning is not precise.

The real root of the appearance of “ unbalanced development” lies in the “inaccurate” of the harmony teaching orientation of different levels . Generally speaking, the level of normal universities and colleges in China can be divided into universities directly under the Ministry of Education, provincial universities and local colleges or universities . Colleges and universities at all levels have obvious gaps in the level of students, teaching facilities and teachers. If we ignore these gaps and generalize the teacher harmony teaching, then the problem of experience and promotion.

D. Planning is not systematic.

The “ planning ” mentioned here refers mainly to the curriculum system aspect . The teaching arrangement of harmony courses in our country ’ s senior teacher talent training program usually includes three interconnected courses Harmony A, Harmony B and Advanced Harmony . Among them, the first two are collectively called the Harmony, Most in the 3, 4 semester started, belong to a professional required course. And the latter, the Advanced Harmony, is started in semester 5 and belongs to professional elective courses. There is a distinct sequential relationship between the three courses. But at present, most normal universities and colleges have no systematic planning for the harmony curriculum system. Harmony and Advanced Harmony have great repetition in the

teaching content, which leads to unclear boundaries between the courses and a large deviation in the target orientation of the curriculum.

The problem is found to solve it better. Since 2017, when the Ministry of Education started the normal professional certification project, normal universities and colleges in China have also started a new round of teaching reform exploration. Based on the existing achievements and aiming at solving problems, under the background of professional certification, follow its ’ basic concepts of ‘ output-oriented ’ and ‘ student-centered ’, we can believe that the teaching reform of harmony course in Chinese normal colleges and universities will enter a new stage of development.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to this work.

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