

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL LITERACY AND AESTHETIC THINKING OF MUSIC TEACHERS IN CHINESE UNIVERSITIES

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### Summary

This article aims to explore artistic techniques, education cognition and culture experience constitute the main system of music education. Based on numerous teaching practices of college music teachers, the development of culture literacy and aesthetic thinking are of great importance at present. Thus teaching space and application range can be extended while creation and deepening of teaching materials would be increased. This work was the result of a scientific and historical study, before which the goal was to determine the quality of musical training in China. The article shows the impact on the level of musical training of Chinese students of the latest technologies using the latest generation of multimedia technology in the process of learning to understand music better. The level of formation of professional competence characterizes the degree of preparedness of a music teacher for music-educational work at school, and acts as a prerequisite for the effectiveness of his pedagogical activity. With the development of times and the progress of society in China, the number of colleges and universities is constantly increasing. College teachers not only carry out the important task of promoting the creative traditional culture of the Chinese nation, but also must have a high degree of cultural awareness and depth. China's spiritual culture and the whole process of teaching and educating people can fulfill this mission.

**Key words:** music teachers, culture literacy, aesthetic thinking, technology, training.

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### 1. Introduction

The development of culture literacy and aesthetic thinking for teachers is an indispensable part of current music teaching system along with the basic music techniques instruction. Most teachers are equipped with a single music technique: vocal music, instrumental music, opera performance, etc. They mostly lack culture knowledge due to the low requirement on literacy for them. The comprehension and analysis of musical works would be definitely weakened. Therefore, college music teachers in China should put emphasis on culture literacy and aesthetic thinking. It is the requirement of teaching practices and the education reform urges them to change. Teaching system with a hierarchy based on teaching cases combined with high quality teaching aims has gone mainstream.

**The purpose of the article** is the theoretical substantiation of the pedagogical conditions for the formation of spiritual culture in future music teachers, the development and experimental verification of the management technology for the formation of spiritual culture in future music teachers, to consider the essence of managing the formation of spiritual culture

and the specifics of the professional competence of a music teacher and to prove the importance of implementing the principle of integration of professional training of future music teachers. The practical significance of the obtained research results will consist in the development of an author's model of managing the process of spiritual culture formation in future music teachers and the technology of implementing its components; in the development of scientific and practical provisions, conclusions and methodological recommendations regarding the application of the management model of the process of spiritual culture formation in future music teachers.

**Research methods.** Methods of theoretical and experimental-empirical levels were used to solve the tasks. The first group consisted of methods of theoretical analysis of psychological-pedagogical and methodical literature; synthesis of empirical material, its classification; modeling and concretization of theoretical knowledge, generalization of pedagogical experience in higher pedagogical education. With their help, the essence of professional competence was considered, the problems of the formation of professional competence in the theory and practice of professional training of future music teachers were analyzed. The second group consisted of such methods as questionnaires, conversations, interviews, surveys; direct and indirect observation, self-observation; independent expert assessments, ranking, creation of problem situations, study of creative works, implementation of experimental verification; statistical methods of experimental data processing.

## 2. Main part

### **The development of culture literacy and aesthetic thinking**

#### (1) Art technique (skills and techniques)

Art technique is the main part of music education. As the base for culture literacy, it also serves as the carrier and origination of teaching. At the same time, aesthetic thinking rises out from it. Namely, music teachers cannot only adhere to the instruction of traditional instrumental performance, culture should be blended into teaching from the perspective of education cognition and culture experience. It provides a thinking base and logic design for teaching.

Art technique teaching involves many subjects rather than a given artistic performance. But the majority of college music teachers focus on the teaching of art techniques. The introduction of basic music terms and music language with appreciation of important musical pieces make students acquire the perception of music: the melody, the rhythm, the harmonics and the orchestration. Then students can master a musical expression (musical instrument, vocal, compose, etc). These can be treated as instruction on the level of art techniques. Generally speaking, most teachers graduating from professional music colleges emphasize the skills and techniques performance while neglecting the significance of education theory and general courses. The present one-to-one tutoring is quite individual, though the rigidity of techniques, stereotype of thinking mode and weakening of literacy cannot be overlooked. Consequently, some music graduates cannot find other jobs except music performance. The lack of cultural deposits, aesthetic awareness and innovation would lead to failure in career. To develop qualifying music graduates, based on imparting the knowledge of art techniques, more on culture literary and thinking mode should be added into teaching system. In other words, literacy and instruments work together to improve students competence (*Wang Anguo, 2004*).

In the context of education reform on Liberal arts and Inter-discipline, college music teachers are confronted with challenges: high requirement and broad teaching room. Hence, the creative teaching system should be considered in the art techniques teaching. Culture literacy

should also be accompanied with the whole teaching practice. To be specific, music teachers are supposed to explore how to broaden education cognition.

### (2) Education cognition(aesthetic and education theories)

It seems that there is difference between education cognition and music techniques instruction. Actually, the teaching practice and teaching activities are based on education theories. College music teachers may be an excellent artist with talent in instrumental performance and vocal performance. However it requires much more to be a qualified teacher. The theories in pedagogy and psychology are necessary in teaching practice.

As college music teachers, the identity of teacher demand education cognition. Meanwhile the knowledge of music teachers in education has an impact on the efficiency of teaching. The art teaching system can also be influenced. "the emotional values, knowledge and techniques, process and methods in music teaching function as systemic structure on students."<sup>2</sup> Music teachers with proper education cognition help to grasp the general rules of music education. The effective communication between students and teachers would be accomplished. It also determines the efficiency and quality of teaching activity. Admittedly, music education is one type of art education. The accumulation of aesthetic theories is quite important. Dong wenzue, the literary artist, put forward a definition on aesthetics value dimension: aesthetics is to cultivate all-round students; aesthetics is about values and art education; aesthetics is a branch of philosophy concerned with the study of the idea of beauty; aesthetic is the instruction of aesthetic perception. From the above explanation, it provides an insight into education cognition. Many dimensions involved in music education are demonstrated. The cultural deposit and aesthetic thinking mode are supposed to employed in teaching practice for comprehension and application.

Culture literacy and aesthetics play an important role in education cognition. The concept of teaching regardless of status and well-rounded education are the emphasis of Confucian thoughts. *Disciple gauge* lists many traditional good manners. The interpretation of *On instruments of Xishan*, researches in music creation of Bach, piano performance and emotional expression of Chopin...numerous literacy in music influence music appreciation and teaching. Education can be related with culture experience.

### (3) Culture experience

Stage and social practice are important in this respect. The field and social community serve as a quite different cultural experience from traditional school education.

The perception of integration in music education become more prominent. The integration in teaching procedure, teaching aim, teaching space, teaching theme and teaching content asks for more in the dimensions of cultural experience. In other words, the pursuit for art techniques and aesthetics in teaching should be accompanied with the enhancement of cultural experience. Cultural experience permeates the whole education system rather than an attachment to teaching practice. Currently college music teachers employ cultural education in the following two aspects: the introduction of background on classics, the artists and artistic features; the summary and expansion.

Quality-oriented education has been a focus in the education of China. Literacy, a set of practices which can be observed, taught, acquired and measured, is the combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes. This type of education with high standards requires music teachers to highlight the integration of art techniques and education cognition through cultural experience. The interaction of theory-practice-theory should be strengthened. The construct of culture literacy and the unity of knowledge and action should be developed for students in teaching practice. Core quality is gradually cultivated from comprehensive quality.

Music teachers should improve their own cultural experience to satisfy the increasing need in music education.

### **The practice of cultural literacy and aesthetic thinking mode development**

Teaching aims and value innovation are involved in cultural literacy and aesthetics. That is to say more aims and value orientation can be found from traditional teaching. Another two specific teaching practice are concerned: the expansion of teaching material and field domain; deep experience and interactive influence. The innovation in music education aims at the multidimensional value orientation. It is the key from the traditional music technique instruction to cultural literacy and aesthetics. Instead of learning several songs and cultivating art specialist, what matters for college students is the improvement of art appreciation and aesthetic competence along with cultural literacy. Hence the development of cultural literacy and aesthetic thinking are based on the creative adjustment on teaching aims and values. The expansion of teaching material and field domain is referred to as well as the deep experience and interactive influence.

In the context of interdisciplinary and integrating scope of college music education reform, there are many limitations for the traditional teaching aims and value orientation. College music teachers should apply cultural literacy and aesthetics thought into teaching for positive values.

(1) The expansion of teaching material and field domain (the extension of teaching space “classroom-stage-field”)

The diversity of options in teaching material and the expansion in teaching field domain are the focus in the practice of cultural literacy and aesthetic thinking mode development. Multi-dimensional teaching material can be available for music teachers. The domain for practice can be expanded in teaching space. The teaching application domain can be defined as a special cultural domain. An objective relationship grounded on the production, inheritance, transmission and acceptance of knowledge is produced among educators and educatees. It should be noted that the teaching application domain in a narrow sense concentrates on the traditional school and classroom. Recording studio, stage and theater would be included. However it can be expanded to community and field in music teaching application domain. Thus more vivid and rich teaching material can be obtained. In other words, the college, stage and field, as different dimensional application domain, can benefit teaching to shape a complete teaching system.

### **The comparison of teaching plans in music appreciation of two college teachers**

<b>Teacher A-traditional teaching plan</b>	<b>Teacher B-modified teaching plan</b>
the lead in for preview	the lead in for preview
the introduction for content	the introduction for content
the demonstration of teaching material(audio and video)	the show of folk musician
the discussion and reflection	the presentation of students
	the discussion on the similarity and difference between folk musician and music majors
	the call for the attention on original culture and the emphasis on the conservative value of culture heritage and aesthetic value of folk art

(Wang Changen, 2011)

From the above teaching plans, the difference lies in the choice of teaching material. There is less material in the former which concentrates on audio and video. While the teaching material is plentiful in the latter and better teaching effect can be achieved. The expansion of field domain, “classroom-stage-field”, is formed on the basis of college music teachers' vision and accumulation of knowledge. Equipped with corresponding culture deposit and aesthetic thinking, teachers can design more creative teaching activities. Except for teaching aims and content of music education, the practicability, variety and expansion of teaching material should be taken into account in teaching. Teachers cooperate with students, and colleges coordinate with local government. All work together to enhance application efficiency. In this way, teaching material and teaching space can be fully put into practice.

(2) Deep experience and mutual influence (the mutual interaction between teachers and students from art to culture)

The blend with teaching space is the key in this respect. The logical adjustments in the procedures of traditional teaching plan make the teaching activity develop smoothly. Culture literacy based on deep experience and strong mutuality is emphasized. Specifically, culture literacy education of college music teachers is demonstrated in two aspects: the interpretation of classic works, artists and artistic features at the beginning of class; the summary of knowledge expansion at the end of class.

The comparison of teaching procedures on Suona horn between the traditional teaching plan and the modified one:

the traditional teaching procedure	the modified teaching procedure
the introduction of music culture in Meishan	the communication and experience of folk Suona musicians in Danlin area of Meishan
the explanation of artistic features of Suona in Danlin area of Meishan	the consultation of instrument performance, arrangement of band from folk musicians
the show of Suona performance video and analysis of performance techniques	the questions and reflection of students and comments of folk musicians
the imitation of playing Suona	the cooperation with folk musicians on stage (community, school, and other places)
the rehearsal on the stage and teachers' comment	the questions and reflection of students and comments of folk musicians
the consolidation	the consolidation

(Feng Lanfang 1978-1998).

From the comparison of the two teaching plans, the latter is abundant in teaching material and teaching field domain. Meanwhile the culture experience run through the whole teaching procedure. The interest is intrigued in the latter teaching model and the transition from art to culture is realized. What matters is college music teachers' culture literacy and reflections. Thus the deep influence and mutuality in teaching activity can be achieved. The social value, cultural value and aesthetic value can be obtained at the same time (*Wang Anguo 2004*).

Obviously, it doesn't mean the aim of deep experience and influence can be achieved if students are led to the teaching field out of class. Sometimes it only scratches the surface in practice and the effect may be not equal to the effort teachers put in teaching. Some vocal music teachers put forward the learning system of “learn-immers-sing-perform-feel-think-create”. It is not only a expansion of the simple system of “learn-sing-perform”, students can experience

culture through learning singing techniques, engaging in stage performance, reflection and analysis of knowledge. Therefore college music teachers try to explore more suitable teaching plan in order to realize deep experience and mutual influence based on culture literacy and aesthetics.

### 3. Conclusion

There remains some problems in the development of cultural literacy and aesthetics for college music teachers: the lack of systematic training model for teachers and suitable textbooks, the communication gap between students and teachers, the restriction on teaching activity during the Corona-virus epidemic..... However, music teachers should reflect on exerting themselves to enhance cultural literacy and complete sound knowledge system from the perspective of academics, teaching and life. Then the realistic value should be achieved.

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