



Strategy and Practice of Choral Conducting Ability in Normal Universities

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Abstract

Based on the requirements of teachers' chorus conducting ability in 2022 edition, this paper discusses the problems in the cultivation of chorus conducting skills of senior teachers, and puts forward corresponding strategic suggestions. This paper analyzes the lack of practical experience of chorus conducting of senior students through literature materials and cases. Finally, according to the ability requirements, the paper puts forward the corresponding solution: the supplement and adjustment of teaching content, the play of the resource advantages of colleges and universities to provide practical training opportunities, as well as the combination of class and after class, to cultivate students' independent learning ability.

Subject Areas

Music

Keywords

Senior Teacher Music Education, Choral Conducting Practice, Chorus and Conducting Skills, Student Training

1. Introduction

As a collective activity, chorus activity can enrich the form of art activities of primary and middle school students, enhance the sense of teamwork, and cultivate the students' comprehensive sense of music, their music understanding ability, aesthetic ability, cooperation ability, coordination ability, social ability, judgment ability, communication ability, etc. The society and schools pay more and more attention to chorus, and social and cultural activities related to chorus are held every year. After the "2022 Edition of Art Curriculum Standards" was put forward, specific requirements were put forward for the "solo and coopera-

tive singing” of primary and middle school students, which also put forward new requirements for music teachers’ chorus conducting skills.

To train future music teachers in normal colleges requires students need chorus conducting skills to be competent for future work. Because of this, the cultivation of chorus and conducting skills needs to be constantly updated with The Times. Although the conducting course has always been one of the compulsory contents and main courses for training normal colleges music students, it also needs to be adjusted according to the needs of music teachers’ conducting skills in primary and secondary schools. This paper will start on the ability needs of teachers, and discuss the training strategies of chorus command skills.

2. The 2022 Art Curriculum Standards Requires Teachers’ Choral Conduct Ability

In “2022 Edition of Art Curriculum Standards” (hereinafter referred to as “Art Standards”), there is a lot of detail in the section of “solo and cooperative singing”, from the learning objectives to the learning tasks, from the content requirements to the learning requirements and even the teaching tips. The following is a summary of the requirements that music teachers need to achieve as mentioned in the Art Standards.

2.1. Conducting, Singing and Multi-Vocal Teaching Ability in the Music Class

The “Art Standard” emphasizes that “we should pay attention to and strengthen the chorus teaching, and actively create conditions to carry out the full participation of the class chorus” [1]. The chorus in class is an important part of the teaching task, and the class chorus is a direct way for primary and middle school students to gradually contact and cooperate in singing. The learning task 2 puts forward specific requirements and teaching tips for “solo and cooperative singing”. Grade 3 - 5 for unison singing, round singing, fixed vocal accompaniment singing and other simple chorus; grade 6 - 7 for further simple chorus, and can adjust their singing according to the requirements of the work; grade 8 - 9, can actively participate in various forms of chorus, practice multi-sound, and direct others to sing.

In order to complete the teaching content in music class and cultivate the multi-voice hearing ability and choral ability of primary and middle school students, music teachers are required to have correct gesture assistance, guide students to enter, stop and have command ability, and need to demonstrate pitch relationship to students directly, and in the vocal superposition, from one vocal rhythm to multi-vocal rhythm practice, one vocal melody is added to two-vocal part. Teachers need multi-vocal teaching ability.

2.2. Chorus’s Ability to Select, Organize and Rehearse Songs in Extracurricular Music Activities

“Art standard” put forward “singing teaching and social and cultural activities,

campus cultural activities, class team activities, festival celebration, in the real activity situation exercise students' singing ability" chorus as a collective activities, music activities can enhance children self-confidence, cultivate collective consciousness and coordination and cooperation ability [1]. The most common chorus in extracurricular music activities is choir rehearsal. On the basis of regular chorus teaching, the conductor of a choir has to master more.

Firstly, the conductor must possess knowledge of music theory, harmony, music analysis, solfeggio, ear training, cavity, and piano techniques. Additionally, they should have the ability to choose and arrange songs, understand multi-voice scores, guide proper breathing and intonation control in the choir, and handle administrative tasks related to the choir's daily maintenance and organization. Furthermore, selecting talented members for the choir and assigning responsibilities within the sound department are key responsibilities of the conductor. Finally, the conductor should strive to produce exceptional work by efficiently leading the choir during practice rehearsals. This includes ensuring each team member carefully observes the conductor's gestures, understands their facial expressions and eye movements, comprehends the intent of the commands, and exercises a strong sense of cooperation. During rehearsals, it is important for the conductor to guide the choir in delivering impactful performances and ultimately represent the school in various competitions.

3. Problems Existing in the Cultivation of Senior Division Chorus Conductor Skills

Choral and conducting skills, on the surface is to sing choral songs, conducting the chorus. However, in the above practical application scenarios, it is not difficult to find that it cannot be limited to the chorus and command ability, but is a combination of various abilities. In order for students majoring in music teachers to be competent for the above two scenes, senior teachers should cultivate students from the above various ability perspectives and provide opportunities and processes for learning multiple abilities. At present, most universities still adopt the traditional research of the basic knowledge of chorus singing and the study of the basic command techniques. According to the differences between the training strategies of colleges and universities and the needs of primary and secondary schools for teachers' chorus ability, the following problems are shown.

3.1. The Lack of "Primary and Secondary Schools" Section, Cannot Reflect the "Pedagogical"

Lack of learning process of selecting and organizing songs in the rehearsal of the primary and secondary school choir. As a result, graduates do not know how to train and arrange chorus, which cannot adapt to the actual needs of chorus teaching and rehearsal organization in primary and secondary schools [2]. At present, most colleges and universities use the teaching mode of professional choir or vocal chorus rehearsal, which ignores the future career needs of students. Com-

pared with other colleges, the teaching of chorus conductor in higher school universities should reflect its “Pedagogical” characteristics.

In Zhejiang normal university, for example, the first is the teaching content, rarely in the process of chorus and command textbooks chorus teaching content, the lack of how to allocate voice, children multi-voice training method, children’s works movement choreography and music analysis, variable knowledge learning, for primary and secondary school chorus organization training and rehearsal method class allocation. Secondly, many graduates said that in the face of primary and secondary school choirs, they know little about the repertoire, and will not choose songs that are not suitable for the students’ voice conditions during rehearsal. These are different from the actual work needs of primary and secondary school teachers.

3.2. Rich Chorus Practice and Lack of Practical Experience

Students lack the ability to rehearse the choir, and the practical environment to cultivate multi-voice teaching ability. Chorus and Conducting has been in the form of a large class. At present, in the process of carrying out practical teaching activities, senior teachers still take teachers as the main body and lack of curriculum practice. Class form in two modes, one is the teacher speak knowledge-students singing/command, homework, the second is the teacher command in front of the teacher or the teacher video practice a repertoire of traditional teaching mode, ignore the practical teaching, just repeat the students choir rehearsal way, the pitch sound training. The few practices focus on chorus practice and light on command practice, ignoring the importance of practice teaching. Students rarely have the opportunity to really command, “just talk, not practice”. As a result, after the end of the course, the students only learn how to “sing”, how to “swing”, but they do not know how to “teach”, let alone how to “row”. The excellent talents in primary and secondary schools trained by senior teachers should be teachers with the ability to direct and lead the group rather than excellent choir members.

3.3. Lack of Opportunities to Deal with the Works Independently

In the final analysis, the core content of choir rehearsal is the study of choral works. The ability to deal with works is a must for a conductor, while the training of senior teachers will not exercise students’ processing ability so carefully. In class, the teacher takes a few fixed pieces of the repertoire as the semester homework, and it is difficult to fully apply the content of the unfamiliar works that cannot be contacted.

Processing works “time hero”, for example, this is a mixed four-part tune, its voice into the very complex, as a command first need skilled accurate read to the spectrum lyrics rhythm, the position of the voice into and rest, the rhythm of the lyrics, thinking about the voice of sound, key processing voice into the section rhythm. Next, sing the melody of each part, according to the melody and rhythm,

use the command skills learned, try to direct each part once, experience the work. Continue to find out the key points of the work and provide solutions to have a general impression of the work. Next, I independently analyzed the music lyrics, tone, speed, strength and special music notation, and analyzed the music style, mood, background, music structure and other elements. Next, further analysis of the story of the song (depending on the situation), the tone of the lyrics, add the conductor to the details of the music. Finally, the work is fully interpreted during the rehearsal process. As a training of command skills, the current course content cannot meet the use of many repertoire.

4. Choral Conducting Skills Strategy Suggestions for Senior Division Students

4.1. Supplement and Adjust the Teaching Content According to the Ability Needs

4.1.1. Basic Teaching Content

The demand of compulsory education for music teachers in primary and secondary schools. The author divides the teaching content of senior teachers into three parts: chorus part, conducting part, chorus rehearsal and conducting practice. The learning of chorus basic theoretical knowledge and the connection of basic skills are the most basic learning part, and also the main body of the course. On this basis, we need to integrate the content related to music education in primary and secondary schools.

Part I of chorus: understanding of vocal music training and voice training; selection and analysis of chorus works; rehearsal of choral works; choirs, notes and rehearsal methods; competition performance. Students who learn to sing together by themselves can better guide the chorus students to learn together. The basic movements of command, the practice of shooting and drawing lines, and the practice of directing the movement of shooting and drawing; the division of phrases and breathing; the practice of command speed and strength; the distribution of hands; reading the chorus score and score, the meaning of the melody line; the design of chorus performance movements. Let the students understand the meaning of each hand wave, not just imitate the teacher learning a song command action to respond to the test. Part III: Chorus and conducting practice: Learn the practical application of various beats, and learn the combination of basic theory and practice. It is also the most important part of chorus conductor learning, transforming theory into practice, and then rising from practice to theory.

Among them, the most emphasized is the module of “training skills of primary and middle school choir, precautions in sound change period and rehearsal methods” integrated in the existing teaching process, which should be explained according to the professional ability needs of music normal university students. For example, the component of primary and secondary school choir can simulate the scene and guide students to practice and learn as follows: select chorus members from the class members—assign different parts to students according

to the timbre—adjust the volume, timbre and breath according to different students—summarize and reflection of chorus training—chorus practice, so as to understand how to cultivate the chorus organization and management ability and rehearsal ability [3].

4.1.2. Selection of Textbooks and Repertoire

The choral conducting textbook should include the basic choral content, and the score selection of the singing command course should reflect the step by step, classify the repertoire, and the students of different degrees should select their own appropriate repertoire for practice. Teaching repertoire should contain a variety of styles, with classical chorus works understand harmony concept, with works related to regional characteristics, minority style works art style, with modern works expand students vision, with pop music adaptation of chorus works follow the trend, foreign classic chorus experience different melody characteristics around the world, and many primary and secondary school teaching children's chorus works, etc. [4], to provide students with a more comprehensive knowledge system. In the process of repertoire practice, we need to pay attention to the transformation of internal parts and pay more attention to non-melodic parts, which is the charm of chorus works, and lays the foundation for the work to direct different styles of chorus works in the future!

4.2. Give Full Play to the Resource Advantages of Colleges and Universities and Provide Practical Training Opportunities

The ultimate goal of the cultivation of chorus conducting skills is to make students really apply what they have learned in the classroom. Therefore, to improve the command level of students, it is also necessary to provide students with a systematic and comprehensive practice platform and opportunities, extend the learning experience of the course, and let students have the opportunity to practice, so as to realize “interest and practice, accumulation and reflection”.

4.2.1. Small Stage of Classroom Practice

Classroom is always the main battlefield of teaching, maintaining the way of group rehearsal, but group practice should not only stay at singing together, but also be able to take turns to direct and exchange the melody of each part. It can also communicate outside the group, take turns in pairs, ask questions to each other, can regularly hold group performance exchange, gain practical experience. In addition, different class groups can be used to form a big chorus, so that students can face the strange choir, improve their strain ability and play ability on the spot, boldly communicate with their eyes and movements, complete the works, and finally form a small stage for classroom practice.

Taking choral teaching at Zhejiang Normal University as an example, the chorus command course provides a two-semester program, with classes held once a week. In the first semester, the focus is on the chorus class, which is divided into small groups of 6 - 8 students. These small groups practice choral

music together and engage in inter-group cooperative exercises. At the end of the semester, there is a small practice concert where the small groups come together to form a larger choir and perform. This allows students to practice their choral skills in a larger group setting. In the second semester, the emphasis shifts to command courses. Students take on the role of commanding the songs that were performed in the first semester. Each group takes turns being in charge of the command. After completing their assigned tasks, they have the opportunity to interact with the “strange chorus” of other classes or groups, which helps them exercise their command abilities. Overall, this course offers a variety of group interactions and cooperative learning methods, allowing students to gain practical experience in choral music and develop their command skills.

4.2.2. Choral Performances in Various Forms on Campus

It is far from enough to complete the study of chorus theoretical knowledge in class and conduct skill training on this basis. If the classroom cannot meet the demand for chorus conductor level, senior teachers should expand the teaching forms and strengthen the connection with practice. Let the students combine the professional knowledge learned in the theory course by participating in various forms of art practice activities to enhance the learning effect. Extracurricular art practice students participate in various types of choir, such as female chorus, male chorus choir, mixed choir training and participate in school performances [5]. Teachers can give students chorus conducting competitions, group chorus special concerts, red theme chorus activities, etc., and integrate teaching guidance content into practice through various practical training forms to cultivate students’ subjective initiative in learning. Constitute theory-practice-re-theory-re-practice, forming a virtuous circle, promoting the improvement of comprehensive skills of chorus and command, and finally testing the learning results through teacher evaluation.

4.2.3. Off-Campus Linkage Chorus Base

Use local resources after class to set up “community choir” or “primary and secondary school chorus base” connected with senior teachers, combine choral conductor with social and cultural activities, to help students enter the choir for rehearsal, and exercise their practical conducting ability. Let the students really face the problems that may occur in the primary and secondary school choir. During the semester, the students can communicate with the teacher again, improve the degree of command and practice again, and help to complete the role transformation of teachers and students. At the same time can provide high strength for the society, reduce the primary and secondary schools double reduction or the second classroom shortage, reduce the community do activities need additional contact resources manpower, strengthen the contact with primary and secondary schools, normal schools and Primary and secondary schools, community, the students rehearsal scores included in the students’ practice performance.

4.3. Combine Class with Class and below Class to Cultivate Students' Independent Learning Ability

Most of the chorus command courses in colleges and universities only have one year to teach. In the face of all kinds of various chorus works, only one year of course learning is not enough, nor is it enough to deal with the practical problems in the future work. The traditional teaching mode cannot provide sufficient teaching content for students. New media and network teaching are more and more introduced into the classroom, which puts forward higher requirements for students' awareness of independent learning. "Chorus and Conducting" plays a useful role in cultivating students' chorus command ability, and there are several suggestions in guiding students to learn command skills independently.

4.3.1. Guide Students to Study through Multiple Channels

Students are encouraged to learn higher choral conducting content through high-quality teaching platforms such as MOOCs, Learning Pass, netease Cloud Classroom, and Bilibili. There are many excellent conducting teachers and even vocal music teachers, which are the summary and sharing of these senior teachers' experience over the years. Furthermore, the content of online learning can not only be limited to the chorus conducting techniques, the expression in language and literature, the movement in dance, the resonance position of vocal music and so on are all high-quality learning content that can promote the growth of the command state.

4.3.2. Encourage Students to Sign up for the Cloud Chorus

In chorus command course, encourage students to sign up command group, cloud, chorus, chorus command technology, as a technology, want to convert into their own level, varied, finally combining the actual summary, in this way, can be simple, fast, in a planned way system learning school command basic class limit and unable to show content, expand their knowledge accumulation [6]. Not limited by the region and time, I can effectively improve the chorus conducting skills, consolidate what I have learned before, and improve my understanding of the works and conducting skills with high quality recently. Finally, the online contact works are recorded and can be taken to the school command teacher, who provides on-site guidance.

4.3.3. Encourage Students to Know More about the Chorus Competitions

Students are encouraged to watch all kinds of chorus competitions, absorb the excellent conducting characteristics of each choir, find out the shortcomings of the choir, and find out the deficiencies of other choirs [7]. There is no best mode to learn from the strengths of many families, pay attention to music from the heart, flow to the fingertips, express the experience of the conductor will be music, is the best conductor.

5. Conclusions

The "2022 Edition of Art Curriculum Standards" has emphasized the importance

of conducting skills for teachers in choir classes and extracurricular music activities. However, there are several challenges in the training of conducting skills in normal universities, including the lack of a dedicated section for primary and secondary school education, insufficient practical experience, and inadequate opportunities to handle works. To address these issues, this paper has proposed several strategies that can help enhance the development of conducting skills in the training of normal university students. These strategies include adjusting teaching content based on demand, providing practical opportunities through university resources, and promoting student autonomy in learning.

With the emergence of art curriculum standards, new requirements are put forward for art curriculum and music curriculum, and new standards are put forward for the quality of primary and secondary school teachers. Learners learn the chorus conductor in a continuous spiral state, and the cultivation of the chorus conductor skills also needs to keep pace with The Times. Every teacher also has his own teaching methods, and the learning of choral conducting skills plays a positive role in cultivating excellent music teachers. Educators in normal colleges should take the lead and keep up with the pace of The Times. This paper tries to study the training program in line with the current needs, and tries to put forward ways to reform the teaching content and methods. Of course, this still needs more discussion, constantly injects new vitality, to adapt to the new era of basic education talent training to make efforts.

6. Limitations of Research

This study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the paper only focuses on the challenges and solutions related to the training of conducting skills in normal universities, which may not reflect the situation in other educational institutions or communities. Secondly, while the proposed strategies are based on experiences, they have not been tested and evaluated in rigorous empirical studies. Lastly, the impact of various external factors, such as cultural background, policy, and technology, on conducting skill development in choir education is not explored in-depth.

In conclusion, this paper has identified the challenges in the training of conducting skills in normal universities and provided strategies to address them. Based on the analysis of the “2022 Edition of Art Curriculum Standards”, it is clear that enhancing conducting skills is crucial for both teachers and students in choir education. The proposed strategies, such as adjusting teaching content, providing practical opportunities, and promoting student autonomy, are feasible and effective. However, further research is needed to test and evaluate these strategies in different contexts and to explore the impact of external factors on conducting skill development in choir education.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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