

Research on the reform of music education talent training mode in applied undergraduate colleges and universities

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Abstract: The development of the economy and society demands that our country's talents become more applied and versatile. The demand for applied talents is growing, and cultivating such talents has become a common educational model in universities. Applied undergraduate education in China is still in its early stages, despite its relatively short history, it plays a crucial role in the domestic higher education system. This article, based on the current societal demand for applied music talent and the current state of music education in applied undergraduate institutions, explores the models of music education talent cultivation and proposes several teaching reform measures. It aims to enhance the quality of music education in universities and achieve the goal of cultivating applied music talent.

Key words: applied undergraduate; music education; talent training mode

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Introduction

Music education, as an art form, is a vital component of basic education, effectively enhancing students' aesthetic cognition, creativity, and cultural literacy. In response to the evolving demands for music education talent, applied undergraduate institutions, which primarily focus on cultivating practical talents, bear the responsibility of nurturing high-quality music educators. In recent years, the Chinese government has been actively promoting educational modernization, emphasizing the integration of education with societal development and the cultivation of innovative and practical talents. The goal of music education programs is to prepare future music educators, and their professional development significantly impacts the future of music education. However, due to the rapid changes in the music education industry, traditional models of talent cultivation face numerous challenges. Adapting to social needs and developing practical music educators with both solid professional knowledge and excellent comprehensive qualities has become a critical issue for the construction of music education programs in applied universities.

1 The importance of applied undergraduate education in higher education

As China's higher education transitions from an elite model to a mass education system, the diversification of educational institutions and the cultivation of multi-level talents have become inevitable trends. A number of applied undergraduate institutions, upgraded from higher vocational colleges, have emerged, primarily aimed at training high-level technical application talents for frontline roles in production, construction, management, and service. These institutions focus on developing students' technical application skills, ensuring they have strong technical thinking, are adept at applying technology, and can solve practical problems. After all, only a few research universities and experts can engage in knowledge innovation and high-tech R&D; the cultivation of applied talents is an objective requirement for social modernization. Traditional higher education has emphasized uniformity and academic talent, suppressing students' individuality and potential, which has made it difficult for students with excellent imagistic thinking and innovative ideas to showcase their strengths, thereby reducing their market competitiveness. Education should develop in a stratified and categorized manner, and applied undergraduate education addresses this shortcoming. With the expansion of higher education institutions, the elite education model is no longer dominant. If it remains unchanged, it will lead to a surplus of mediocre elites and a shortage of applied talents. There is a significant difference between elite education and mass education; if elite institutions take on the task of mass education, it will disperse educational resources and reduce the

quality of elite education. Therefore, applied undergraduate education is the inevitable path for higher education to transition from an elite to a mass education system.

2 The development status of applied undergraduate music education talents

2.1 Increasing demand for music talents in society

In today's society, the demand for music professionals is steadily increasing. As people's living standards improve, their pursuit of spiritual and cultural life has grown stronger. Music, as a vital cultural medium, plays an increasingly significant role in daily life. In the education sector, there is a growing need for music teachers across various schools and training institutions. With the comprehensive promotion of quality education, music education has become a crucial component in developing students' overall qualities, necessitating a large number of professional music teachers to conduct teaching activities. In the cultural and entertainment industry, music professionals are equally essential. The music performance market is thriving, with concerts and music festivals emerging frequently, requiring professional music performers. The music production industry is also booming, from songwriting, arrangement to post-production, all of which require specialized talent. Emerging professions such as music copyright management and music agency are also on the rise, significantly increasing the demand for professionals in music management and marketing. Moreover, the development of the Internet has given rise to new business models like online music education and live streaming, providing a broader employment space for music professionals. In summary, the demand for music professionals in various sectors is becoming increasingly diverse and large-scale, offering rich employment opportunities for applied undergraduate music education talents.

2.2 Employment requires higher quality of talents

Currently, music education professionals in applied undergraduate programs face higher quality requirements when seeking employment. In terms of professional skills, employers are no longer satisfied with basic musical performance and singing abilities; they place greater emphasis on comprehensive skills in areas such as music composition, arrangement, and the use of music production software. For example, individuals who can skillfully use professional software for post-production, adding unique features to musical works, are highly sought after. Regarding teaching ability, in addition to a solid foundation in music knowledge, they must also master modern teaching methods and techniques. They should be able to use multimedia resources to create engaging and lively music classes, encouraging active student participation and interaction, and stimulating students' interest and creativity. Additionally, overall quality is crucial. Good communication skills enable effective interaction with students, parents, and colleagues; teamwork spirit allows for collaborative efforts in music projects or teaching activities; and innovation enables the design of innovative music teaching plans or the creation of unique musical works. Only by possessing these high-quality attributes can music education professionals stand out in the competitive job market and meet the growing demand for music education talent in society.

3 Problems existing in the training mode of applied music teachers in application-oriented undergraduate colleges and universities

3.1 Teaching is out of step with social development needs

The curriculum for music teacher education programs at applied undergraduate institutions is updated slowly, failing to keep pace with new trends in music education and falling short of societal needs. The teaching content focuses heavily on traditional music knowledge and skills, with limited coverage of cutting-edge concepts and emerging teaching methods, making it difficult for students to stay updated with the latest industry developments. Practical teaching components are weak, with insufficient practice time and monotonous formats, leaving students without enough exposure to real-world teaching scenarios, which hinders their ability to effectively apply theoretical knowledge to practical teaching. Students lack understanding of specific employment standards and actual teaching practices, leading to a mismatch between training directions and job requirements. Additionally, there is a lack of international perspective in music education, preventing students from engaging with cross-cultural music education philosophies and methods. This results in

inadequate adaptability and innovation when facing a diverse music education environment, making it challenging to meet society's diverse demands for high-quality music teacher talent.

3.2 Ignoring the cultivation of students' comprehensive quality

In the training of music teacher candidates at applied undergraduate universities, there is a strong emphasis on professional skills training, while the cultivation of students' humanistic qualities is often overlooked. The curriculum lacks sufficient general education courses in literature, history, and philosophy, resulting in a narrow knowledge base for students. In terms of skill development, there is an overemphasis on professional skills like music performance and singing, while the comprehensive qualities required for teaching and education, such as lesson planning, classroom management, and understanding student psychology, are not adequately developed. Teamwork and communication skills are often neglected, with few group activities or cooperative learning opportunities, which hinders students' ability to improve their communication and collaboration skills through teamwork. Additionally, there is a lack of emphasis on fostering innovative thinking and practical skills, with traditional teaching methods that rely heavily on teacher demonstrations and student imitation, limiting students' opportunities for independent exploration and innovation. This approach fails to meet the high standards of comprehensive teacher qualities required by modern music education.

4 Reform of music education talent training mode in applied undergraduate colleges and universities

4.1 Adjust the training objectives and clarify the direction of talent training

The reform of the talent cultivation model for music education in applied undergraduate universities should be guided by social needs, breaking through the limitations of traditional subject-based approaches, and building a training system that emphasizes 'competency-based + diversified development.' The current music industry urgently requires composite talents with artistic literacy, innovative awareness, and practical skills. Universities should focus on an 'applied' orientation, shifting their training goals from single skill transmission to comprehensive quality development, enhancing students' adaptability and creativity in music education, cultural heritage, and creative industries. By optimizing course structures and deepening industry-education integration, universities can align talent cultivation with industry needs more precisely, forming a nurturing pattern characterized by 'a solid foundation, strong practice, and good innovation.'

Taking the "History of Western Music" course as an example, after setting new training objectives, teachers no longer limit themselves to teaching students about historical events, figures, and works in Western music history. Instead, they focus on developing students' ability to interpret musical phenomena and solve problems within the context of Western music history. For instance, they analyze how different Western music styles have influenced contemporary music creation and teaching trends at various historical stages, helping students understand the development of music from a historical perspective and stimulating creative thinking. We also encourage students to apply their knowledge of Western music history to creative experiments, such as combining musical materials from different historical periods to create new music products or propose unique teaching plans. Additionally, we frequently organize activities such as group discussions and classroom presentations, which help students improve their communication and collaboration skills through mutual exchange and cooperation. Through these collaborative activities, students deepen their understanding of Western music history and clarify their roles in music education and their future career paths in this field.

4.2 Optimize the course structure and enrich the content of music courses

The traditional curriculum structure suffers from issues such as the disconnection between theory and practice and the singularity of course content, which fails to meet society's demand for applied talents. Therefore, it is essential to develop a scientific and well-structured curriculum system, with core professional courses as the foundation, to strengthen students' musical foundations in areas like music theory, vocal performance, and instrumental playing, ensuring they have a solid professional base. Additionally, the proportion of practical courses should be significantly increased, including music pedagogy practice, stage performance practice, and music production practice, to enhance students' professional skills and

problem-solving abilities through hands-on experience. Furthermore, interdisciplinary courses should be introduced to break down disciplinary barriers, integrating music with psychology, education, information technology, and other fields to broaden students' horizons and cultivate versatile talents. For instance, a music psychology course can help students understand the psychological aspects of music learning, optimizing teaching methods; a music information technology course can teach students how to use music production software, enhancing their music creation and editing skills. The curriculum content should be updated regularly, incorporating modern music education concepts, cutting-edge research findings, and popular music elements to keep pace with the times. The curriculum should also be layered and diverse, catering to the learning needs and interests of different students, from introductory courses for beginners to advanced courses for those with specialized skills. By optimizing the curriculum structure and enriching its content, we aim to create a comprehensive, diverse, and practical music education system, cultivating applied music education talents who can adapt to societal development.

4.3 Promote evaluation reform and build a diversified evaluation system

In the reform of the talent cultivation model for music education in applied undergraduate universities, it is urgent to advance evaluation reforms and establish a diversified evaluation system. Currently, the demand for applied music education professionals is becoming increasingly diverse, and the traditional evaluation method, which primarily focuses on exam scores, is no longer suitable. Universities need to break this limitation and innovate in multiple dimensions, including evaluation content and methods.

In terms of evaluation criteria, it is essential to assess not only students' grasp of fundamental music theory, such as music history and theory, but also their practical skills. Abilities like performance and teaching can be assessed through actual stage performances or simulated classroom settings. Additionally, innovation should be integrated into the evaluation system, encouraging students to engage in music creation and innovative teaching methods, with their creative achievements being evaluated accordingly. The evaluation methods should be diversified, moving away from a single written test and incorporating elements like interviews, work presentations, and practical operations. For instance, students can submit original musical compositions, which are then scored and evaluated by professional teachers and industry experts, providing a comprehensive assessment of their creative abilities.

To make the evaluation system more scientific and reasonable, it is essential to integrate multiple evaluation entities. Teachers, with their professional knowledge and teaching experience, are the core evaluators, capable of providing precise assessments of students' learning processes and outcomes. However, student self-assessment and peer assessment are equally important. Self-assessment helps students reflect on their progress and identify areas for improvement, while peer assessment enables students to learn from each other and recognize others' strengths through communication. For example, after a group music project, students can evaluate each other's performance in teamwork and task completion. Additionally, music education institutions can be invited to participate in the evaluation process to understand graduates' performance in actual work and market demands. Feedback from employers on graduates' professional skills, communication abilities, and professional ethics can be collected through methods such as questionnaires and on-site visits. Based on this feedback, universities can promptly adjust their talent development plans and teaching methods to ensure that evaluation results truly serve talent development, cultivating applied music education professionals who meet societal needs.

4.4 Promote school-enterprise cooperation to achieve mutual benefit and win-win development

The collaboration between schools and enterprises is a crucial component in the reform of music education talent cultivation models at applied universities. In Western music history courses, schools can collaborate deeply with professional music performance groups and music cultural dissemination companies. These organizations can provide internship venues for the school and organize students to participate in Western musical performances and promotional activities. For instance, when preparing a Western opera exhibition, students can be assisted in analyzing the historical background and style of Western operas, applying the Western music history knowledge they have learned in class to practical scenarios, thereby deepening their understanding of the musical characteristics of different eras. Meanwhile,

industry experts from these companies can also visit classrooms to share the latest information and real-world cases from the Western music scene, enriching the classroom content and enhancing the relevance and freshness of the course.

The collaboration between schools and enterprises can achieve a win-win outcome. For schools, leveraging corporate resources and knowledge can enhance the quality of music education, boost employment rates, and better align graduates with market demands. For students, internships in companies allow them to experience the work environment earlier, laying a solid foundation for their future careers. For enterprises, they can continuously gain new ideas and insights from school students, which greatly aids in expanding their business and promoting their brand image. Furthermore, universities and enterprises can jointly undertake research projects on Western music culture, transforming academic achievements into practical productivity, promoting the inheritance and development of Western music culture, and fostering a positive interaction and mutual prosperity between education and industry.

5 Epilogue, peroration

Music education plays a crucial role in enhancing cultural soft power. Currently, local music colleges and universities face numerous challenges and difficulties. Therefore, this article proposes reform strategies for the applied music talent training model, aiming to accurately meet the societal demand for music professionals. By enhancing school-enterprise cooperation in the process of promoting teaching and practical activities, it seeks to cultivate outstanding music educators needed in the new era. This initiative aims to invigorate music education at local universities and provide stronger support for China's cultural and economic development.

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