"Student-centered" Professional Development Strategy for Music Teachers in Universities

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Abstract: *The professional ability of music teachers in current universities seriously affects the quality of teaching. The depth of a teacher's professional knowledge and the breadth of their field of expertise directly affect their own quality improvement and also affect the formation of students' music knowledge structure. Currently, music teachers in universities face problems such as unreasonable curriculum design, poor teaching methods, and inappropriate textbook selection, which seriously hinder music teaching in universities. In order to better promote the improvement of professional abilities of music teachers in universities, this article explored the professional development strategies of music teachers in universities. By analyzing the development issues of music majors in universities and the concept of "student-centered", it was suggested that this concept could be applied to the professional development of music teachers in universities. Through a study of music teachers at a local university, it was found that after receiving training on the "student-centered" concept, 35% of the university's music teachers achieved a very reasonable level of teaching design, 30% of the music teachers' teaching methods were very reasonable, and 33.33% of the music teachers' textbook choices were very reasonable. This article hoped to study the professional development strategy of "student-centered" university music teachers, which could play a certain role in promoting the professional development of university music teachers.*

Keywords: *Strategies for Teacher Professional Development, Student-centered Conception, College Music Teachers, Teacher's Professional Ability*

1. Introduction

With the gradual improvement of current educational concepts, the professional abilities of university teachers have also faced new challenges. The professional level of university teachers is the key to maintaining the sustainable and healthy development of education, which directly affects the development of the entire education industry. In music teaching in universities, there is a close connection between the construction of the music teacher team and the professional development and training goals of university teachers. The professional development training of music teachers in universities is not only the foundation of teacher team construction, but also has an important impact on the quality of education and the stable development of basic education. However, there are certain problems in the professional development of music teachers in universities, and how to solve these problems and promote the better development of their professional level is an urgent problem to be solved at this stage. This article explored the professional development strategies of music teachers in universities based on the current popular "student-centered" education concept. It is hoped that through this research, more ideas can be provided for the cultivation of professional abilities of university teachers, and theoretical support can be provided for the wider application of the "student-centered" concept.

With the increasing emphasis on the professional ability of music teachers, there is an increasing amount of research on their professional development. Many scholars have studied the professional development of music teachers from different perspectives and explored the factors that affect their professional development. Koner Karen believed that the professional development needs of music teachers might be influenced by their level of professional experience. He examined the professional development needs of experienced music educators from 2007 to 2017 and stated that the constantly changing needs throughout their career and informal interactions between music educators were two

new themes that were effective for the professional development of music educators [1]. Johnson Daniel C explored the professional development needs of music teachers through the professional knowledge of music teachers and music teacher education experts, as well as research literature on music teacher professional development, and provided specific policy recommendations for music teachers at each career stage [2]. West Justin J evaluated the practices and policies of music teacher professional development in the United States from 1993 to 2012, and stated that school policies were severely inadequate. He introduced the impact of policies, practices, and academia on the professional development of music teachers [3]. Scholars' research on the professional development of music teachers can enrich the research content of music teacher professional development and provide a certain theoretical basis for this study, but there are also some shortcomings.

In order to better promote the professional development of music teachers in universities, this article proposed new strategies for promoting the professional development of music teachers based on theoretical analysis of the issues of professional development of music teachers in universities and the concept of "student-centered". Through empirical research, it was found that this strategy could better enhance the professional ability of music teachers in universities. Compared with traditional methods, the innovation of this method lied in its attention to the importance of the "student-centered" concept and its application in the research of professional development strategies for music teachers in universities. This helped to promote the improvement of music teachers' professional level and ultimately promote the development of music teaching. The framework of this study is shown in Figure 1:
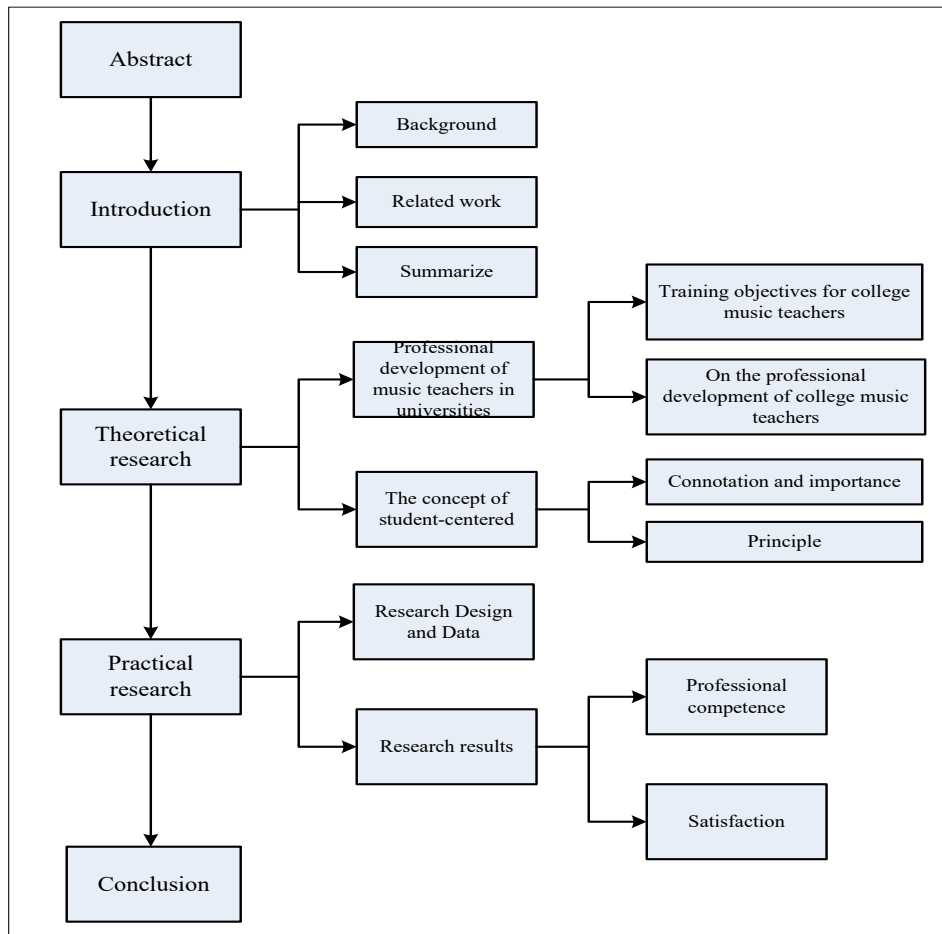

Figure 1. Research framework of this article

2. Theoretical Investigation on the Professional Development of Music Teachers in Universities

2.1 Training Objectives for College Music Teachers

The profession of university teachers refers to the rich professional knowledge that teachers possess

in the education and field they teach, and the ability to proficiently apply professional knowledge to the field they teach. The music teaching method is mainly conducted in the classroom, which means that in the early stage of in-service training for university teachers, their professional skills, understanding of music culture and other subject knowledge systems, and understanding of music aesthetics are all necessary skills for the professional development of university music teachers [4-5].

2.2 Issues Related to the Professional Development of Music Teachers in Universities

(1) Incomplete theoretical knowledge in teaching

In music teaching in universities, vocal and instrumental music teaching is an important aspect, and the guiding role of theory in vocal and instrumental music teaching practice should be fully utilized [6]. Currently, there is a lack of books on the development of vocal teaching in China, and there is no in-depth, scientific, and systematic research on this topic, nor has a complete theoretical system been formed. Therefore, it cannot provide effective guidance for vocal teaching practice activities of university teachers. In Chinese music teaching, the lack of theoretical research has become a major factor restricting the professional development of music teachers [7].

(2) Neglecting the overall music literacy of students

College music teachers should pay attention to the training of students' skills, emphasizing not only their singing but also their teaching [8]. However, in real life, there is a common phenomenon of emphasizing singing over teaching in music teaching in universities, which seriously affects students' learning outcomes. In the teaching process, music teachers in universities often focus on cultivating students' extension skills, and they would spend a lot of time and energy on sound quality, resonance, sound unity, and other aspects related to vocalization and singing. However, the explanation and teaching of vocal cultural knowledge, historical background, style characteristics, and other aspects included in music are rarely involved or even ignored.

(3) Unreasonable curriculum and content settings

The current music curriculum in universities is unreasonable. Firstly, the curriculum of music majors in universities is unreasonable, with problems of single content and form; compared with other emerging disciplines, the teaching of music majors lacks rich practical activities. In the actual vocal teaching process, music teachers in universities only provide simple explanations to students in the classroom based on textbooks. Students often feel bored and find it difficult to deeply understand the knowledge content, which goes against the original intention of music professional teaching. Secondly, the teaching content of music majors is singular and inconsistent; many universities choose or write their own textbooks, which results in a lack of a unified system for music major teaching. Each course has strong arbitrariness, and teaching experience cannot be shared among different universities. This has had a significant negative impact on the development of music major teaching; the third reason is that the content of music major teaching is not satisfactory. Due to the lack of rich practical experience by many teachers, they only allow students to blindly imitate, which leads to students usually only learning superficial knowledge and unable to understand its essence. This makes it difficult for students to achieve good results in their music learning.

From it, it can be seen that there are still some problems in the current professional development of music teachers in universities. Taking students as the fundamental purpose, main content, basic methods, and developmental evaluation concept of teacher professional development can better interpret the essence of teacher professional development that teaching and learning complement each other, which is of great significance for promoting the professional development of music teachers in universities.

2.3 Concept of "Student-centered"

As the main body of acquiring knowledge and seeking development, students should be the main body of the classroom in teachers' teaching activities, and student-centered teaching reform is needed [9-10]. This has made the core idea of "student-centered" new curriculum reform increasingly well-known to teachers. "Student centered" refers to respecting every student, respecting their personality, and treating them as "complete individuals" in the teaching process; it is necessary to help each student solve their own difficulties and achieve their self-development [11]. In short, "student-centered" education is a harmonious and beautiful teaching philosophy and method that enables every student to fully develop [12-13].

The professional development of teachers is of great significance for the development of students, schools, and even society. As the main body of education, students should receive the attention they deserve. "Student-centered" is an extension of the "people-oriented" educational philosophy and an innovation of the traditional teacher centered educational philosophy [14-15]. The contemporary concept of "student-centered" further deepens this concept, and the professional development concept of university teachers is a deeper reflection on the professional development of teachers and student learning, which is an inevitable requirement for the construction of first-class universities and high-quality higher education [16-17].

The "student-centered" educational ideology emphasizes students' independence, cooperation, and exploratory abilities [18]. At the teacher level, randomly select a music teacher as an individual and perform cross operation with each student to generate a new individual; at the student level, two classmates were randomly selected for cross operation. According to the characteristics of the distribution estimation scheduling algorithm encoding, the crossover operator design is carried out. Firstly, on the activity list, two points are used to cross, and then the interval [1, m-1] is randomly generated into two different integers p_1 and $p_2(p_1 < p_2)$. After that, the new activity list can be obtained, which is described by the formulas as follows:

$$\theta_i^m = \theta_i^1, 0 \le i \le p_1 \tag{1}$$

$$\theta_i^m = \theta_n^2, n = min\left\{n\middle|\theta_0^m \notin \{\theta_n^2, \cdots, \theta_{p_1}^m\}\right\}, p_1 + 1 \le i \le p_2 \tag{2}$$

$$\theta_i^m = \theta_n^1, n = min\left\{n\middle|\theta_0^m \notin \{\theta_n^1, \cdots, \theta_{p_2}^m\}\right\}, p_2 + 1 \le i \le m \tag{3}$$

Among them: θ^m, θ^1, and θ^2- respectively represent the activity list of the new individual and the activity list of the two individuals used for crossing.

The resource list is updated through the following methods:

$$\omega_h^m = (1 - \sigma)\omega_h^1 + \sigma\omega_h^2, 0 \le h \le H \tag{4}$$

Among them: $\sigma \in [0,1]$- learning rate, which refers to the rate at which relatively poorer individuals learn from better individuals;

ω_h^m, ω_h^1 and ω_h^2- represent a new individual resource list and the number of h-th resource used in the intersecting two individual resource lists.

3. Investigation on the Professional Development Practice of College Music Teachers

3.1 Investigation Purpose and Data Sources

To verify the feasibility of applying the "student-centered" teaching concept to the professional development of music teachers in universities, this article conducted a study on 60 music teachers from a local university and compared their professional abilities before and after applying the "student-centered" concept for teacher professional development training. In addition, this article also conducted a questionnaire survey on music major students to determine their satisfaction with music teachers. The basic information about questionnaire distribution and collection is shown in Table 1:

Table 1. Basic information on questionnaire distribution and collection

Serial number	Questionnaire	Quantity (copies)	Proportion
1	Questionnaire distribution volume	253	100%
2	Questionnaire collection volume	242	95.65%
3	Effective questionnaire collection volume	238	94.07%

3.2 Evaluation of Investigation Results

The professional ability of teachers is an important criterion for measuring their professional level, and the professional ability of teachers mainly refers to their teaching design, teaching methods, and textbook selection. Generally speaking, the more reasonable teaching design, teaching methods, and textbook selection, the better the teacher's level. This article compared the professional level of teachers before and after the "student-centered" teacher professional development training, and the specific results are shown in Figure 2:
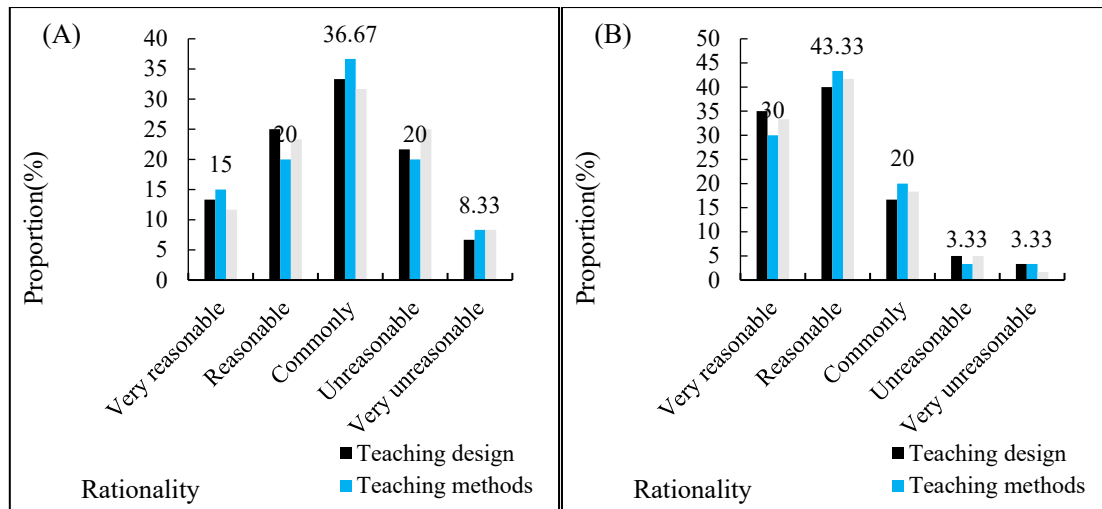
Figure 2. Comparison of changes in professional abilities of music teachers before and after the "student-centered" professional development training

Figure 2 (A): Professional abilities of music teachers in universities before the "student-centered" professional development training;

Figure 2 (B): Professional competence of music teachers in universities after the "student-centered" professional development training.

From Figures 2 (A) and 2 (B), it could be seen that before the training, only 13.33% of music teachers in the school had teaching designs that were very reasonable, while 6.67% of music teachers had teaching designs that were very unreasonable; after undergoing a "student-centered" professional development training, 35% of the school's music teachers' teaching designs were at a very reasonable level, while 3.33% of the music teachers' teaching designs were at a very unreasonable level. In terms of teaching methods, 15% of music teachers had very reasonable teaching methods before training, while 8.33% of music teachers had very unreasonable teaching methods; after receiving "student-centered" professional development training, 30% of music teachers' teaching methods were at a very reasonable level, while 3.33% of music teachers' teaching methods were at a very unreasonable level. Similarly, in terms of textbook selection, before the training, 11.67% of music teachers' textbook selection was very reasonable, while 8.33% of music teachers' textbook selection was very unreasonable; after training, 33.33% of music teachers' textbook choices were very reasonable, while 1.67% of music teachers' textbook choices were very unreasonable. From this, it could be seen that after a period of "student-centered" teacher professional training, the professional abilities of music teachers in the school significantly improved. This indicated that applying "student-centered" to the professional development of music teachers in universities had a certain effect.

In addition, this article also investigated the satisfaction of music majors with trained music teachers through a questionnaire survey. The specific results are shown in Table 2:

Table 2. Satisfaction of music majors with music teachers after training

Serial number	Satisfaction	Number of people	Proportion
1	Very satisfied	80	33.61%
2	Satisfied	91	38.24%
3	Commonly	30	12.61%
4	Dissatisfied	25	10.50%
5	Very dissatisfied	12	5.04%

According to Table 2, after receiving the "student-centered" music teacher professional development training, 33.61% of students are very satisfied with the teacher, and 38.24% are satisfied with the teacher. The overall satisfaction of students with teachers is relatively high, which helps to stimulate students' interest in learning music and improve the efficiency of music classrooms.

3.3 Specific Development Strategies for "Student-centered" Music Teachers in Universities

Firstly, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of the teaching staff for music teachers in

universities, establish a curriculum framework for the professional development of higher education teachers, and construct a lifelong education system [19]. The construction of the teaching staff for music teachers in universities is an inevitable requirement for promoting the development of music today. Teachers must place equal emphasis on "learning" and "teaching", among which learning means improving their own music professional level and research ability. The pre employment training of music teachers in universities should not have the phenomenon of "off stage", and it is necessary to ensure the continuity of the training process. The professional quality of teachers also requires them to be able to care for students and have a high sense of professional identity. On the job training includes various opportunities such as teacher promotion. Therefore, schools should provide a higher-level learning platform for music teachers in universities and provide targeted training at different stages of their employment. Appropriate training goals and plans are formulated for teachers of different age groups. Through the support of materials and equipment, the professionalism level of teachers has been improved. The establishment of a lifelong education system requires the joint efforts of various forces such as the government, society, and the internet to continuously improve it and attract more scholars to join.

Building an evaluation system for the teaching quality of music teachers in universities, improving student participation, strengthening the construction of talent and teaching teams, and creating first-class universities and disciplines are the common efforts of the country and major universities. When evaluating the teaching of university teachers, it is not only necessary to rely on the education administrative department of the university for evaluation, but also to establish a diversified quality evaluation system for schools, experts, students, and society [20]. Internal evaluation refers to the internal evaluation of the teaching quality conducted by teachers within universities, which can offer some public courses to supervise the teaching of music teachers. This can not only make teacher evaluations more open and transparent, but also allow some excellent teachers to be recognized by more people. It can also enable more people to receive education through online, remote, MOOC, and other means. The feedback from students on the teaching quality of teachers can be directly reflected through the comprehensive development of students and the quality of graduates. University music teachers can conduct self-evaluation and reflection based on feedback information, so as to improve their professional shortcomings.

4. Conclusions

With the continuous advancement of current education reform and the increasing demands on college students, there are different requirements for both teachers and students. In terms of teachers, how to improve the professional abilities of university teachers has become an important issue currently being explored. The theme of this article was the "student-centered" professional development strategy for music teachers in universities. Firstly, the relevant research background of this article was introduced, followed by a comprehensive analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of previous scholars' research. The current status and problems of the professional development of music teachers in universities were analyzed. On this basis, combined with the concept of "student-centered", a method to promote the development of music teachers in universities was proposed. To verify the effectiveness of this method, this article finally analyzed it and proposed strategies for the professional development of music teachers in universities. Research showed that the concept of "student-centered" could help promote the better improvement of the professional level of music teachers in universities, thereby increasing students' satisfaction with teachers, stimulating their interest in learning music, and ultimately promoting the common development of music majors and teachers in universities. However, there were still some shortcomings in this study, and further in-depth discussions are needed in the future.

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