

Research on Piano Curriculum Evaluation Reform of "Five-education Integration" in Higher Vocational Preschool Education

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Abstract: "Five-education integration" is not only a necessity for the development of modern society but also a crucial approach to implement the fundamental task of cultivating virtues and achieving the comprehensive education of individuals. In order to adapt to the current rapid development pace of vocational education, this paper, based on the new idea of "Five-education integration," analyzes the construction and evaluation of the piano curriculum in the preschool education major of a higher vocational college in Guangxi. With aesthetic education as the leading factor, content as the core, and practice as the goal, the paper explores the reform of piano curriculum evaluation in the preschool education major of higher vocational colleges.

Keywords: "Five-education integration"; higher vocational education; preschool education; piano; curriculum evaluation

1. Introduction

Currently, the construction of the preschool education major in higher vocational colleges is in a phase of rapid development, with various corresponding policies, plans, strategies, and ideas continuously updating. On this basis, the introduction of the concept of "Five-education integration" undoubtedly broadens a new perspective for the development of the preschool education major in higher vocational colleges. According to the current requirements for the training of preschool education majors, various colleges have set up corresponding piano courses, and the corresponding curriculum evaluation is still in a state of continuous updating. This paper will combine the current situation of piano course settings in a college in Guangxi, summarize the current teaching evaluation of piano courses in the preschool education major of higher vocational colleges, and explore the feasibility of the reform of piano course evaluation under the concept of "Five-education integration" based on practical teaching experience.

2. Current Status of Piano Courses in Higher Vocational Preschool Education Programs

Through an analysis of the talent training programs of various preschool education-related colleges in the Guangxi region and the author's own college, the establishment of piano courses in higher vocational preschool education programs primarily falls into two categories: Piano Fundamentals and Applied Piano. These encompass multiple courses such as Piano Basics, Children's Song Accompaniment, and Piano Accompaniment.

2.1 Current Status of Piano Fundamentals Courses

Piano Fundamentals courses in the Guangxi region are generally conducted in group sessions, spanning one semester with a total of 80 class hours. Preparatory courses include Basic Music Theory and Solfege, providing students with a foundational understanding of music theory before delving into the main curriculum. The main content includes staff and sol-fa notation recognition, basic playing techniques such as legato and staccato, exercises on major and minor scales, arpeggios, and basic chords, as well as practice pieces and musical compositions.^[1] Additional content covers adaptations of children's songs for piano, duet playing, classical and adapted pieces, ensemble pieces, and more. In terms of content, these courses generally cover a wide range of fundamental piano playing knowledge and repertoire types accessible to higher vocational preschool education programs in Guangxi.^[2]

2.2 Current Status of Applied Piano Courses

Applied Piano courses are typically designed based on the practical nature of higher vocational preschool education programs and the actual demands of employment positions. The Children's Song Accompaniment course, spanning one academic year with a total of 120 class hours, combines piano accompaniment fundamentals with vocal performance. It involves learning different piano accompaniment textures to align with the emotional expression of various domestic and international children's songs and local folk songs.

Not all higher vocational institutions in the region offer Piano Accompaniment courses, but for those that do, the typical course duration is one semester with a total of 20 class hours. The main teaching content includes accompaniment for local folk songs, popular songs, film and television songs, and art songs. These courses are usually considered as in-depth learning content within the framework of applied piano courses.

2.3 Current Status of Piano Enrichment Courses

Piano enrichment courses are elective courses, and based on the actual situation of our college, the content varies according to the teachers' professional orientations. Here, we will elaborate on several courses that appear frequently.

The Piano Performance course is designed for students with a certain foundation in piano basics or those seeking to further enhance their piano performance skills. The course mainly covers classical piano piece interpretation, four-hand piano playing, improvisational piano, and other directions, with an emphasis on showcasing the artistic charm of piano through performance.^[3]

The Early Childhood Piano Teaching Method course integrates the advantages of preschool education and combines it with piano teaching methods. The course revolves around the development laws of preschool children, providing explanations of piano teaching methods, making it an interdisciplinary course with strong practicality.

The Piano Music Appreciation course primarily focuses on the appreciation of classical piano works, outlining the characteristic features of piano music styles from different periods to understand the artistic charm of piano music.

3. Evaluation of Piano Courses in Higher Vocational Preschool Education Programs

The evaluation of piano courses in higher vocational preschool education programs is based on the guiding principles of service-oriented education, employment-oriented guidance, and the integration of industry and academia. It incorporates feedback from various sources, including students' social and job-related practices, skills competitions, and more, to assess the currently established piano-related courses.

3.1 Evaluation of Piano Fundamentals Courses

The evaluation of piano fundamentals courses primarily relies on student and teacher assessments. Thanks to the construction of our school's teaching evaluation information system, course instructors can access students' feedback on each course through the system at the end of each semester. Common evaluations include the perceived difficulty of piano playing, the substantial time commitment required for practice with challenging effectiveness, and a lack of interest due to the perceived dullness of learning content.^[4] Teachers' evaluations of piano fundamentals courses focus on students' receptiveness and teaching effectiveness, providing feedback on course construction. Discussions typically revolve around professionalism, practicality, and musicality, with an emphasis on exploring course construction. Given the current situation in higher vocational institutions, the practicality of piano fundamentals courses should take precedence.

For many students at our school, learning piano fundamentals is their first exposure to the instrument. Usually lasting only one semester, the course faces challenges in achieving high effectiveness within a short period. To address these issues, considerations were made during course goal-setting, and adjustments were made to localize teaching materials by incorporating more ethnic and folk music elements. The curriculum content was simplified, aiming to integrate teaching content with practical job experiences as much as possible.

3.2 Evaluation of Applied Piano Courses

The evaluation of applied piano courses places emphasis on external assessments as a reference. Feedback is obtained by collecting information from students participating in qualification certificate exams, skills competitions, and the employment units of graduates, offering insights into the evaluation of applied piano courses.

In terms of qualification certificate exams, the corresponding exam for students in relation to piano applied courses typically involves the assessment of children's song accompaniment. Evaluation feedback indicates that some students struggle to proficiently complete the accompaniment section, resulting in overall reserved performances that fail to fully showcase the expected charm of children's songs. Currently, the teaching effectiveness of applied piano courses does not entirely meet the requirement for rapidly achieving a high level of expressiveness in children's song accompaniment.^[5]

Concerning skills competitions, due to the preparation for corresponding events and the selective nature of student participation, the feedback received from these competitions is generally positive, highlighting the ample preparation time and the ability to achieve high evaluations.

From the perspective of employment units for graduates, evaluations from employers, primarily kindergartens, are generally fair. They acknowledge that the application of piano applied courses in actual job positions is not yet fully mature. Additionally, feedback from external music training institutions on employed students suggests that preschool education majors have inherent theoretical and practical advantages in teaching preschool children. Combining this with the effectiveness of piano courses, graduates can quickly adapt to market demands, meeting the requirements for music training of preschool children in various institutions.^[6]

3.3 Evaluation of Piano Enrichment Courses

Regarding piano enrichment courses, the current setup for several courses is still experimental. Through the evaluation of these courses, attempts are made to identify new directions for course construction. Overall, the teaching effectiveness of the Early Childhood Piano Teaching Method course is relatively good. Students can combine their knowledge of early childhood education, psychology, and related courses to experiment with the practical aspects of teaching preschool children piano. As mentioned earlier in the evaluation of applied piano courses, this type of course also meets the training market's demand for teachers.

The evaluation of the Piano Music Appreciation course is currently unclear. This course guides students in exploring the field of piano art, and there is still much room for improvement, which will be discussed further in the following sections.

4. Research on the Reform of Piano Course Evaluation in the Context of "Five-Education Integration" in Vocational Early Childhood Education

"Five-Education Integration" aims to develop quality education and realize the complete life of students. It integrates moral education, intellectual education, physical education, aesthetic education, and labor education, organically blending the content, knowledge, thoughts, and experiences from different subjects, domains, and stages of the five educations in a way suitable for students' development. In the current context where vocational education is increasingly valued in society, exploring new approaches to piano course evaluation within the framework of "Five-Education Integration" and the current development of vocational education may pave the way for the advancement of piano courses in vocational early childhood education.

4.1 Construction of Piano Course Evaluation with Aesthetic Education as the Core

In the five major fields of early childhood education, the arts play a central role in aesthetic education. Within the music domain, the piano, as a crucial vehicle that permeates the entire field of music, plays a vital role in aesthetic practice and evaluation. In the evaluation of piano courses in vocational early childhood education, there is a need to emphasize practical outcomes, leverage the aesthetic role of piano courses, and lead the construction of a new evaluation system with aesthetic education at its core.

During the development of our school's basic piano courses, in addition to refining the teaching of

fundamental piano playing techniques, it is essential to establish basic cognitive awareness of piano tone, emotion, and expressive imagery from the first key touch. Starting with the teaching of the "do, re, mi, fa, sol" five notes, students are guided to switch between different key areas, experiencing the depth of the low register, the calmness of the mid-register, and the brilliance of the high register. Moreover, students should be able to perceive emotional changes through variations in volume. Techniques such as legato, staccato, and chords are not only the foundation for expressing musical elements but also crucial skills for the transformation of musical images. The teaching of piano pieces should not be limited to the mastery of specific techniques or musical styles but should focus more on the humanistic content, exploring the beauty of melody, layers, and, most importantly, the emotional beauty conveyed by the music. The aesthetic education function of the piano essentially serves as a form of emotional education.^[7]

In practical teaching evaluation, by adjusting the weightings of course evaluation criteria, teachers can have more dimensions to assess students' learning outcomes. For instance, the current piano course evaluation can allocate 25% of the score to each of the following aspects: basic skills, key touch tone quality, emotional expression, and performance artistry. Quantifying each aesthetic aspect of basic piano courses can drive a new wave of evaluation reform.

In the development of piano application courses, with their strong practical nature, besides the quantifiable evaluation standards of basic piano courses, reference to external evaluation criteria can be made to assess the reform in course evaluation. When evaluating student-designed practical teaching activities, considerations should extend beyond basic teaching logic, activity design, and language expression to include a focus on whether the chosen pieces can showcase artistic charm and convey a deep understanding of beauty.^[8]

Piano extension courses represent the frontline of piano course evaluation reform. Traditional appreciation courses often suffer from the drawbacks of appreciating without analyzing or analyzing without articulating. In piano extension courses, the emphasis should be on discussing the intrinsic beauty of musical art itself. Analyzing the beauty of classical and contemporary works not only depends on the guidance of the instructor but also necessitates continuous communication and discussion between teachers and students. Through this process, discussions naturally lead to evaluations, thus propelling the reform of piano extension courses.

Therefore, in the process of piano course development, it is imperative to solidify the leading role of aesthetic education, emphasize the aesthetic role of piano courses, and, in course evaluation, consider piano course aesthetic effectiveness from a practical perspective. Only through this can we further promote the evaluation reform that integrates the five educations.

4.2 Building "Five-Education Integration" around Course Content

Over three centuries of development, the piano has accumulated a vast repertoire of works, and with the evolving needs of early childhood education, new pieces continue to emerge for performance and interpretation. Therefore, from the perspective of "Five-Education Integration," the core can be the works involved in the course content, facilitating the integration of the five educations and subsequently conducting course evaluations.

In the creation of piano works, the composer's personality is already ingrained, and through their compositions, they convey this personality to each listener. Regarding the content of piano courses, as students study works such as "Defending the Yellow River" and "Sparkling Red Star," the inherent strong national sentiment and patriotic spirit within these pieces have a profound impact on students' thoughts.

Piano, as a highly specialized course, inherently possesses intellectual attributes. Beyond basic piano playing techniques, related music theory, historical backgrounds, and the creativity involved in music performance are manifestations of the integration of aesthetic and intellectual education. Simultaneously, the study of piano-related courses requires students to have a high degree of creativity and expressiveness. The creativity and expressiveness demonstrated in course content effectiveness also showcase the synergy between intellect and beauty. Therefore, when conducting course evaluations, this aspect can be considered as a novel way of assessment.

Piano and physical education may seem like two entirely different fields, but they share some interesting commonalities. For example, in the basic practice of piano, students are continually required to progress from accurate playing to faster speeds and greater force. This requirement aligns with the

demands in physical sports for accuracy, speed, and strength. Additionally, both fields necessitate learners to have significant perseverance and engage in continuous practice. Evaluating course content by selecting works related to physical activities, such as "Athlete's March," can validate whether the chosen pieces reflect the energetic and progressive spirit of athletes. Moreover, it can highlight the inherent rhythmic beauty of music.

Looking at the origin of music, there is a mention of the origin related to labor, narrating the relationship between music and labor. In the context of evaluation reform, extracting elements from labor-related musical works and innovating course content, and then applying these contents in the service of labor, are key considerations when exploring the integration of aesthetic education with labor education. For instance, the piece "Yellow River Boatman's Song," derived from a famous labor chant, can be used to evaluate whether the piano rendition of the work reflects the spirit of labor. Additionally, evaluating the ability to further propagate the spirit of labor through the interpretation of related works is a crucial factor to be included in evaluations. Thus, in piano course evaluation reform, the combination of aesthetic education with the spirit of labor, craftsmanship, innovation, and entrepreneurship needs to be explored.

4.3 Evaluation System with Practical Goals

The National Vocational Education Reform Implementation Plan emphasizes combining theoretical exams with practical operation assessments, focusing on students' practical abilities and mastery of theoretical knowledge. Combining process-based assessments with final assessments, paying attention to students' learning processes and outcomes, and integrating school evaluations with industry evaluations, industry standards, and corporate culture are essential to ensuring the objectivity and accuracy of evaluations. Therefore, while "Five-Education Integration" introduces new perspectives for course evaluation in vocational early childhood education, it is equally crucial to adhere to practical goals and construct a new course evaluation system.

In the evaluation of piano courses, it is necessary to integrate "Five-Education" related teaching content into course construction, enriching students' knowledge reserves in relevant disciplines and consolidating the comprehensive development of "Five-Education Integration" course philosophy. In practical operation assessments, it is crucial to determine whether the desired course outcomes are achieved and whether the "Five-Education Integration" content extends to assessment targets. Ultimately, based on the foundation of "Five-Education Integration," a new piano course evaluation system needs to be established.

In process-based evaluations and final assessments, it is vital to examine whether students have achieved aesthetic outcomes from piano courses and whether the integration of "virtue, intellect, physique, beauty, and labor" related content with "beauty" has gradually progressed during the process. In final assessments, internal self-expression of mutual integration of "virtue, intellect, physique, beauty, and labor" in achievements is crucial. Furthermore, practical examinations, performance interpretations, on-the-job practices, and other multifaceted practical evaluations need to be incorporated, drawing from the essence of external evaluations. This ensures the effective application of "Five-Education Integration" in practical scenarios.

For further evaluation reform, emphasis should be placed on combining school evaluations with industry evaluations, introducing industry standards and corporate culture, and utilizing industry channels to promote the talent development reform of vocational early childhood education. For piano courses in vocational early childhood education, "Five-Education Integration" sets new standards for teaching and practical activities in the "five major fields" of early childhood education. When evaluating piano courses, the guiding principle should be the ideology of "Five-Education Integration." After students enter teaching positions, the final course evaluation should be conducted in conjunction with the content of the "five major fields" to comprehensively assess the course.

5. Conclusion

The concept of "Five-Education Integration," proposed in recent years, is still in the exploratory stage, whether in the development of piano courses in vocational early childhood education or in the evolution of piano course evaluation. With vocational colleges entering a period of rapid development and early childhood education being a crucial component, the existing piano course evaluation systems may struggle to meet future needs. Analyzing past evaluations of piano courses in vocational early

childhood education and guided by the "Five-Education Integration" philosophy, the author, based on practical teaching experiences at a vocational college in Guangxi, has outlined an exploration of piano course evaluation construction dominated by aesthetic education, the integration of the five educations around course content, and an evaluation reform focused on practical goals. Significant progress has been achieved through related evaluation practices. In future research on further piano course evaluation reform, the intrinsic core of this philosophy will be continuously explored to propel the development of course evaluation in vocational early childhood education.

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