

Constrution of a Teaching Guidebook for Chorus Course for Second-Year Students Majoring in Musicology at Hanshan Normal University in Chaozhou City, Guangdong Province, China

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were: (1) To study choral music teaching methods ; (2) To construct a chorus teaching guidebook for second-year students majoring in musicology at Hanshan Normal University ; (3) To experiment on the chorus teaching guidebook for second-year students majoring in musicology at Hanshan Normal University ; (4) To evaluate the efficiency of using the chorus guidebook for teaching second-year students majoring in musicology at Hanshan Normal University.

This study adopted a mixed research method, qualitative research and quantitative research, and selected 40 students from the second-year students of majoring in musicology of Hanshan Normal University as experimental subjects to conduct a teaching experiment of choral .The researchers used qualitative research methods to study the literature and interview the main informants to observe the learning status of the second-year students majoring in music at Hanshan Normal University. The researchers used qualitative research methods to study the literature and interview the key informants to observe the learning status of the second-year students majoring in music at Hanshan Normal University. During the development phase, the quantitative analysis method is studied through questionnaires and experiments, and data collection and analysis are carried out. This article analyzes the effect of students using the Choral Guidebook through three formative tests and summative tests.

Keywords: Teaching Guidebook; Chorus Course; Second-Year Students; Musicology; Hanshan Normal University; Chaozhou City; Guangdong Province; China

Introduction

Choral education plays a pivotal role in developing students' musical literacy, artistic expression, and collaborative skills. As an integral part of musicology programs, chorus courses serve as a platform for students to deepen their understanding of vocal techniques, harmony, and ensemble performance. However, the effectiveness of such courses often hinges on the availability of well-structured teaching resources tailored to the specific needs of the learners. At Hanshan Normal University in Chaozhou City, Guangdong Province, second-year students majoring in musicology face unique challenges in their choral education, stemming from varying levels of vocal proficiency, limited access to regionally relevant instructional materials, and the need to balance traditional Chaozhou musical elements with broader choral practices. Addressing these issues necessitates the development of a comprehensive teaching guidebook designed to meet the pedagogical demands of both educators and students.

This study focuses on the construction of a teaching guidebook for the second-year chorus course at Hanshan Normal University, aiming to provide a systematic and adaptable framework for choral instruction. Drawing on educational theories, regional cultural elements, and practical choral methodologies, the guidebook seeks to bridge the gap between traditional music education and contemporary pedagogical approaches. By equipping educators with targeted lesson plans, rehearsal strategies, and culturally resonant repertoire, this research aspires to enhance the quality of choral training and foster a deeper appreciation for music among students. Ultimately, the guidebook is envisioned as a tool to cultivate the next generation of musicologists, empowering them to excel in both academic and professional musical pursuits.

Research Objectives

1. To study choral music teaching methods.
2. To construct a chorus teaching guidebook for second-year students majoring in musicology at Hanshan Normal University.
3. To experiment on the chorus teaching guidebook for second-year students majoring in musicology at Hanshan Normal University.
4. To evaluate the efficiency of using the chorus guidebook for teaching second-year students majoring in musicology at Hanshan Normal University.

Research Methodology

This research used a mixed research method by using of qualitative and quantitative research with the aim of achieving the research objectives regarding the study of choral knowledge, the creation of an instruction manual, experimentation, and evaluation.

Qualitative research: includes studying literature and interviewing experts

Quantitative research: mainly through questionnaires, experiments to carry out research, to carry out data collection and analysis.

Conceptual Framework

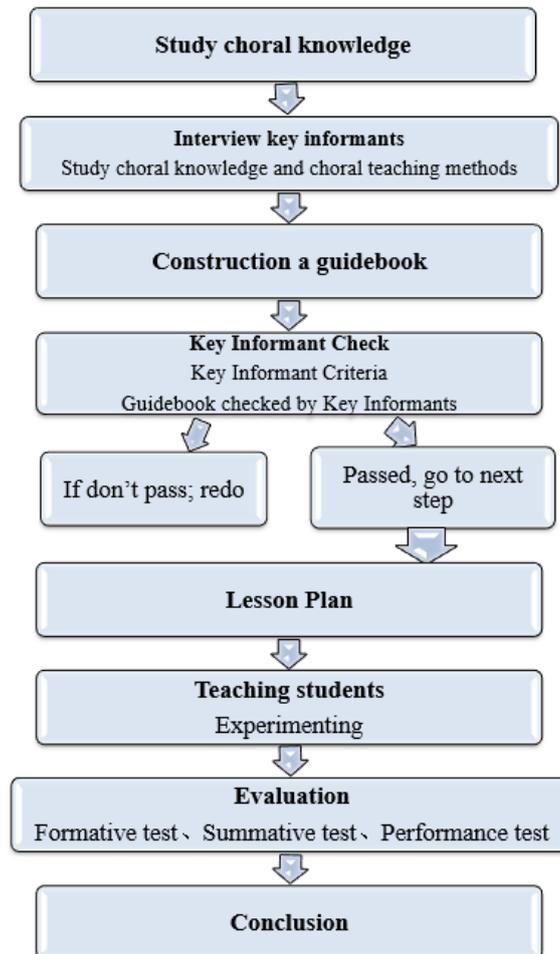


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Findings

1. Through studying the literature and interviewing key informants, the researcher learned the following knowledge related to choral singing:

1) Concepts, theories and skill development related to choral singing

Choral singing is a musical art form centered on the coordination of multiple voices, which not only focuses on the expressiveness of individual voices, but also puts more emphasis on the integration and tacit understanding between the overall voices. The uniqueness of this art form lies in the fact that through the pitch, rhythm, and harmony between different voices, it creates rich sound effects and profound emotional expression. Understanding the concept of choral singing can lay the foundation for teaching and make students realize the importance of teamwork and musical expression from the very beginning.

Theory is the foundation of practice. Choral theory covers the division of voice parts, tone color matching, vocal techniques and so on. It helps teachers and students understand the function and role of each part in a choral work. For example, the lower voices provide the harmonic foundation, the middle voices play a transitional role, and the upper voices are responsible for the expression of the melodic line. Through the guidance of theory, rehearsals and performances in teaching can be more organized and efficient.

The improvement of choral skills cannot be separated from scientific and systematic training. First of all, vocal training is the foundation, involving breathing control, resonance skills and other key aspects. Secondly, the training of pitch and sense of rhythm is directly related to the overall performance of chorus. In addition, vocal coordination is the core of choral teaching, students need to gradually master the ability to find their own position in the team through vocal practice and overall ensemble practice, so as to realize the high degree of unity of each vocal part. Through continuous skills training, students can not only improve their singing level, but also enhance their understanding and interpretation of musical works.

2) Methods and Practices in Choral Teaching

Key informant instructor researcher, Key informant pointed out that students' choral skills need to be gradually cultivated through reasonable teaching methods. In the early stage of teaching, teachers can focus on the training of basic skills, such as improving students' pitch perception through sight-singing and ear-training courses, and establishing their control of rhythm through repetitive exercises of simple melodies. As students' level increases, complex choral works can be introduced so that students can try to find their own roles in multiple voices, and develop their independent singing ability and sense of teamwork. In addition, more interactive exercises, such as group discussions and group rehearsals, should be incorporated into the teaching, which can both increase students' participation and enhance the learning effect.

In higher education, choral teaching focuses on the combination of theory and practice. On the one hand, teachers can help students deepen their understanding of choral works by explaining the background, style and structure of the works; on the other hand, practical aspects are indispensable, such as organizing regular choral rehearsals, on- and off-campus performances and competitions. These activities can not only improve students' actual singing level, but also enhance their stage performance ability and psychological quality. At the same time, teaching should focus on personalized instruction, adjusting teaching strategies according to students' musical literacy and learning progress.

The types of songs in choral lessons should cover a variety of styles such as classical, folk and pop to meet the diverse learning needs of students. For example, classical works can help students understand traditional harmonic structures, folk songs can cultivate a sense of cultural identity, and pop songs are closer to students' lives and interests. In addition, the selection of repertoire should take into account the ability level of students and increase the difficulty step by step. Through the rich arrangement of repertoire, students can have a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity of choral art.

3) Evaluation and Research Summary of Teaching Effectiveness

Scientific assessment is the key link to improve teaching quality. The assessment should cover multiple dimensions, including students' technical level (e.g. pitch, rhythm, vocal skills), musical expression and teamwork ability. In terms of specific methods, students' learning outcomes can be measured through regular classroom singing, sub-vocal presentations and

group performances. Meanwhile, a combination of self-assessment, peer assessment and teacher assessment can be used to obtain more comprehensive feedback data. Based on the assessment results, teachers can optimize their teaching methods, such as strengthening the training of students' weak points or adjusting the difficulty of the repertoire.

Students' feedback is an important source of reference for optimizing teaching. Through questionnaires, class discussions and other forms, teachers can understand students' views on course content, teaching methods and evaluation methods. In response to students' specific needs, teachers can adjust the teaching progress or add more practical rehearsal opportunities to help students better understand and master chorale skills. For example, if students generally reflect that certain repertoire is too difficult, they may choose pieces that are closer to their level so as to enhance their interest and confidence in learning.

2. Through in-depth interviews with three key informants, the researcher gained a comprehensive understanding of the needs and key teaching strategies for choral teaching for second-year university students in the School of Music at Hanshan Normal College, especially how to gradually improve students' choral skills and musical literacy through the combination of theoretical learning and practice. Based on this, the researcher designed a choral instruction manual suitable for second-year university students, selecting three pieces, "Jiangxue," "Yue ren Song," and "Jinse" as the core teaching content, and dividing the manual into four chapters covering theoretical learning and the step-by-step learning process of the three pieces.

The core of "Creating a Choral Guidebook" lies in combining theory and practice to improve students' choral skills and musical expression abilities in stages. Through the theoretical study in Chapter 1, students have established the basic knowledge of choral singing; through the gradual study of "Jiang xue," "Yue ren Song," and "Jinse" in Chapters 2 to 4, students have gained a comprehensive training in pitch, rhythm, emotional expression and teamwork, etc. The design of this manual has fully considered the characteristics and learning needs of second-year students. The design of this manual takes into full consideration the characteristics and learning needs of second-year university students, and helps students master the core elements of choral art from basic to in-depth through progressive teaching content and scientific teaching strategies.

In the future, this manual can continue to be optimized, improve its content through feedback from students and teachers, and explore how it can be promoted in a wider range of teaching scenarios to better serve the practice of university choral teaching.

3. Prior to the start of the course, the researchers drew a study sample of 40 students from the 120 students at the School of Music.

The researchers had the students study four chapters over the course of a semester, including choral theory and three choral works. After 16 weeks of instruction, the students took the first formative test in week 6, the second formative test in week 10, and the third formative test in week 14. A comprehensive review was conducted in week 15, after which students took a summative test in week 16.

When using the Instructional Manual for Choral Teaching in the classroom, the teaching process can be divided into four sections. The first section introduces the theoretical knowledge of choral singing. The second, third, and fourth chapters are about studying three choral works respectively, and each chapter is divided into two modules; the first module is about learning the theoretical knowledge of the piece, and the second module is about learning to sing the piece. Students are also assessed by quizzes at different times.

4. In this dissertation, following the recommendations of key informants, the researcher conducted a total of four assessments to evaluate the learning progress of 40 students, comprising three formative tests and one summative test, conducted in the 5th week, 10th week, 14th week, and 16th week. The assessment criteria primarily include five aspects: Theoretical knowledge, Accurate rhythm, Complete performance, Singing skill, and Emotional expression. The total score is 100 points, with each criterion worth 20 points.

In the first formative test, the average score of the 40 students was 64.95, with a highest score of 67.33 and a lowest score of 63.00. In the second formative test, the average score was 73.50, with a highest score of 76.33 and a lowest score of 69.33. In the third formative test, the average score was 79.33, with a highest score of 84.00 and a lowest score of 77.33. In the summative test, the average score was 85.60, with a highest score of 88.00 and a lowest score of 82.33. The average score of the first three formative tests was 72.59, which was very different from the average score of 85.60 in the last summative test, indicating that the overall knowledge level of the students had improved greatly through the re-study adjustment. In addition, the summative test was higher than the investigators expected, and the study assumed that the average student score would not be less than 70.00.

The above results show that this strongly demonstrates that the guidebook effectively enhances students' music learning abilities using the three major international music teaching methods and indicates a growing enthusiasm among students for these methods. The success of this guidebook can serve as a reference for other schools and institutions using the three international music teaching methods to teach music courses.

Discussion

In accordance with the research objectives, the following was discussed prior to the preparation of the Choral Teaching Guidebook, based on the objectives of the study:

Choral singing, as a form of collective musical expression, originated in religious music and was systematically developed during the European Renaissance. From Gregorian chant in early church music to polyphonic choruses in the Baroque period to modern polyphonic choral works, the art of choral singing has continued to evolve, not only as an important vehicle for musical expression, but also as an important medium for cultural exchange and education. The art form of choral singing emphasizes teamwork and the pursuit of harmony and hierarchy of sound, which places high demands on the participants' musical literacy, aural ability and cooperative spirit (Tarskian, 2005).

The differences between Chinese and foreign choral singing are mainly reflected in artistic style and language performance. Western choral singing, centered on polyphonic harmony, focuses on the balance and counterpoint between voices. Western choral repertoire is diverse, ranging from religious chorales, chorales of the Romantic period to contemporary experimental works, reflecting the combination of technique and emotion. Chinese choral music is based on national culture, emphasizing melodic and linguistic expression. Many Chinese choral works incorporate the timbre of national instruments as well as the characteristics of local opera, showing rich cultural colors. Western choral music emphasizes the high unity of pitch and language rhythm in language expression, and the cooperation between lyrics and melody emphasizes the natural pronunciation law of language. Chinese chorus puts forward different requirements for melodic design due to the tonal characteristics of the Chinese language. For example, the four tones of Mandarin as well as the phonological

characteristics of the dialect will directly affect the bite of the lyrics and the undulation of the melody (Liu, 2014).

The focuses of Choral Teaching of Chinese choral works include: language biting and spitting, understanding ethnic elements, balancing vocal parts and emotional expression. Choral Teaching in China often uses Chinese or national languages, so it is necessary to pay special attention to the pronunciation and semantic expression of the lyrics. Training should focus on the unity of vowels and the clarity of consonants to ensure that the lyrics are delivered clearly and emotionally. Chinese choral works often incorporate national melodies and rhythms, such as the use of pentatonic modes and the adaptation of folk ditties. Teaching needs to help students understand the cultural significance and emotional connotations behind the works, so that the interpretation can be more in line with the spirit of national music. Choral Teaching needs to focus on the balance and cooperation between the voices, and improve the choristers' intonation, sense of rhythm and aural acuity through targeted exercises. Especially when interpreting Chinese works, harmonies should be designed according to the characteristics of the melody and lyrics, so as to achieve harmony and richness of sound. In teaching, teachers need to guide students to go deeper into the background of the work, and to explore and convey the connotation of the work through the combination of language, music and performance (Chen, 2017).

In the process of writing the chorus teaching guidebook, research literature on chorus teaching guidebook design at home and abroad was referred to, and the main sources of information and experts' suggestions provided important support for the construction of the content framework. According to the research objectives, the following contents were discussed:

chorus teaching guidebook is a systematic resource designed to help teachers design and implement chorus programs and improve students' music literacy and choral ability. It not only provides a theoretical foundation for chorus teaching, but also includes specific teaching strategies and practice examples to help teachers effectively respond to practical challenges encountered in teaching. This handbook is not only a teaching tool, but also an important reference for improving the quality of teaching and promoting innovation in education (Smith, 2020).

The guidebook should provide a clear framework and steps to help teachers rationally organize curriculum content and enhance the science and effectiveness of chorus teaching. Through vivid teaching examples, operational suggestions, and professional best practices, teachers will be able to gain a deeper understanding of the core concepts of the choral arts and translate them into practical applications in the classroom. In addition, the guidebook should include a wealth of teaching resources, such as chorus teaching methods, vocal practice repertoire, and assessment tools, to ensure a systematic and actionable teaching process. (Caldwell, 2011).

When designing instructional manuals for choral education in China, it is important to give due consideration to localized characteristics, such as language uniqueness and the incorporation of cultural elements. The content should be clear, easy to follow, and appropriate to the actual level of the students. Teaching suggestions in the manual should focus on the stimulation of students' interest and enable them to better understand and appreciate the art of chorus teaching through appropriate ethnomusicological elements and innovative teaching methods. Visually appealing design and clear and concise content presentation are also important to enhance teachers' experience and teaching effectiveness (Zheng, 2018).

Recommendations

Practical Recommendations

In actual teaching, teachers should flexibly adjust the content of chorus teaching according to students' age, ability and cultural background. For example, lower grade students can develop basic skills through simple rhythmic imitation and singing games, while higher grade students can gradually challenge complex multi-part works. For Chinese students, local folk songs and ethnic music elements are incorporated to enhance their sense of identity with the local culture.

Schools should be equipped with the necessary chorus teaching resources and equipment, such as professional sound equipment, teaching videos and multimedia resource libraries, to support teachers in implementing high-quality classroom teaching. Digital learning platforms can also be developed to provide online chorus teaching resources to facilitate students to continue learning outside the classroom.

Chorus teaching should focus on teamwork and interactivity. Through group practice, role rotation and diversified performance forms, students' participation and sense of responsibility can be enhanced. Meanwhile, interactive classroom assessment methods, such as instant feedback or mutual assessment, help students quickly identify problems and improve their performance.

2. Recommendation for future research

Further research on the role of digital tools in chorus teaching, such as virtual chorus platforms and artificial intelligence accompaniment software. How these technologies support teachers in teaching and enhance students' learning experience should be a key area for future research. Comparative studies of choral education in different countries and regions are conducted to analyze how their teaching methods and cultural backgrounds affect students' learning experience and educational effectiveness. In particular, we will explore the characteristics and development potential of chorus teaching in China in the global context, and provide more international perspectives for local chorus education. Through this policy, practice and research recommendations, the theoretical value and practical significance of the chorus teaching guidebook will be further realized, providing solid support for the innovation and development of choral education.

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