

TikTok for Pop Vocal Music Education: The Guideline and Practical Cases

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Abstract: With the development of new media technology and the popularity of the TikTok platform in China, a large number of popular vocal music teachers have flocked to online platforms for teaching. Online vocal music education in China is undergoing a transformation and facing challenges. This study adopts an exploratory research approach, interviewing students learning pop vocal music, and observing popular pop teachers on TikTok. The advantages, disadvantages, techniques, and methods of domestic TikTok pop vocal music teaching were investigated and studied, and a series of experiences and suggestions for optimizing TikTok teaching were put forward. The results of this study are helpful for understanding the advantages and disadvantages of TikTok pop vocal music teaching and grasping the correct development direction. These guidance and suggestions can stimulate teachers' creativity and improve their vocal music teaching level.

Keywords: Online education; Pop vocal; TikTok; Music teaching

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1. Introduction

Under the guidance of the strategic development policy of Internet +, all walks of life have been invested in the wave of innovation and development, and the education industry is no exception. The biggest advantage of the Internet is that people can constantly deepen and improve themselves by making full use of the development background of Internet +. People can enjoy the unlimited information resources provided by it in any place. This feature also makes the vocal music teaching mode from the origin of circulation to each region, so that colleagues who love vocal music can learn better vocal music teaching.

In particular, 2020 was a very difficult year for traditional offline vocal music teaching. Due to the sudden outbreak of the epidemic, some teachers, either actively or passively, found themselves in front of the camera, initiating live-streamed education via the Internet. This shift has brought both opportunities and challenges to vocal music teaching. Vocal music teachers must rise to the occasion and strive to integrate online and offline modes, finding a balance between virtual instruction and real-life interaction. To maximize the benefits of both

approaches, short video broadcasting platforms have emerged as alternative models to traditional teaching methods. However, these platforms also come with certain limitations that cannot be overlooked. Both teachers and students must critically assess the constraints of online vocal music learning. How can these limitations be addressed, and how can effective teaching be achieved in this new environment?

TikTok teaching has become a trend, but there are few articles about using TikTok for vocal music teaching. Therefore, based on the case of online vocal music teaching on the TikTok platform and through interviews with relevant personnel, this paper deeply analyzes the unique advantages and existing problems of vocal music teaching on the TikTok short video platform under the background of new media. It also shares a series of experiences and suggestions for optimizing TikTok teaching. The results of this study will provide talents in the field of vocal music teaching that can keep up with the pace of the times, make full use of network technology to optimize the traditional teaching mode, and improve teaching efficiency.

2. A new way to learn vocal music: Short video online platform

From the literature review, studying music teaching and learning via social platforms is quite popular in China. For example, Lei ^[1] found that online music art education is a beneficial supplement to traditional music art education. As the country gradually attaches importance to online art education and social capital continues to invest in it, online art education has a good prospect of development. Through the long-term efforts of art educators, online music art education in China can flourish. Lei believed that online music education is an art education platform for the whole society, especially for non-professional ordinary people ^[1]. Online music education is one of the important ways to improve people's cultural literacy. More and more non-professionals are learning about music online. Compared with traditional music education, online music education costs less time and money. TikTok is a good platform to integrate capital. It can provide a good way for online music education to develop. We can see that there are many types of online music education, from the initial resource website to the later live teaching, and so on; there are many different paths. Xu ^[2] divided online music education into two categories: (1) One-way resources: This kind of online music education has been established for a long time and enjoys a certain reputation. However, it is mainly based on resource sharing, most of which are free, and some of which are charged, like MOOCs; (2) Two-way interactive: Compared with the early resources output online music learning, online one-to-many or one-to-one two-way music courses have gradually become a trend. TikTok, a short video social live streaming platform, falls into this category ^[2]. Such platforms attract corresponding customer groups through certain marketing means and provide teaching services in the form of free live streaming or group purchase of courses. This kind of live broadcasting platform has powerful functions of asking questions and leaving comments in real time. Besides completing the teaching content, teachers can also further explain and answer questions according to the needs of students, which greatly improves the degree of interaction.

According to Li's research ^[3], the number of Internet users in China is 940 million, and the number of online video users (including short videos) is 888 million. From the continuous growth of short video users, it can be seen that Internet short video platforms have high user penetration, strong user stickiness, and obvious year-on-year growth. Internet short video platform users are highly active. In many popular short video platforms such as TikTok, a music teaching account not only has millions of fans, but also has hundreds of millions of video views. Li believed that music teaching resources on short video platforms are rich and easy to obtain. Through the short video platform, users can easily search and obtain music teaching

resources. Users also have greater autonomy in choosing learning content, and can compare and freely select homogeneous content^[3]. From the point of view of Lv^[4], teaching content can be organized freely, which is conducive to the play of music teachers' subjective initiative. With the continuous upgrading of mobile devices such as smartphones, the recording of music teaching content is more convenient, and users can independently organize teaching content, style characteristics, and lecture duration. Moreover, the communication effect of short video music teaching is obvious. Not only is the number of users large, but also the activity is high, and the communication effect is strong. Featured music teaching resources can gather similar "circle layer" users in a short time, and realize the dynamic balance between music content suppliers and music content demanders^[4].

The TikTok platform offers a new approach to vocal music teaching. Among the vocal music teachers interviewed, all of them have over two years of experience in teaching pop vocal music on the TikTok platform. With the question "Why do teachers choose the TikTok platform for teaching?", they replied that they generally believe that TikTok has a large number of users and is the most used short-video social platform in China, which ensures a source of students. Secondly, the TikTok platform has powerful functions, which can both broadcast live and release short videos. It makes teaching quick and easy. Indeed, the TikTok platform has made vocal teaching and learning easier. During the author's undergraduate studies, pop vocal singing was studied, which often led to reflections on various questions related to singing. When questions arose or hesitation occurred, in addition to consulting the teacher, answers were also sought on TikTok. For example, if the rage technique was to be learned or improvisation techniques were to be explored, a relevant question could be typed in, and suitable tutorial videos would typically be found. Live classes conducted by music teachers were also viewed. If a particular teacher's instruction was appreciated, their recorded courses might be purchased, or even offline lessons might be attended. The TikTok platform has been regarded as a new method of vocal music instruction, where the advantages of online education—particularly in terms of resource integration—have been more effectively demonstrated.

3. Developing a pop vocal music teaching guide for TikTok by integrating data

3.1. The advantages and disadvantages of vocal music teaching on the TikTok platform, as well as the techniques and methods used

In order to study the advantages and disadvantages of vocal music teaching on the TikTok platform and the techniques and methods used, semi-structured interviews and observations were conducted on popular vocal music teachers and students on TikTok in China. The survey results are as follows:

TikTok offers distinct advantages for online pop vocal education, primarily through flexibility, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness. For teachers, the platform enables flexible scheduling, eliminates geographical barriers, reduces operational costs (no physical classroom/equipment needed), and provides revenue streams via paid courses and live gifts. Personalized teaching is facilitated through student feedback and segmented content, while features like video classification and accompaniment tools ease teaching burdens. Students benefit from fragmented learning via short videos, low-cost or free resources, diverse teacher expertise (including professionals and celebrities), and engaging, entertaining content that boosts motivation. However, challenges persist. Technical issues like signal delays, audio distortion, and equipment dependency hinder live interaction and accurate feedback. Teachers struggle with limited face-to-face guidance, while students face inconsistent teaching quality and distractions due to the platform's entertainment nature. The one-to-many model lacks personalized attention, and complex features pose a learning curve for some educators. Despite its transformative potential, TikTok teaching requires balancing convenience with pedagogical rigor to address these limitations.

Data shows that effective TikTok pop vocal teaching employs a hybrid approach: short videos for concise skill demonstrations (e.g., breathing exercises, belting techniques) and live streams for real-time interaction, feedback, and detailed explanations. Teachers utilize equipment like microphones, keyboards, and vocal models to enhance audio-visual clarity and engagement. Content is organized into thematic series (beginner/advanced levels, genre-specific tutorials) to ensure structured learning, complemented by learning groups for peer sharing and teacher-student feedback. Key techniques taught include mixing (blending chest/head voice), falsetto, breath control, vocal cord closure, and high-pitch mastery, presented through practical, engaging tutorials. This blend of accessible formats and targeted techniques caters to fragmented learning while fostering skill development and interaction.

3.2. Observing successful actual teaching cases on the TikTok platform

The TikTok platform can integrate better vocal music teaching resources. TikTok has attracted many good vocal education teachers or groups, or even stars to teach on the platform due to the huge number of users. There are many successful cases, among which two successful vocal music teaching cases are selected for analysis. The first case is SOU-E singing teaching. On TikTok, the platform flow of Enterprise, a music teaching head represented by “SOE singing teaching,” has a significant effect. The total number of short videos played has exceeded 100 million.

Why is SOE so popular? Her short teaching videos are rich in content, covering all kinds of vocal music knowledge points, which are relatively simple and easy to learn. The content of the teaching video is also relatively clear. For example, the lyrics are easy to see, and the positions of various vocal music symbols are more accurate. Students need to pay attention to which part is clearly marked, which is conducive to their better learning.

In the interview, most of the teachers preferred Teacher Yisheng’s teaching mode. Yisheng is a male vocal music teacher at a university. He has 4.2 million fans as of now. He mainly teaches through live streaming, which is free, but usually attracts many people to pay for his courses. His TikTok homepage shows many carefully recorded teaching videos by him. In his class, he only uses the piano or guitar. He is always able to explain in a simple and vivid way, perfectly demonstrating his unique teaching method. In addition to explaining the basic techniques of breathing, pronunciation, and singing, he also incorporated a lot of his own understanding and experience of the details.

There are many excellent pop vocal music teachers on the TikTok platform. Observing their teaching can enable us to learn a lot, and their teaching methods also provide reference and assistance for the following guide.

3.3. TikTok vocal music teaching guide

To excel in TikTok pop vocal education, educators should adhere to a structured guide emphasizing professionalism, innovation, and student-centered strategies:

Professional competence: Develop strong vocal techniques (e.g., mixing, breath control) and music theory knowledge, continuously updating skills through training to deliver accurate, in-depth instruction.

Technical setup: Invest in high-quality equipment (microphones, keyboards, lighting) to ensure clear audio-visual quality, enhancing demonstration accuracy and student engagement.

Structured content design: Organize lessons into phased series (beginner to advanced) and thematic categories (e.g., “Breath Control,” “Song Interpretation”) to cater to diverse learning needs and improve content discoverability.

Hybrid teaching model: Combine short videos (1–3 minutes) for concise skill breakdowns (e.g., falsetto

techniques, vocal cord closure) with live streams for real-time interaction, personalized feedback, and detailed explanations of complex concepts.

Innovation and personal branding: Cultivate a unique teaching style—humorous explanations, genre-specific expertise, or storytelling—to stand out, leveraging trends and interactive features (duets, challenges) to boost engagement.

Edutainment approach: Make lessons enjoyable through entertaining formats (e.g., popular song breakdowns, visual aids) to sustain student motivation and simplify technical content.

Individualized instruction: Use comments, private messages, and fan groups to understand student needs, offering tailored advice and regular feedback to address individual vocal characteristics and goals, ensuring safe and effective skill development.

By integrating these strategies, teachers can leverage TikTok's strengths to create accessible, engaging, and impactful vocal education, balancing convenience with pedagogical rigor to meet learners' diverse needs.

4. Conclusion

The TikTok platform of vocal music teaching as a new kind of vocal music teaching mode, better reflects the online teaching resources to promote the basic vocal music knowledge configuration and its advantages. As the economy increases continuously, with the support of national policy and emphasis on quality education, online music education targets will still continue to rise, and the market demand is huge. For teachers, this is both an opportunity and a challenge, we must embrace the Internet, not refuse and escape. In this era of rapid development, continuous learning and thinking can lead us better transformation and innovation, and also better promote music education. Although the development of online music education is in full swing, instruments or singing are highly dependent on the characteristics of the teacher, so that traditional music education forms still maintain advantages in terms of teaching experience and effect. In the author's opinion, the mainstream trend of music in the future will be that online and offline models complement each other, and no one will replace the other. The combination of the two will further promote the overall development of music education.

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