

Research on the Teaching Reform and Practice of Music Majors in Comprehensive Universities from the Perspective of New Liberal Arts

Yan Zhang*

School of Music, Shanxi University, Taiyuan 030006, Shanxi, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: Under the background of the new era, with the rapid development of China's economy, society, and culture, profound changes have taken place in the social demand for music professionals. Higher requirements are placed on their comprehensive qualities and professional abilities. Music professionals are not only required to have solid professional skills but also an interdisciplinary knowledge structure, an innovative spirit, and a sense of social responsibility. In this context, it is of great practical significance to explore the teaching reform of music majors in comprehensive universities from the perspective of new liberal arts.

Keywords: New liberal arts; Comprehensive universities; Music majors; Teaching reform

Online publication: July 7, 2025

1. The necessity of teaching reform for music majors in comprehensive universities

1.1. Higher requirements for music professionals imposed by social development

With the development of the times and social progress, the role and function of music in modern society are undergoing profound changes^[1]. Music is no longer limited to the traditional level of art appreciation but has become an important cultural force and means of social communication. The demand for music professionals in modern society is no longer limited to performing skills or creative abilities. Instead, more emphasis is placed on the comprehensive development of their qualities. Against this background, music professionals need to have a broader vision, a deeper cultural heritage, and a stronger sense of social responsibility^[2]. Nowadays, with the rapid development of information technology and the increasing frequency of global cultural exchanges, music has ushered in unprecedented development opportunities. On the one hand, the Internet platform enables music works to spread rapidly around the world, breaking geographical restrictions and promoting the exchange and mutual learning of different cultures. On the other hand, the application of digital technology has not only changed the way of music production but also given birth to many emerging professional fields, such as music programming and audio design. These fields require both solid professional

knowledge and interdisciplinary knowledge integration. Therefore, music professionals in the new era should not only be proficient in traditional music skills but also keep pace with the times and master modern information technology to adapt to the changing professional requirements^[3].

1.2. The driving force for the development of school disciplines and majors

When exploring the teaching reform of music majors in comprehensive universities from the perspective of new liberal arts, the internal driving force for the development of school disciplines and majors cannot be ignored. With the continuous evolution of social culture and the continuous renewal of higher education concepts, music majors in colleges and universities are facing unprecedented development opportunities and challenges^[4]. To adapt to the changing demands for music talents in the new era, schools must actively seek the transformation and upgrading of their discipline construction and development models. The core driving force in this process comes from the keen perception and active response of schools to external environmental changes. The increasing requirements for the quality of music graduates in society prompt colleges and universities to reflect on and improve their existing talent cultivation models^[5]. At present, the competition in the job market is becoming increasingly fierce, and employers attach more importance to the comprehensive qualities and innovative abilities of job seekers. In this context, music professional education needs to break through the constraints of the traditional framework, build an open and inclusive talent cultivation system, pay attention to cultivating students' critical thinking, teamwork skills, and cross-cultural communication skills, and other soft skills. It also needs to establish close cooperative relationships with industries and enterprises, jointly explore the integrated development path of industry-university-research, so that students can be exposed to real-world workplace scenarios during their school years, accumulate valuable practical experience, and thus improve their future employability^[6].

2. Problems in the teaching system of music majors in comprehensive universities

2.1. Inadequate connection between the talent cultivation system and the school's orientation

In comprehensive universities, there is a certain disconnection between the talent cultivation system of music majors and the overall orientation of the school, which is reflected in many aspects. On the one hand, the school's orientation emphasizes general education and interdisciplinary integration, while the teaching model within music majors is relatively single^[7]. Many comprehensive universities aim to cultivate compound talents with a wide knowledge structure, strong adaptability, and a sense of social responsibility. However, in actual operation, the curriculum settings of music majors often focus on the teaching of traditional music theory and technical skills, neglecting the cross-integration with other disciplines such as literature, history, philosophy, and natural sciences like computer science and psychology. This makes students' knowledge scope narrow, and it is difficult to meet the demand for diversified music talents in modern society. On the other hand, the school's orientation focuses on cultivating an international perspective and innovative abilities, but music majors have obvious deficiencies in this regard. From an international perspective, although some universities propose to introduce advanced international music education resources and encourage students to participate in international exchange programs, many challenges are faced when it comes to the actual teaching practice of music majors^[8]. Moreover, in terms of cultivating innovative abilities, traditional music education over-emphasizes skill training while neglecting creative expression. The curriculum design lacks flexibility and openness, making it difficult to stimulate students' innovative thinking and artistic inspiration.

2.2. Textbooks lagging behind current basic education

In the education process of music majors in comprehensive universities, textbooks, as an important carrier of knowledge transmission, play a crucial role in the entire teaching system^[9]. However, currently, the music textbooks used in some universities have obvious lagging problems, which are difficult to meet the development needs of music education in the new era and have a certain gap with the concepts and standards advocated in basic education. In terms of textbook content, the content arrangement of some university music textbooks lacks flexibility and timeliness. The textbooks fail to be updated promptly to reflect the latest music theory research results and the changes in music forms in a multicultural context. For example, with the continuous emergence of modern music creation techniques and the booming development of popular music culture, traditional textbooks may still focus on the appreciation of classic music works and the explanation of traditional composition techniques, with little mention of emerging music genres such as electronic music and hip-hop music. This makes the knowledge structure that students come into contact with during higher education relatively single, which is not conducive to cultivating their comprehensive artistic perception and innovative abilities. In terms of teaching method guidance, existing textbooks also show certain limitations^[10]. In some university music textbooks, there is little mention of how to guide students to conduct inquiry-based learning and project-based learning. Teachers rely more on the established teaching process in the textbooks when teaching, making it difficult to adjust flexibly to meet the needs of students at different levels, thus limiting the development space of personalized teaching.

2.3. Urgent need to strengthen the construction of the teaching staff

In music majors of comprehensive universities, the current teaching staff faces many difficulties, which, to a certain extent, restrict the improvement of teaching quality and the all-around development of students. On the one hand, there is a shortage of music teachers. With the implementation of the college enrollment expansion policy, the enrollment scale of comprehensive universities has been continuously expanding, and the number of music major students has also increased. However, at the same time, the number of music teachers has not been expanded accordingly. This leads to each teacher having to undertake more teaching tasks and making it difficult to give students sufficient attention and guidance^[11]. Especially in some small-scale comprehensive universities, the teaching resources of music majors are even scarcer. Often, one teacher is responsible for teaching multiple grades and multiple courses, which makes it impossible for teachers to concentrate on in-depth research and teaching innovation in a specific field, thus affecting the teaching quality. On the other hand, the knowledge structure of music teachers is single. In the context of new liberal arts, the connotation of music majors is constantly expanding, covering not only traditional performing arts but also multiple interdisciplinary fields such as music education and music technology. However, some music teachers have limited understanding of these emerging disciplinary fields and are difficult to meet the needs of students' all-around development.

3. Teaching reform strategies for music majors in comprehensive universities from the perspective of new liberal arts

3.1. Integrating ideological and political education into courses and exploring diverse teaching modes

In the teaching reform of music majors from the perspective of new liberal arts, organically integrating ideological and political education into music courses can not only strengthen students' ideological and moral

qualities but also broaden the depth and breadth of music education. The implementation of ideological and political education in courses requires teachers to pay attention not only to the teaching of music skills but also to the cultivation of students' sense of social responsibility, patriotism, and humanistic spirit^[12]. For example, in the process of teaching music history, teachers can guide students to understand the historical changes of the country and feel the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation by introducing the development of modern and contemporary Chinese music. In this way, students can not only master music knowledge but also draw spiritual strength from it and establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. The exploration of diverse teaching modes aims to break the limitations of traditional teaching methods and introduce more diversified teaching means. Experiential teaching allows students to feel the charm of music through hands-on operation by creating situations or simulating real-life scenarios. For example, when teaching musical instrument playing skills, teachers can organize students to visit musical instrument museums to learn about the historical and cultural backgrounds of musical instruments or invite professional performers to give live performances, allowing students to experience the unique charm of music art firsthand. This teaching method not only enhances students' learning interest but also improves their aesthetic ability and creativity. Project-based teaching encourages students to conduct in-depth research around a specific theme and finally complete a comprehensive music project in groups^[13]. Cooperative learning emphasizes the interaction and common progress among students. In music classes, teachers can flexibly adjust the grouping method according to different task requirements, enabling each student to give full play to their strengths in the group. For example, in chorus rehearsal, teachers can divide students into groups according to vocal parts for practice, and then representatives of each group can summarize their opinions to jointly improve the chorus effect. This can not only promote communication and cooperation among students but also improve the overall performance quality. In the specific implementation process, teachers should constantly sum up experience and lessons, adjust and optimize the teaching plan according to the actual situation to ensure that each class can achieve the expected teaching goals.

3.2. Combining theory with practice and strengthening the construction of training bases

For students majoring in music in comprehensive universities, theoretical learning provides them with a solid academic foundation, while practice helps to transform the learned knowledge into practical skills. To achieve this goal, strengthening the construction of training bases is an essential part. Training bases are not only important places for students to conduct skill training but also bridges connecting the campus and society. By establishing stable off-campus internship bases, students can be provided with a real-world working environment and professional experience. For example, by establishing long-term cooperative relationships with local art troupes, theaters, music studios, and other institutions, students can have the opportunity to participate in actual performance projects and exercise their professional abilities in practice^[14]. At the same time, these cooperative units can also serve as important channels for graduates' employment, laying a solid foundation for students' future career development. To better promote the integration of theory and practice, schools should also encourage interdisciplinary cooperation. Music is not an isolated art form but is closely related to other disciplines such as literature, history, and philosophy. Therefore, interdisciplinary teaching teams can be organized to jointly develop some characteristic curriculum modules, such as "Music and Film" and "Music and Social Movements," allowing students to understand the charm of music from different perspectives and cultivate their ability to solve complex problems.

3.3. Updating the concept of cultivating people with morality and optimizing the professional teaching staff

Cultivating people with morality is the fundamental task of education, and it has been given new connotations in the context of the new liberal arts. Music teachers, as an important part of the college teaching staff, shoulder the responsibility of cultivating music talents with both moral integrity and professional competence and all-around development. However, currently, some music teachers have deficiencies in practicing the concept of cultivating people with morality. For example, they pay too much attention to the teaching of professional skills and neglect the cultivation of students' moral cultivation and humanistic qualities. Through the teaching practice of the "Music Aesthetic Psychology" chapter in *Introduction to School Music Education and Teaching Methods of Textbooks*, we can have a deeper understanding of the importance of this concept. The content of "Music Aesthetic Psychology" explores the psychological reaction process and its laws when people are stimulated by music, involving multiple aspects such as perception, memory, imagination, and emotion. In music classes from the perspective of the new liberal arts, teachers should integrate the concept of cultivating people with morality into daily teaching activities^[15].

When explaining "Music Aesthetic Psychology," teachers can combine specific works to let students feel the emotional colors conveyed by different styles of music and at the same time encourage them to share their views and experiences on these works, thus stimulating students' pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty deep in their hearts. This interactive teaching method not only helps to improve students' music appreciation level but, more importantly, promotes their personality shaping and personal growth. In addition, to better implement such teaching reform measures, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of the music teaching staff. On the one hand, the overall quality of the existing teaching staff should be improved. Regular professional training activities should be organized, and well-known experts and scholars at home and abroad should be invited to give lectures to help teachers broaden their horizons and update their concepts. On the other hand, it is necessary to attract a group of young talents who have both solid professional skills and know how to use modern information technology to carry out teaching work. By constantly enriching and improving the structure of the teaching staff, we can ensure that the concept of cultivating people with morality can be effectively implemented in music professional teaching in the long term.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, this article deeply analyzes the current teaching situation of music majors in comprehensive universities from the perspective of new liberal arts and proposes a number of practical teaching reform measures. The aim is to improve the quality of music professional talent cultivation and better serve the national cultural development strategy and social and economic development needs. Future research will further focus on the specific implementation effects of these reform measures and their impacts on students' future development.

Funding

Teaching reform project in Shanxi Province, "Research on the Teaching Reform and Practice of Music Majors in Comprehensive Universities from the Perspective of New Liberal Arts" (Project No.: J20230136)

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Guo B, 2019, Construction of the Practical Teaching System for Music Education Majors under the Background of “Double-First-Class” Construction. *Chinese Music*, 2019(3): 134–136.
- [2] Li J, 2018, Research on the Practical Teaching and Management Model of Musicology Majors. *Education Teaching Forum*, 2018(4): 208–209.
- [3] Liu G, 2017, Exploration of the Construction of the Practical Teaching Staff for Music Majors in Regular Colleges and Universities. *Industrial & Science Tribune*, 2017(19): 266–267.
- [4] Bi X, You Z, 2017, Research on the Transformation of the Talent Cultivation Model for Music Majors in Colleges and Universities to Serve Local Economic Development. *Journal of the College of Adult Education of Hebei University*, 2017(2): 97–102.
- [5] Liu J, 2023, Research and Practice on the Training Model of Applied Talents for Music Performance Majors in Applied Universities – Taking the School of Music and Dance of Daqing Normal University as an Example. *Intelligence*, 2023(23): 177–180.
- [6] Su L, 2022, Analysis of the Education Model for Music Majors in Colleges and Universities under the Concept of Cultivating People with Morality. *Art Evaluation*, 2022(20): 89–92.
- [7] Hao Y, 2024, The Construction, Development, and Innovation of Music Education Majors from the Perspective of the “Double-First-Class” Strategy. *Journal of Chifeng University (Natural Science Edition)*, 2024(12): 113–118.
- [8] Du H, 2024, Research on the Education and Teaching Reform of Music Communication Majors in Vocational Colleges under the Background of We Media. *China National Exhibition*, 2024(17): 135–137.
- [9] Wang B, Xie T, 2024, Exploration of the Current Situation and Development Path of Practical Teaching in Music Teacher Education. *Music Education and Creation*, 2024(3): 44–48.
- [10] Wu L, Lin W, 2023, Exploration of the “One Major with Multiple Abilities” Teaching Practice for Music Majors in Local Colleges and Universities in Hubei Province under the Background of “Double-First-Class” Construction. *Home Drama*, 2023(33): 160–162.
- [11] Lü Y, 2022, Application Strategies of Aesthetic Education in College Music Teaching. *Journal of Honghe University*, 2022(3): 157–160.
- [12] Lü F, 2022, Diverse Practical Exploration of Solfeggio Teaching for Musicology Majors in Applied Universities. *Popular Literature and Art*, 2022(11): 188–190.
- [13] Liang L, 2022, Reflection and Exploration on the Construction of the Practical Teaching Curriculum System for Music Majors in Local Colleges and Universities in the New Era. *Home Drama*, 2022(2): 172–173.
- [14] Zhou M, 2021, Cultivation of “Double-Qualified” Teachers in the Curriculum-Based Art Practice of Music Majors in Colleges and Universities. *Art Sea*, 2021(5): 97–99.
- [15] Yang Z, Pan G, 2021, Opportunities and Challenges Brought by “Internet + Education” to Music Professional Education in Colleges and Universities. *Art Education*, 2021(5): 48–51.

Publisher’s note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.