Teaching Reform Attempt of Harmony Course in Local Normal Colleges under the Goal-Oriented

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Abstract: The course goals guide all the teaching activities of the course. This paper starts from the phased experience of the teaching reform, sets the course goals as the core, and then gradually extends to comb the curriculum system, adjust the teaching content, coordinate the teaching means and improve the evaluation strategy, so as to explore a relatively complete teaching mode of harmony course in local normal colleges under the background of professional certification.

Keywords: Goal-oriented; Local normal colleges; Harmony course; Teaching reform

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“Goal-oriented” is an important concept put forward in the normal professional certification project launched by the Ministry of Education in 2017. It requires that the teacher cultivation of normal colleges must be guided by the goal of achieving the “professional quality” and “core skills” which are necessary for teachers, and all teaching activities should be based on this goal. This concept provides a new direction for the professionalization of teacher education in China.

In the process of implementing this concept, the “goal” as a guide was further dismantled into the three levels: talent training goal, course goal and teaching goal. Among them, the talent training goal is the ultimate goal of teacher education in a certain major, and the course goal is the implementation plan of a specific course to achieve the talent training goal, the teaching goal is the decomposition and implementation of the course goal in the teaching activities.

In these three levels of goal, the course goal is the concretization of talent training goal and guide teaching goal at the same time, which is the key to whether the ultimate goal can be achieved. It amounts to a “constitution” of a course that directly determines all aspects relevant to teaching. Therefore, in the teaching reform for the harmony course, the author has made a series of attempts in straightening out the curriculum system, adjusting the teaching content, coordinating the teaching means, improving the evaluation strategy and so on.
1. Set the Course Goal

(1) The basis for setting goal

The setting of course goal is guided by talent training goal. The musicology major cultivates music teachers for primary and secondary school, so the basis for the goal setting of the harmony course must be based on them.

In order to set the goal of harmony course more accurately, the author completed a sample survey of music teachers in primary and secondary schools in Shandong Province in two years. From the results, almost all respondents believe that what they most need and lack is the ability of harmonization (including piano accompaniment and chorus), followed by the ability of harmony analysis and listening, while the ability of four-parts writing is useless.

In addition to survey, the best way to understand the music education in primary and secondary schools is to analyze the music textbooks. Because for teachers, textbooks are the starting point of all their teaching activities. By harmonizing all the songs in the compulsory music textbook of PMP (People’s Music Publishing House) in Shandong Province, the author divided the teaching content of the harmony course into two parts: basic harmony and advanced harmony. The basic harmony part covers all kinds of chords used in harmonization for songs in textbooks.

(2) The conclusion of setting goal

Based on the above analysis, the author describes the goal of harmony course in local normal colleges as follows:

General goal: To enable students to be competent for harmony analysis and harmonization in music teaching in the compulsory education stage, and to lay a solid foundation for further learning other theoretical courses in composition and composition technology.

Course content: The basic harmony part is the chord of natural, secondary dominant and subordinate chords, the modulation between related keys, and other contents.

The advanced harmonies are other transit modulatory chords, alternate mode chords, altered chords, modulation between foreign keys, chromatic modelation.

Teaching focus: mainly focus on harmonization for the songs and harmonic analysis of music works, and supplemented by four-parts writing.

2. Straighten out the Curriculum System

After establishing the course goal, the author made the overall layout of the harmony curriculum system. For local normal colleges, harmony usually refer to
a micro curriculum system consisting of Harmony A, Harmony B and Advanced Harmony, which lasts for three semesters. Among them, Harmony A and B are required courses, mainly corresponding to the basic harmony part of the course; Advanced Harmony is an elective course, mainly corresponding to the advanced harmony part of the course.

(1) Basic harmony part
Harmony A is the cornerstone of the whole system of harmony curriculum, which aims to help students build the underlying thinking of the classical harmonic system represented by the “functional circle”. Considering the quality of students in local normal colleges, the author suggests that the teaching content should include the primary triads and its inversions, dominant seventh chord and its inversions, and cadences.

Harmony B is the first extension made on the basis of the underlying thinking, its purpose is to help students fully grasp the system of diatonic chords and preliminary contact with the system of chromatic chords, familiar with all the harmonic phenomena in music teaching in primary and secondary schools. Therefore, the author suggests that the teaching content should be defined as the secondary triads and its inversions, and secondary seventh chords and its inversions, the basic Chinese pentatonic chords, the secondary dominant, and the subordinate chords.

(2) Advanced Harmony Part
Advanced Harmony is a comprehensive exploration of the system of chromatic chords, focusing on the professionalism of the discipline and the higher order of the content. As an elective course, it aims to lay the foundation for further study for a small number of students with good foundation. So its teaching content should be limited to the system of chromatic chords.

After such adjustment, the whole harmony curriculum system is clear and focused, thus solving the problems of repetition of teaching content and confusion of teaching focus.

3. Adjust the Teaching Content
First of all, the author puts forward the adjustment principle of “weakening writing, strengthening analysis, and highlighting practical application of harmonization”. Then starting from the students situation, the author divides the course goal of writing, analysis and practical application into two levels: the general goal and the improving goal. The general goal is the compulsory goal that all students must achieve, while improving goal is the non compulsory goal that the students who have the ability to learn more should achieve.
(1) The adjustment of teaching in basic harmony part

In this part, the overall proportion of writing, analysis and practical application was adjusted from 8: 2: 0 to 3: 3: 4. In order to implement this change into specific teaching activities, the author specially compiled the textbook *Practical Course of Basic Harmony*. In this textbook, the content of each chapter is divided into three modules: writing, analysis and practical application, and all the examples and exercises of the practical application module are taken from PMP textbooks.

1) Goals of four-parts writing training

The general goal is to be able to master the basic rules of four-part writing, and correctly complete the chord connection of common harmonic composite.

The improving goal is to be able to skillfully use the basic rules of four-part writing to smoothly harmonize for the melody.

2) Goals of the analytical training

The general goal is to correctly analyze the tunality, mark chords and non-harmonic tones.

The improving goal is to accurately identify all kinds of non-harmonic tones, analyze harmonic layout and harmonic logic, and illustrate the purpose of harmonic progression in specific works.

3) Goals of practical application

The general goal is to make students have the ability to design a correct harmonization for the songs and to sing it with piano accompaniment by himself.

The improving goal is to make students have the ability to design two or more ways of harmonic arrangement for a song, and to skillfully use the creation method to complete the creation of small music works.

(2) The adjustment of teaching in advanced harmonic part

In the advanced harmony part, in order to highlight the professionalism of the discipline, the author adjusted the proportion of composition, analysis and practical application from 3:3:4 to 4: 4: 2, and use the classical teaching material *Harmony Course* (by Spotsobin, etc.) as the textbook. At the same time, in order to highlight the higher order of the content, there is no difference between goal levels.

The above series of adjustments not only make the goal orientation of all parts of the harmony course clearer, but also enhance the operability, thus walking out of the dilemma of previous teaching reform.

4. Coordinate the Teaching Means

In order to adjust the teaching content to show its due effect, teachers must also coordinate all kinds of online and offline teaching means in pre-class stage, in-
class stage and after-class stage.

(1) Pre-class Stage
The main task of the pre-class stage is preview. Teachers usually publish the preview tasks and relevant materials on the specific online platform one day in advance, and monitor the students’ preview with the help of the platform data.

(2) In-class stage
The main task of the in-class stage is learning new knowledge. Teachers generally help students achieve the basic goals through the routine teaching process of review-teaching-demonstration-practice.

(3) After-class Stage
The main task of the after-class stage is to consolidate and upgrade. Teachers first use the online platform to publish tasks of harmonization for songs, then require students to submit them in the form of video within the specified time limit. Doing like this can not only consolidate the learning effect in time, but also facilitate the communication between teachers and students in time. In the meantime, it keeps the personal playing and singing materials for reference in the future. In addition, teachers also use the online platform to release learning videos such as harmonization for melody, so that students who have the ability to learn more could achieve their improving goals.

5. Improve the Evaluation Strategy
Harmonic learning is never easy, and the process requires incentives. In order to stimulate students’ learning enthusiasm and urge them to study actively, the author changed the final evaluation to process and formative evaluation. Specifically speaking, it is to form the 6:4 upside down mode between the usual performance and the final grades, and further divide 60% of the usual performance into 5% of attendance, 15% of classroom practice and 40% of practical application. In addition to attendance, the results of classroom practice and practical application are all based on the platform record and accumulated time by time.

Through one year of attempts, the author found that, inspired by this evaluation strategy, the students’ learning enthusiasm has been completely mobilized, and the learning effect of the harmonic course has been significantly improved.

The reform of the above five aspects has roughly built the basic framework for the harmony course teaching mode of local normal colleges under the background of professional certification. Although it is not mature, as a kind of attempt, its initial effect is still satisfactory. The author hopes that these phased experience can provide some help to the research of similar teaching reform, and make a little contribution to improve the harmony teaching in local normal colleges in general.
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References

[1] *Thinking on Harmony Teaching of Department of Music Academy* Liu Dongyun