The Action Research of Gordon's Music "Listening and Thinking" Theory in Vocal Teaching

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Abstract: *The action research background of Gordon's music "listening and thinking" theory in vocal teaching stems from the pursuit of innovative music education and a deep understanding of individual differences among students. Under this theoretical framework, teachers can apply teaching methods more flexibly, pay attention to the individual development of students, and stimulate their independent thinking and creative expression of music. By conducting action research on the application of Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" in music, educators can gain a deeper understanding of students' experiences and reactions in music learning, further promote innovation and optimization of vocal teaching models, guide students more targeted, enhance their musical literacy and comprehensive abilities, promote vocal education to better meet the needs of contemporary students, and cultivate music learners with independent thinking and creative expression abilities.*

Keywords: *Gordon music; Listening and thinking; vocal teaching*

1. Introduction

Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" comes from profound contemplation of the music learning process and research on the cognitive development of children's music. He emphasized that early childhood music learning should focus on perception and thinking, rather than just training music skills. The core idea of this theory is to achieve comprehensive development of music literacy through the auditory perception and internal thinking of music. In Gordon's music theory of "listening and thinking", "listening" emphasizes the perception and understanding of music, while "thinking" emphasizes inspiring students' inner thinking and expression through perception. Gordon believes that through positive music experiences, students can better understand the essence of music and cultivate musical literacy, rather than just mechanically mastering music skills. Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" in music has been widely applied in music education. This theory is not only applicable to children's music education, but also has a positive impact on adult music learning and professional education. In music teaching practice, Gordon's theory is used to guide the design of teaching activities, including vocal teaching. The main purpose of studying Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" in music is to gain a deeper understanding of learners' cognitive processes in music learning, promote the development of music education theory, and provide educators with more effective music teaching methods. By understanding the music cognitive development of learners, educators can better design teaching activities and promote the comprehensive development of students. The importance of vocal teaching practice lies in the fact that vocal music is a subject with strong emotional expression and artistic value in the field of music. Through the application of Gordon's theory of "listening and in music, vocal educators can better guide students to achieve a deeper understanding of vocal art by perceiving and thinking about music. The application of this theory not only helps students improve vocal skills, but also cultivates their independent thinking and creative expression of music, making vocal education more comprehensive and profound.

2. Overview of Gordon's Theory of "Listening and Thinking" in Music

2.1 Basic Concepts of Gordon's Music "Listening and Thinking" Theory

Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" in music is a core theory in the field of music learning, which refers to the ability of individuals to listen and understand music psychologically without actual physical sounds. This theory suggests that "listening and thinking" is the foundation of musical skills a crucial element in musical activities. "Listening and thinking" differs from some related concepts.

Unlike auditory perception, auditory perception emphasizes a direct response to actual sound stimuli, while auditory ideation occurs after the sound disappears, that is, in the process of individual thinking and understanding of sound. The difference from music imitation is that although imitation is a part of learning, "listening and thinking" focuses more on thinking and understanding of sound, emphasizing that it is a process rather than a result. Meanwhile, "listening and thinking" is closely related to music memory. Gordon believes that memory is a part of the "listening and thinking" process, and music processed through "listening and thinking" is easier to absorb and retain.

Gordon believes that "listening and thinking" abilities are naturally formed, and he advocates that teaching should not be forced, but rather by providing appropriate knowledge and experience to stimulate students to fully unleash their "listening and thinking" potential. This theory suggests that "listening and thinking" is a musical thinking ability that enables individuals to construct and understand the structure of music psychologically, and thus engage in creative musical expression. From the perspective of educational application, Gordon's music "listening and thinking" theory provides guidance for music education. This theory emphasizes the cultivation of students' listening and understanding abilities towards music, in order to construct the meaning of music. The goal of education is to enable students to understand music, participate in familiar music, and anticipate the expression and structure of unfamiliar music, thereby teaching students to "listen and think" about music.

Overall, Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" in music provides a new theoretical perspective for music learning, emphasizing the cultivation of musical thinking abilities and providing a beneficial theoretical foundation for music education and practice.

2.2 Types and stages of music listening and thinking

There are mainly eight types of listening and thinking, which are presented in a certain order. Firstly, it is "listening to music", which means listening to music that one wants to be familiar with or is not familiar with through listening. Next is "reading music", listening and thinking about music through reading. The third is "recording music", which involves listening to music while also recording it. The fourth is "recalling music from memory", which includes recalling familiar musical elements and expressing them through singing or playing. Another form is to recall familiar music in the mind without actual music, that is, to listen to music in silence. The fifth is to "write music from memory", listening and thinking by writing familiar music from memory. The sixth is "creation or improvisation", which involves creating or improvising familiar or unfamiliar sound and rhythm patterns. The seventh is "reading, creating or improvising music", which includes the form of reading music scores and listening to symbols. Finally, there is "writing, creating, or improvising music", which involves creating or improvising while recording familiar or unfamiliar sound and rhythm patterns.

The listening and thinking stages are divided into six levels, from low to high. The first stage is "instant retention", which refers to the moment when music is heard, it is unconscious and does not give any meaning to the sound effect heard. Secondly, there is the ability to imitate and imagine pitch and rhythm patterns, which can identify the main pitch, rhythm, center note, and beat during the process of listening to music. The third stage is to establish intuitive or objective modes and beats, which can be determined based on identifying the main sound and rhythm patterns. The fourth stage is to maintain the pitch and rhythm patterns that have already been organized in the listening process. After confirming the mode and beat, one can also identify musical elements such as power, timbre, and form. The fifth stage is to "recall the organized pitch and rhythm types, listen and think of other music segments." The pitch and rhythm types of music are like the vocabulary of music, thinking and listening through rich musical vocabulary. The final stage is to anticipate and predict the pitch and rhythm types, which can better predict the music content based on accumulating a certain musical vocabulary.

2.3 Theory of Music Learning Order

Skill learning sequence.The skill learning sequence of Gordon's music learning theory includes two methods: discriminative learning and deductive learning, which complement each other and help students gradually establish comprehensive music skills. In terms of discriminative learning, students first cultivate a basic understanding of music through the listening/speaking stage, and then endow the music with intrinsic meaning during the vocalization stage, while some comprehensive stages internalize the learning content of the first two stages. The symbolic connection stage requires students

to use musical symbols to write the learned content after listening to music, and ultimately enter the comprehensive stage, learning the overall musical elements, including pitch, rhythm, mode, and beat.[1]

Derivative learning emphasizes independent exploration and begins in the generalization stage, including three sub stages: listening/speaking, speaking, and symbol. During this process, students form an overall summary of music through independent exploration. The creative/improvisation stage emphasizes the creative expression of music by students in the listening/speaking and symbolic sub stages. The final stage of theoretical understanding emphasizes learning music theory and improving the understanding of music perception. Overall, Gordon's skill learning sequence cultivates students' comprehensive understanding and autonomous expression of music through a progressive approach.

Content learning order.The content learning sequence of Gordon's music learning theory includes the order of tone learning and the order of rhythm learning, which are combined to help students deeply understand the elements of music. The order of tone learning is based on the tone context, gradually expanding from a single mode to multiple modes. By establishing a tonal context, students can feel the pitch relationship in a mode and gradually learn concepts such as mode, key sign, and mode tonic. Gordon emphasizes that before learning multimodal music, students must establish good musical listening and thinking abilities on the basis of a single mode.

In the order of rhythm learning, Gordon differs from traditional music knowledge in that he emphasizes dividing the rhythm form based on the feeling of music. The three elements that determine rhythm are big beat, small beat, and rhythm type. By singing music while experiencing different beats, students can understand the roles of big beats, small beats, and their extensions in rhythm.[2] Gordon also introduced the concept of non normal paired beats and non normal paired beats, enriching students' understanding of rhythm.

Overall, Gordon's learning sequence of content is gradually deepened, allowing students to start with the basic concepts of perceived pitch and rhythm, gradually forming a comprehensive understanding of musical elements, laying a solid foundation for their higher-level music understanding and expression.

3. The significance and feasibility of Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" in vocal teaching

3.1 The significance of Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" in vocal teaching

Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" in music is of great significance in vocal teaching. Firstly, it profoundly affects students' music perception and comprehension abilities. Through "listening and thinking", students can simulate and reproduce sound in their psychological awareness, cultivate sensitivity to musical elements such as pitch and rhythm, and better understand and grasp the musical elements of the track. This not only enhances the overall music perception level of students, but also lays the foundation for their higher-level vocal expression.

Secondly, this theory has played an important role in vocal singing, especially in terms of expression and performance. Through "listening and thinking", students can gain a deeper understanding of the emotional connotations of musical works and transform their inner auditory consciousness into vocal expression skills.[3] This helps to enhance students' performing arts, making them more emotional and expressive when singing. Gordon's theory injects a new perspective into vocal performance that emphasizes inner experience and emotional expression.

Finally, Gordon's music theory of "listening and thinking" encourages creative expression. By cultivating students' unique understanding and imagination of music, theory provides them with opportunities to unleash their creativity and personality in the field of vocal music. Students can create new musical elements and performance methods through "listening and thinking", making vocal teaching more flexible and diverse. This not only promotes students' artistic creativity, but also enables them to better integrate into the world of music and shape distinctive vocal styles.

The contribution of Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" in vocal teaching is not only reflected in improving students' music perception and expression level, but also in encouraging creative expression, making students more creative and unique. This injects deeper and more personalized educational concepts into vocal teaching, providing theoretical support for cultivating vocal students with thinking and creativity.

3.2 Feasibility of applying Gordon's music teaching theory to vocal teaching

Firstly, Gordon's music teaching theory emphasizes the music experience and participation of students, advocating for a deeper understanding of music through "listening and thinking". In vocal teaching, students' subjectivity and emotional involvement are crucial for singing expression. By adopting Gordon's theory, teachers can guide students to actively participate in music creation and expression through the inner process of listening and thinking, and improve their singing art level. Secondly, Gordon's music teaching theory advocates for individualized teaching methods, emphasizing the development of personalized learning plans based on the characteristics of students. In vocal teaching, there are differences in students' range, timbre, and way of speaking, so differentiated teaching strategies are needed. By understanding the music learning needs of each student, teachers can design targeted learning activities, provide personalized guidance, and better meet the learning needs of students. In addition, Gordon's music teaching theory emphasizes the holistic nature of music education, focusing not only on the cultivation of music skills, but also on the cultivation of students' music perception, creativity, and critical thinking. In vocal teaching, it is equally important to cultivate students' comprehensive understanding and expression ability of music. By introducing Gordon's theory, vocal teachers can set teaching objectives more comprehensively, focusing on the comprehensive development of students' music knowledge, expression ability, and critical thinking. Finally, Gordon's music teaching theory advocates collaborative learning among students and collaborative relationships between teachers and students, advocating a positive teaching atmosphere. In vocal teaching, choir and group singing are common teaching forms, and collaboration among students has a significant impact on the overall vocal performance. By applying Gordon's theory, teachers can better organize choir experiences, encourage students to collaborate with each other, and jointly create more wonderful music works.

The application of Gordon's music teaching theory in vocal teaching is feasible, which can encourage students to participate more deeply in music learning and achieve comprehensive improvement of music literacy. Gordon's theory provides useful guidance and methods for vocal teaching by creating a positive learning environment, emphasizing individual differences, and cultivating students' overall musical literacy.

4. The Problems of Gordon's Theory of Listening and Thinking in Vocal Teaching

The application of Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" in vocal teaching may face a series of challenges, requiring educators to find a balance between theoretical principles and practical teaching environments.

4.1 Different student acceptance abilities

Gordon's music theory clearly emphasizes individual differences, but understanding each student's learning preferences and differences can be a complex task.[4] Students have differences in music understanding, expression, and receiving feedback, and teachers need to flexibly apply theories within limited classroom time to ensure that the needs of different students are met.

In this challenge, sometimes students' learning preferences may depend on their perception. For example, some students may prefer to learn through visual means, as they may have a better understanding of musical symbols and scores, while others prefer to learn through auditory means and are more sensitive to the melody and rhythm of music. In teaching, teachers can cleverly combine visual and auditory elements, such as by displaying music videos, using charts, etc., to create a multisensory learning experience that caters to the receptive abilities of different students.

4.2 Incomplete teaching resources

Gordon's music theory emphasizes diversity and creativity, but in some schools or regions, there may be a lack of sufficient music resources and technical support. Teachers may need to find creative solutions under existing conditions or seek more support to ensure the effective implementation of the theory.

To overcome the problem of insufficient resources, teachers can actively seek alternative teaching resources. For example, if school equipment is limited, students can be encouraged to create music by using simple recording devices or mobile phones for audio recording. This creative response to

insufficient resources allows students to still have a rich experience in music learning.

4.3 Teaching methods need to be optimized

Gordon's theory emphasizes in-depth music experience and thinking, which may require more classroom time. In the education system, teachers may feel time pressure and need to complete course objectives within a limited amount of time. Therefore, teachers need to find a balance in the application of theory, meeting both the requirements of the theory and ensuring the completion of necessary teaching content within the specified time.

In the process of optimizing teaching methods, teachers can design creative and efficient music activities. For example, by using music games, group collaboration projects, and other forms, teachers can quickly stimulate students' interest in music and guide them to experience music in depth. This flexible teaching method not only meets the requirements of Gordon's theory, but also takes into account the limitations of time.

5. The Application Strategy of Gordon's Music "Listening and Thinking" Theory in Vocal Teaching

5.1 Improving teaching content and enhancing talent's comprehensive abilities

The application strategy of Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" in vocal teaching is reflected in the richness of teaching content. By introducing Chinese songs that have artistic value and are suitable for classroom teaching, teachers can stimulate students' profound understanding and expression ability towards music. For example, by selecting Eason Chan's song "Exaggerate" and analyzing its complex melody and emotional expression, students can cultivate their appreciation for modern pop music while challenging vocal skills. Introducing Deng Ziqi's "Beyond Light Years" can allow students to experience the uniqueness of electronic pop music and expand their understanding of its musical style. Meanwhile, choosing classic Chinese songs like Jay Chou's "Blue and White Porcelain" not only helps students experience traditional Chinese music elements, but also cultivates their expressive abilities in pop music.

In terms of vocal skill training, gradually introducing different difficulty levels and styles of Chinese songs is also an effective strategy. Starting from classic folk songs such as "Jasmine Flower", students can establish sensitivity to modes, pitch, and rhythm in simple melodies. Subsequently, it gradually transitioned to more complex works such as "Millennium Love", cultivating students' expressive power and skills in different musical contexts. This gradual arrangement helps students comprehensively improve their vocal skills.

In terms of comprehensive music materials, the introduction of Chinese choir works demonstrates another application strategy of Gordon's music "listening and thinking" theory. By participating in choirs, such as singing classic choral songs such as "Spring River Flower Moonlit Night", students can cultivate their comprehensive abilities in multi voice collaboration and vocal expression. This experience not only enables students to gain a profound understanding of choir art, but also enhances their skills in music teamwork.

Gordon's theory of "listening and thinking" emphasizes personalization and creativity in vocal teaching. Choosing some Chinese songs, such as "Four Seasons for You" or "The Brightest Star in the Night Sky", can allow students to participate in personalized interpretation or creation of songs, showcasing their unique music style and artistic creativity. Such activities not only enhance students' emotional engagement in Chinese music, but also stimulate their interest in music creation. Through these examples, the application strategy of Gordon's music "listening and thinking" theory in vocal teaching is reflected in the selection of content, aiming to cultivate students' comprehensive, profound, and creative music literacy.

5.2 Enriching teaching methods and emphasizing the comprehensiveness of teaching objectives

The application strategy of Gordon's music theory of "listening and thinking" in vocal teaching presents diversified teaching methods and comprehensive teaching objectives. Firstly, diversified teaching methods are reflected in the classroom. By adopting diverse teaching methods such as group choir, individual guidance, and group collaboration, teachers can better meet the learning needs of

different students. For example, by practicing the classic Chinese song "Jasmine Flower" in group choir exercises, students can perceive the overall music in collective cooperation and cultivate skills in collaborative singing. Secondly, Gordon's music theory of "listening and thinking" focuses on the comprehensiveness of teaching objectives. In vocal teaching, in addition to emphasizing the cultivation of skills, more emphasis is placed on students' comprehensive understanding and expression of music. By setting comprehensive teaching objectives, such as improving music skills, mastering music theory, and deepening music expression, students can achieve comprehensive development in vocal learning. For example, when introducing the English song "Yesterday" in teaching, not only does it focus on improving vocal skills, but it also cultivates students' understanding of musical emotions and expressions through understanding the lyrics. In addition, diversified teaching methods also include the use of diverse teaching resources. Introducing multimedia resources such as music recordings, video demonstrations, and music games into vocal teaching can help students perceive music more intuitively and expand their musical experience. For example, by playing recordings showcasing the same song performed by different artists, students can have a more comprehensive understanding of the music's performance style; Through music games such as "Melody Relay", students can cultivate their interest in music through relaxed interaction.

5.3 Optimizing the Teaching Evaluation System to Stimulate Student Learning Vitality

Optimizing the music evaluation system can stimulate students' self-directed learning.By constructing scientific and comprehensive music evaluation standards, teachers can guide students to have a deeper understanding and perception of music, and stimulate their desire for active learning. Firstly, by establishing a music evaluation system, teachers can clearly define the music skills and knowledge to be taught to students, and systematically evaluate these elements. For example, when students learn to sing the Chinese song "Jasmine Flower", the music evaluation system can cover aspects such as accuracy of sound, mastery of vocal range, and accuracy of rhythm. This helps students to have a clear understanding of their performance in various musical elements, and use it as a basis for self reflection and improvement. Secondly, the music evaluation system can set clear learning goals and stimulate students' learning motivation. By setting phased and long-term goals in the evaluation criteria, students can understand their learning direction and feel a sense of continuous progress and achievement.

6. Conclusion

Gordon's music teaching theory provides useful reference for music education in China. However, compared to other teaching methods, the dissemination and promotion of Gordon's music teaching theory in China was relatively late, and the translation of related books and practical cases were relatively limited. Therefore, there are some challenges in practical teaching applications.When learning and applying Gordon's music teaching theory, we cannot simply apply its concepts, but should reasonably absorb, transform, and draw inspiration from the actual situation of music education in our country. For example, the combination forms of non normal paired and non normal paired and non separable beats do not conform to the rules of basic music theory in China. Therefore, music educators need to flexibly apply them based on actual situations. In the future development of music education, attention should be paid to drawing on Gordon's advanced experience in music teaching theory, while combining with the cultural background and practical needs of music education in China, targeted innovation should be carried out. Through a deep understanding of theory and reasonable adjustments, we can better promote the development of music education and teaching in China, making it more in line with the disciplinary characteristics and practical needs of Chinese students. In academic research and practical exploration, we believe that Gordon's music teaching theory will inject new vitality into music education in China and promote its more comprehensive and in-depth development.

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