Exploring the Trend and Reform of Music Education and Vocal Teaching in We-media Era

Ling-zhu CHEN*
College of Music, Chengdu Normal University, Chengdu, Sichuan 611130, China
*Corresponding author

Keywords: We-media era, Information and communication technology, Music education, Vocal teaching.

Abstract. Over the past decade, the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) is very remarkable around the world and, especially, in the mainland of China. The world’s largest net user group constitutes a solid foundation for the improvement of new types of media so-called as We-media, such as WeChat and MicroBlog, which have diversified communication platforms and have been exploited as a promising private way to extend and promote traditional education in recent years. This is a great opportunity brought by the We-media era to education in China and a new challenge against educators and teachers. In this paper, we attempt to explore and discuss the trend and reform of music education and vocal teaching in the background of We-media era, with laying focus on how digital commutation tools change/reshape the methods, means and notions of modern music education and vocal teaching in China.

Introduction

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) offer increased potential for advancing progress towards economic and social development objectives. The worldwide spread of mobile telephony, computers and communication systems, the growth of internet networks and widespread use of broadband infrastructure and wireless installation have a considerable impact on international production and trade patterns. Contemporary knowledge societies are largely driven by the dynamics of ICTs [1]. Based on the latest technology, many new types of media have been created rapidly, which have taken place the role and status of traditional media to many degrees.

One of the most rapidly rising media types is so-called We-media, which has changed largely, specifically, people’s main aim of creating and managing their own We-media is not only for disseminating information but also for diverse purposes such as making money, playing entertainment and deploying education and study [2]. The We-media era brings people into a new life style termed as media infused lives, which refers to how people, particularly youths, are often deeply immersed in using digital technologies in their everyday lives. Increased mobility, social networking, mass media and globalization have amplified the social connections of educators and learners as well as their exposure to diverse practices, including musically related practices that continue to grow and evolve, often in fast-paced, unexpected, and innovative ways [3].

With such a comfortable life style, people are getting addicted to internet or media. But even with various side effects, such technological development offers new opportunities to us including teachers and students [4]. Music educators and learners in China have undergone transformations in their musical lives, experiencing dissolving boundaries of traditional teaching and learning spaces, and new opportunities for creating their own musical worlds and vocal teaching and learning identities. For example, integration of We-media in music education classes can help facilitate learning experiences that would be less likely to happen in a brick-and-mortar setting. However, issues such as privacy and cyberbullying continue to make educators wary of using We-media in formal educational settings [5]. This paper explores the trend and reform of Chinese music education and vocal teaching in We-media era, discusses how to use We-media in music education and vocal
teaching with selected media platforms, analyzes policy/ethical challenges with using We-media in such educational forms, and tries to avoid some of the potential problems of We-media use in the modern music/vocal educational context of China.

**Characteristic Profile of We-media**

The we-media possesses several abstractive features that can be used to characterize the media concept and form, namely, massification, interactivity, independence and diversification [6]. Massification: The widely used We-media platforms such as WeChat and microblog are very simple communication tools that do not need complicated operation or input cost, thus largely lowering the threshold of We-media use, allowing it to be compatible with the modern fast-paced lifestyle. Interactivity: The communication ways of We-media are free of limits of space and time, and can be used at any place and any time. Privacy. The usage specificity means that We-media is private and independent. Diversification. The information sources of We-media are diversified by collecting various news, abundant knowledge and massive data worldwide. Overall, these features make We-media coincident with the modern lifestyle and psychological state of people. With increased popularity We-media has addressed a non-negligible influence on many aspects of our life; its appearance is a response to the current information development trend and the product of the era.

**Practical Application of We-media in Vocal Teaching**

The practical applications of We-media, internet and information technology in music education and vocal teaching is based on the specific learning motivation of students under the mining and analysis of potential factors affecting the learning state of students, to find effective ways to enhance student’s interest in the learning according to scientific analysis results, and to formulate teaching programs in line with students own learning situation. The design of vocal teaching scheme is divided into specific training scheme and specific implementation scheme [7]. The vocal music teaching system can be established based on We-media platforms and is used to meet the learning purpose of specific students. At the same time, teachers can realize the learning level of each student through the system training program, to accurately analyze the learning performance of students at the latest stage, to implement the teaching scheme according to the analysis results, and to plan what learning objectives the students should be achieved according to their vocal level.

**Advantage and Disadvantage of We-media Platforms in Vocal Teaching**

Vocal teaching is different from other discipline training; both singing vocal knowledge and vocal training are abstract and subjective. The weekly vocal lesson is far from enough to strengthen learner’s memory of vocal state and feeling. By watching the video teaching of experienced teachers on the We-media platforms, students can compare it with the teaching of famous vocal teachers without limits of space and time, and strengthen learner’s understanding of singing voice and feeling. By communicating with teachers or watching and learning the singing and performance of other people in the platform class, students can understand the requirements of correct voice and find out the errors from other people in a straightforward manner, so as to enrich learners from multiple aspects and improve their singing quality [8]. On the other side, however, learning of vocal music through We-media is lack of communication and interaction with teachers. Because of the physical separation by electronic screen, students and teachers are prone to emotional alienation. For teachers, if they are lecturing in front of a video-recording device every day, they can not get immediate feedback from students, let alone teach students in accordance with their aptitude. Students cannot solve the difficult problems in their study very well, and can also not wait for timely guidance. In these cases, teachers are not always able to get feedback in time, nor ensure to give a targeted explanation. There is thus a lack of interaction between teaching and learning in the online We-media environment.
Case Analysis of We-media-based MOOC in Vocal Teaching

Massive open online course (MOOC) is a representative We-media source that has been involved in the preliminary practice of music education and vocal teaching in China. The MOOC is a Chinese online course aimed at unlimited participation and open access via the web [9]. In addition to traditional course materials, such as filmed lectures, readings, and problem sets, many MOOCs provide interactive courses with user forums to support community interactions among students, professors, and teaching assistants, as well as immediate feedback to quick quizzes and assignments [10]. For example, the ‘Shi Chun Xuan Zi Teaching Demonstration Classroom’, which appears on the MOOC website of China University, was opened by Shi Chun Xuan Zi, a teacher of East China Normal University. For national vocal learners if they want to review the course, they only need to login the website and register their accounts to learn this course without any additional requirements and cost.

Summary

Nowadays, the We-media has paved the path of music education and vocal teaching with its unique advantages and provided convenient learning conditions for vocal music enthusiasts. We-media-based vocal music teaching, a new teaching mode in China, can make full use of teacher resources, provide new means and strategies for the teachers, and expand application prospects in music education. As a vocal teacher, how to obtain the latest information through We-media environment on the basis of traditional music education, to keep upgrading of the dynamic information of discipline frontiers, and to enable students to learn more tracks, broaden their horizons, and better cultivate student ability to learn independently in the environment, deserves our attention.

Acknowledgement

This research was financially supported by the CDSFXY.

References


