



# The Difference in Solfeggio Education Between the University and Social Institution

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**Abstract.** Nowadays, solfeggio has become a basic subject in musical education, then more and more people recognize the importance of solfeggio training. This study mainly focuses on the difference between university and social institutions about solfeggio education. Based on the fieldwork, this study will compare solfeggio education from three aspects, including teaching materials, the ability of teachers, and the ability of students. After comparing these aspects, this study will give some suggestions to improve solfeggio education.

**Keywords:** Solfeggio · Musical education · Solfeggio of university · Solfeggio of social institution

## 1 Introduction

In this day and age, musical education has become increasingly popular in China, and most parents want their children to learn musical courses in their childhood. Some people want their children to continue to learn music in the future, but other people just want their children to cultivate a hobby in music [1]. Whatever they have which purpose, they may consider the solfeggio course first, because it is a fundamental skill in musical education [2, 3].

Many people think solfeggio educations are the same among universities and social institutions, and it just trains hearing, singing, and musical theory. There is a tremendous difference between university and social institution, and the content of solfeggio education is more than those three aspects above [3–5]. In China, there are different teaching styles in different areas, then these differences embody in teaching materials, teachers, and students [6, 7].

Considering these aspects, this study is going to make this study on the solfeggio education between the university and social institution. Changchun is the main city in the northeast area of China and it has tremendous educational resources [8]. The Jilin university, the northeast normal university, and the Jilin university of the arts is located in this city. Besides, there are many art institutions here, including institution M, institution J, and institution S. Therefore, this study do believe that this is excellent fieldwork to begin my study.

## 2 Traditional Solfeggio Education

In the traditional model of solfeggio education, people mainly focus on skill training. There are not so many technological methods to train students, and the only tool may be the piano. Under this circumstance, some teachers could use vivid stories and activities to make the class action, but some teachers might make the class boring [9]. With the development of technology and education, people increasingly know the importance of entertainment in class, which impels teachers to improve their teaching methods and model. On the one hand, there are many new teaching materials appearing, including teaching apps, relative books, and teaching websites, which provide a great number of conveniences to teachers [10]. On the other hand, increasing teachers are willing to get a higher diploma to be more professional in solfeggio teaching. In recent years, the change of solfeggio education has changed fiercely, and we can see a novel picture in musical education.

### 2.1 Solfeggio's Education at the University

In this part, this study chooses the Northeast Normal university as my case to reveal the condition of local solfeggio education in university. This university is one of the "211" projects, and according to data from last year, its rank is fourth among all normal universities in China. The musical education in the university also occupies a significant part, so this study will analyze the solfeggio education at the university in terms of the following aspects.

### 2.2 Teaching Material

When it comes to solfeggio education in university, the first thing we need to talk about is the teaching materials which are not only the books but also the PPT, video, and practicing material.

In the training hearing, professor Liu, a famous scholar who worked in a northeast normal university, has a method to train students. She has studied this field for many years, and she not only focuses on books but also searches all of the materials from foreign teaching methods and the Internet. Sometimes, she composes the materials by herself. After that, she put these materials into her PPT to use in class. Sometimes, when she hears songs or folk music that are suitable to train students, she will record them right away and edit them into her teaching materials.

When talking about sight-singing, professor Liu chooses two books as the main materials which are the *Single-voice Sight-singing Training* and the *Appreciation to Masterpieces of Chinese Works and Oversea Works* [1, 2]. The first book mainly teaches students necessary skills on sight-singing, which let students have a good command of the fundamental ability of sight-singing. The second book includes multi-voice works that can train students the multi-voice thinking. Students will learn how to cooperate with other people and how to adjust their voices during the performance.

Musical theory is also a significant part to train, and there are two books for teaching and practicing, the *Musical Theory Base* and the *Fundamental Music Theory II* [3, 4]. The first one mainly focuses on the system of knowledge, which lets students learn

musical theory from easy to difficult. The second one pays more attention to practice. There are a lot of practices after every chapter, which lets students learn musical theory well.

### **2.3 The Ability of the Professor**

We all know that in the university, professors are facing all kinds of students who have different educational backgrounds and personal skills. Under this circumstance, professors need to have different abilities to deal with different students.

For the ability of hearing, professors should have the ability of absolute pitch and relative pitch. In China, a great number of students do not have the absolute pitch, so they just use the relative pitch which is the Sol-fa. In this situation, to teach them well, the professors should have the ability to relative pitch. For some multi-voice works, professors need to use static hearing to teach students to recognize every single voice from the multi-voice work.

There are also requisitions in sight-singing. Professors should have the ability to the fixed-do sight-singing and movable-do sight-singing. Some musical works are based on equal temperament, so professors need to have the ability of fixed-do sight-singing to deal with this kind of piece. On the other hand, some melodies are pentatonic. Students should pay more attention to the tonality of the melody, so the movable-do ability is necessary for this situation. The movable-do sight-singing can cultivate students' sense of tonality.

The musical theory is also necessary for solfeggio teaching. Professors need to have relative knowledge about musical history, composing skills, and cultural background. In the class, professors should help students to analyze the musical works, then choose the suitable method to perform them. For some bigger pieces, professors should analyze the harmony and musical form. Besides, there are special methods to deal with some special works, which are based on the cultural background of the work. Therefore, professors must have a good command of those abilities before they begin to teach.

### **2.4 The Ability of the Student**

Students are the main body in class, so they need some abilities to match the course. Before university, some students have received relative training, so they can adapt to the course easily. However, if some students do not have enough training before university, then they may have trouble catching the course.

From the ability to hear, students should have the ability to recognize the single tone, interval, and chord. After the short-time training during senior high school, they can record the simple rhythm and melody. Besides, they are capable of charging the tonality by hearing the melody. All of these abilities ensure that they can accept more difficult training during university.

In addition, students should have the basic ability of sight-singing to accept higher training during university. Before university, they accepted the relative training in sight-singing, so they can perform those fundamental rhythms, melody, and chords. Only by having these abilities, can they continue to practice multi-voice sight-singing. We

all know that multi-voice sight-singing also occupies a significant part in professional solfeggio teaching.

Students also should pay attention to their ability of analysis, and they should acquire the necessary knowledge about fundamental music theory before university. Sometimes, professors arrange many assignments for students that students need the relative knowledge to analyze the tonality, the harmony, and the musical form. Meanwhile, these trainings are prepared for the coming courses about composing.

### 3 Solfeggio's Education in a Social Institution

Students of different ages, social institutions, or personal musical schools choose different methods and materials to teach solfeggio. They focus on different aspects of teaching knowledge, including entertainment, hobby, and common knowledge on solfeggio. Therefore, this study chooses three social institutions to show the solfeggio education in society, institution M, institution J, and institution S.

#### 3.1 Teaching Material

After this study touched with many local institutions, this study find an interesting phenomenon that they often choose one book including sight-singing, hearing training, and musical theory. However, due to their different focuses, they may choose different materials. Therefore, this study choose three books used widely in the city to discuss.

Institution M mainly uses the *Box of Musical Story* as its main material [5]. This is a series of books from Taiwan. This course includes the Orff teaching method, Kodaly teaching method, and Dalcroze teaching method. Through those interesting stories, children become interested in simple musical knowledge hidden in stories and pictures. At the same time, children can feel musical elements through simple dancing and beat Orff instruments. Besides, they can use the knowledge acquired to compose a simple melody, which can cultivate their creative thinking.

Institution J takes *Practical Sight-singing Training* as the tool to teach children [6]. This book is written by Huang Ying who is a professor working at Ji Lin university of arts. This book includes a little entertainment and the paper is not colorful. There is different knowledge in different chapters, and every chapter includes sight-singing, musical theory, and rhythm practicing. It combines hearing training, sight-singing, and musical theory, but it put more importance on sight-singing and hearing training.

Institution S does not have its main material for solfeggio. This kind of musical institution mainly teaches piano and other instruments. Therefore, they are likely to use the theoretical parts in their piano books to teach solfeggio. They mainly use the *Piano Adventure* and *Bastien Piano Basics* [7, 8]. Both of them include theoretical parts, but their function is mainly to help the learning of piano. These books pay more attention to sight-singing and musical theory.

#### 3.2 The Ability of a Teacher

The teachers working in social institutions do not have to possess the most professional knowledge about solfeggio, but they should be familiar with the teaching method that is

suitable for their students. Besides, they should be familiar with the group whom they teach.

There is no request for the hearing ability of these teachers, but they should have the ability to recognize a wrong voice from many voices. When they teach in front of many children, they can correct those wrong voices and guide children. With the help of the piano, they do not have to possess the absolute pitch, but if they have the ability, it will be better for their teaching activities. In institution J, they have the solfeggio class including 6 individuals at least, so they should have the ability to recognize the wrong voice from many voices and give the right guide.

When it comes to the ability of sight-singing, teachers can sing simple melodies, because sight-singing for children is not so complicated. Meanwhile, they should have the ability to play piano when they are singing or they should have the ability to accompany children because most children do not have an exact sense of pitch. Under this situation, they need help from teachers, and the accompanying is the best choice for them. In situation S, many children also learn piano here, so they not only get the training of sight-singing but also get the training to accompany the piano when they are singing.

It is also necessary to talk about the ability to analyze among teachers. In social institutions, teachers are capable to divide the musical works into several parts according to the musical theory. Sometimes, they need to arrange musical activities for children. If the musical work cannot satisfy their needs, they should recreate the melody to rehearse the simple chorus and the simple ensemble. Therefore, they should have the ability to analyze the musical works, then recreate the music with their musical theory. Especially, in institution M, teachers and children often create a new melody in class, and teachers often arrange the Orff ensemble for children.

### 3.3 The Ability of the Student

It is common thinking that children of different ages should attend different courses because they have different ways of thinking and ability of learning. If children choose a level that is not suitable for them, they will not acquire the knowledge they need or they will not accept the difficulty of the course.

Children do not need to have hearing skills at the beginning level. At this level, they just need to learn how to listen to and feel musical elements. In institution M, they let children feel the different pitch, different duration, and different rhythms. When children reach the higher level, they need to recognize the exact tone and the exact rhythm, though these are just the single tone and simple rhythms. In institution J and institution S, when children have studied for several months, they can recognize the simple intervals and chords.

The ability of sight-singing also plays an important role in social institutions. In institution M, children just need to sing the rough pitch following the video or the piano. At this level, they pay more attention to the feeling of the music. In institution J and institution S, they need children to sing the exact pitch, even though they do not have to accompany the video or the piano. At this level, they more focus on their knowledge of music.

Due to the age limit, children in the social institution cannot make complicated analyses when they receive the solfeggio training. In institution M, children just are

required to analyze the simple meter and the common tempo, because they do not have enough knowledge about musical theory to analyze other elements in music. In institution J and institution S, children need to recognize tonality, simple harmony, and simple form. At this level, children have learned some fundamental theories about music, so they can make a further analyses during learning musical works.

#### **4 Analysis and Comparison**

According to these descriptions above, we can know that there exist many differences between universities and social institutions, including the teaching materials, the ability of teachers, and the ability of students. Therefore, we can analyze this phenomenon through these three aspects.

For the hearing training, the students in university accept more professional training and knowledge, because they need to use these skills and knowledge to find a job. Whether they want to be a teacher, an artist, or a composer. These are necessary for them if they want to develop a musical career. On the contrary, the children in a social institution, accept easier training, because they just want to cultivate a hobby or just want to get basic music knowledge. Therefore, they do not have to spend a lot of time and energy learning professional solfeggio, and the present training is enough for them whatever they want to be in the future.

For the sight-singing training, the students in university need to learn more professional training to accept more difficult theory courses in university, because their major is music and music could be their business in their whole life. Children in a social institution, do not need to accept difficult training and knowledge. For one thing, they do not have enough logical thinking to understand that complicated knowledge. For another, it is a little bit difficult for them to find professional teachers who have similar knowledge and skills to professors in the university.

For the analysis training, university students should analyze all musical elements in works, including musical form, harmony, and musical history. Before university, they already have learned relative knowledge. Besides, during university, they accept more professional courses, so they are capable of analyzing further. However, the students in a social institution, do not have enough knowledge to make an analysis deeply. They just can analyze some simple elements in music. At this level, they mainly cultivate an interest in music and learn fundamental knowledge.

#### **5 Problems and Suggestions**

Admittedly, there are different problems between the university and social institutions. Some people think the solfeggio education in university is so boring that students do not like to attend it. Other people believe that the solfeggio education in the social institution cannot satisfy their needs for professional development in the future.

From this perspective, professors in universities can exert some interesting methods into their classes. Nowadays, many universities begin to use Orff and Kodaly in their solfeggio classes and get better feedback from students. Therefore, this study does believe that professors can put some entertainment elements into their classes, which will make students more interested in solfeggio.

## 6 Conclusion

Social institutions can improve their training for children. On the one hand, they can enhance the ability of teachers, which gives more opportunities to teach students at different levels. On the other hand, they can divide children into different classes. For example, some children learn the instruments that use staff notation. In this situation, they are more likely to use absolute pitch. Some students learn Chinese instruments that use numbered notation. This kind of student is more likely to use relative pitch. Therefore, they need to adjust the teaching method according to the practical situation of students.

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