

A Review of Research on the Cultivation Models of Senior High School Music Students

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Abstract: With the growing popularity of aesthetic education and increasing attention to art college entrance examinations, the cultivation of senior high school music students has attracted considerable academic interest. This paper systematically reviews existing literature from four dimensions: class management, curriculum and cultivation models, evaluation and progression mechanisms, and articulation and selection between primary and secondary schools. Overall, most existing studies remain at the level of empirical strategy summaries, while differentiated research on different grade levels, professional directions, and school types remains relatively weak. Furthermore, how to translate macrolevel cultivation concepts into concrete and operable practical plans requires further exploration.

Keywords: Senior High School Music Students; Class Management; Cultivation Models; Evaluation Mechanisms.

1. Introduction

With socioeconomic development and the continuous expansion of aesthetic education, the popularity of applying to music-related majors in colleges and universities has been rising steadily. Consequently, art college entrance examinations have attracted increasing attention from parents and the wider society. Against the dual policy background of the new college entrance examination reform and the implementation of new curriculum standards, senior high school music students are now facing new demands that emphasize both professional competence and cultural literacy, as well as the comprehensive development of core competencies. However, several practical problems persist in current cultivation models. First, the allocation of class hours between cultural and professional courses is often inappropriate, and some schools have relatively weakened their cultural teaching, resulting in students' insufficient investment in cultural learning. Second, cultivation paths are highly homogenized, with excessive emphasis on skill training at the expense of aesthetic perception and innovative thinking, which is detrimental to students' long-term development. Third, the articulation mechanism between high schools and universities remains ineffective, making it difficult to meet the diversified talent selection needs of art education, and many students experience adjustment difficulties after entering college. Therefore, exploring effective strategies to optimize the cultivation pathways for senior high school music students and promoting scientific articulation with college music education hold significant theoretical and practical value for the sustainable development of music talents.

Existing research on the cultivation process of senior high school music students focuses on the following four aspects: first, the management of high school music classes; second, the design of teaching curricula and cultivation models; third, the evaluation and progression mechanisms for art students; and fourth, the articulation, selection, and cultivation models between primary and secondary schools. Each of these four aspects is reviewed and discussed in turn.

2. Management of Senior High School Music Classes

Senior high school music classes typically consist of students who have chosen music as their major. These students are required to complete cultural courses at the same intensity as ordinary high school students while also fulfilling the demands of professional training. This means they must invest more time and energy than their peers and therefore face greater academic pressure. In practice, the tendency to "emphasize profession over culture" is common among this group. This tendency leads many music students to lack motivation in cultural learning and to experience imbalances in time and energy allocation, with some students even developing fear and resistance toward cultural courses. Over time, this imbalance between cultural and professional development not only affects students' comprehensive competence but also poses potential risks to their future performance in art college entrance examinations.

At the level of class organization and management, class grouping is an important factor affecting the coordination between cultural and professional courses. In current school practice, there are two main ways to group music students. The first is centralized grouping, in which all music students are placed in the same class. This approach facilitates unified professional management and coordination of training time, allowing teachers to tailor their teaching to the characteristics of these students. However, its disadvantage is also clear: the cultural learning atmosphere in such classes is often weaker than that in ordinary classes, as students tend to develop a group mentality that "everyone here prioritizes professional training." The second approach is mixed grouping, in which music students are dispersed into ordinary classes. This approach helps create a better environment for cultural learning, as music students can be motivated by their regular peers. However, it creates difficulties for professional teaching, as students are scattered across different classes, making unified instruction hard to arrange. Thus, both grouping methods have limitations, and deciding how to choose or optimize them according to the specific context of

each school remains a practical challenge in class management.

Researchers have explored the management difficulties of such special classes from various perspectives. At the level of problem diagnosis, Tang Caiqin (2019)[1] pointed out that current high school music classes suffer from inadequate management mechanisms, unreasonable teacher allocation, and insufficient satisfaction of students' individual development needs. These issues make the management of music students even more complex. At the level of management strategies, Li Jia (2018)[2] proposed, from the perspective of management models at the secondary level, the establishment of a flexible management system that accommodates both professional training and cultural learning. The core of such a system is to ensure both the intensity and continuity of professional training while not neglecting the basic requirements of cultural learning. From a macro policy perspective, the enrollment policy for art students has been canceled to prevent the instrumentalization of aesthetic education. How to reform the existing evaluation system to genuinely reflect students' artistic competence remains a challenge to be solved (Wu Jian, 2020)[3]. This policy change has had a profound impact on the cultivation models for high school music students, forcing schools to reconsider the relationship between professional training and cultural learning.

Based on the above literature review, existing studies have preliminarily explored the management issues of high school music classes. However, most remain at the level of empirical strategy summaries, and differentiated research on class management for different grades and different professional levels remains relatively weak. It should be noted that class management is only one part of the cultivation process. To truly address the imbalance between cultural and professional development, it is necessary to focus on more fundamental aspects: how the teaching curriculum should be designed and how cultivation models should be constructed.

3. Teaching Curriculum and Cultivation Models

How the teaching curriculum should be designed and how cultivation models should be constructed are another key link in solving the problem of "emphasizing profession over culture" among music students. With the continuous advancement of the new curriculum reform and the new college entrance examination reform, traditional lecture-based cultural teaching has become increasingly ill-suited to the learning characteristics of music students. Music students typically possess strong abilities in image-based thinking and artistic perception but are relatively slower in acquiring abstract theoretical knowledge. Therefore, how to construct a cultivation system that integrates cultural and professional education has become a key focus of academic attention.

In terms of curriculum articulation, the coordination problem between cultural and professional courses has long existed. As mentioned earlier, music students need to complete cultural courses at the same intensity as ordinary high school students while also investing significant time in professional training, creating a natural tension in the allocation of class hours between the two types of courses. However, it should be recognized that the allocation of class hours is only a surface issue; the deeper problem lies in the decoupling of curriculum content. At present, cultural

teaching mostly follows the content and methods of ordinary high school education, lacking meaningful connections to students' professional practice. For example, the appreciation of ancient poetry in Chinese language classes is rarely linked to lyric writing or the interpretation of musical works, and history classes rarely touch upon the historical development of music. Professional teaching, on the other hand, focuses heavily on skill training, such as vocal techniques or instrumental performance, and rarely connects to the knowledge learned in cultural courses. This state of disconnection makes it difficult for students to establish meaningful links between the two domains, leading to the perception that "cultural learning is useless" and consequently reducing their learning motivation. Lin Zhigang and Chen Shanmei (2018)[4], in their discussion of the cultivation and management of high school music students, also noted that the coordination problem between cultural and professional courses is a longstanding difficulty in practice. Therefore, how to enhance the intrinsic connection between cultural and professional courses while maintaining the integrity of each knowledge system is a core issue that urgently needs to be addressed in curriculum design.

In terms of cultivation models, researchers in recent years have generally recognized the drawbacks of "emphasizing profession over culture" and have begun advocating for cultivation concepts that value both cultural learning and professional training. Liu Fengping (2019)[5], in constructing a new model for the cultivation and selection of high school music students, proposed that attention should be paid to cultural education, that class hours for cultural courses should be appropriately increased, and that regular examinations should be used to strengthen students' awareness of cultural learning. This approach addresses practical needs to some extent, but its focus remains on increasing class hours rather than integrating content. However, the implementation of this concept still faces many difficulties. For example, the idea of "dual-track integration of culture and profession" is often simply understood as increasing class hours for cultural courses rather than achieving organic integration in curriculum content. Furthermore, students from different professional directions—such as vocal music, instrumental music, and music theory—often receive identical cultivation plans, failing to reflect the differences between their respective needs. Vocal students need more time for vocal training, instrumental students require extensive practice time, and theory students need more time for theoretical study, yet these differences are rarely taken into account in current cultivation models. From the perspective of learning motivation, when students perceive that cultural learning is only weakly related to their professional development, their level of engagement tends to decline significantly. This suggests that simple adjustments to class hours or conceptual advocacy are insufficient to truly solve the problem. The reform of cultivation models needs to be further implemented in areas such as curriculum content design and differentiated teaching plans.

In summary, existing research has formed a preliminary consensus on teaching curriculum and cultivation models, namely shifting from a focus on professional training to an equal emphasis on cultural learning and professional training. However, at the specific level of implementation, how to achieve organic articulation between cultural and professional courses from the perspective of curriculum content, and how to design differentiated cultivation plans for different

professional directions, remain issues that require further exploration. Future research needs to pay more attention to the design of curriculum content and the innovation of teaching methods, rather than merely adjusting class hours.

4. Evaluation and Progression Mechanisms for Art Students

Beyond curriculum design and cultivation models, evaluation and progression mechanisms are also indispensable components of the cultivation system. Evaluation mechanisms affect not only students' learning motivation and direction but also the actual effectiveness of cultivation models. With the continuous advancement of the new college entrance examination reform, the weight of cultural course scores in art student enrollment has been steadily increasing, which undoubtedly poses new requirements for the evaluation system for music students.

In terms of evaluation mechanisms, the main problem in current practice is the singularity of evaluation criteria. Existing evaluation systems tend to overemphasize professional performance—such as vocal examinations, instrumental examinations, and music theory tests—while relatively neglecting the comprehensive consideration of cultural foundations and learning processes. This singular evaluation orientation can easily lead students to form the mistaken belief that "good professional skills alone will get me into a good college," thereby further exacerbating the tendency to "emphasize profession over culture." In response to this problem, some researchers have proposed that attention should be paid to cultural education, that class hours for cultural courses should be appropriately increased, and that regular examinations should be used to strengthen students' awareness of cultural learning (Liu Fengping, 2019). This approach points to the importance of cultural course evaluation, but it must be acknowledged that this approach has not yet formed a systematic evaluation system, and further research is still needed on specific operational aspects. For example, what weight should cultural course scores carry in comprehensive evaluation, and how should the relationship between professional scores and cultural scores be balanced? These questions remain unanswered.

In terms of progression mechanisms, the reform of the art student enrollment examination has set higher requirements for the cultural course scores of music students, which in turn requires schools to strengthen the articulation and implementation of cultural courses in the cultivation process. Cheng Qiangzhou (2024)[6], in the context of the new college entrance examination, pointed out that the reform of the art student enrollment examination urges schools to strengthen the articulation and implementation of cultural courses in the cultivation process. Specifically, under the new college entrance examination, the minimum required cultural scores for art enrollment have been rising continuously, with some key institutions even requiring music students to meet the standard undergraduate admission score. However, from the current situation, some schools' cultivation models still remain at the rough stage of "professional intensive training plus cultural accompaniment"—that is, focusing mainly on professional training during regular semesters while offering cultural courses only symbolically, and only engaging in cultural cramming in the final year of high school. This model lacks systematic planning aligned with progression requirements and often results in students failing their cultural

examinations. At the same time, students also have certain cognitive deviations regarding their progression goals and self-positioning (Wang Shuo, 2021)[7]. Many students lack an objective understanding of their own professional and cultural levels; some are overconfident, while others are overly anxious. This requires schools to strengthen guidance and planning in the cultivation process to help students establish realistic progression goals. The existence of these problems indicates that the improvement of evaluation and progression mechanisms cannot rely solely on adjustments to external policies; rather, schools need to establish corresponding supporting measures within their internal cultivation systems, including the development of scientific evaluation standards, strengthened progression guidance, and assistance in helping students position themselves appropriately.

In summary, existing research has preliminarily recognized the importance of cultural course evaluation in terms of evaluation and progression mechanisms. However, at the specific implementation level, how to establish a scientific evaluation indicator system and how to effectively feed evaluation results back into the cultivation process remain issues that require further exploration. Future research needs to pay more attention to the detailed design of evaluation mechanisms and the interactive relationship between evaluation and cultivation.

5. Articulation and Selection Models between Primary and Secondary Schools

In the overall cultivation chain of music students, articulation and selection between primary and secondary schools is a key link. The importance of this link lies in its direct impact on whether students can successfully adapt to specialized training requirements after entering high school. Specifically, the transition from primary to junior secondary school focuses on artistic enlightenment and basic training, while the transition from junior to senior secondary school involves the standardization of selection criteria and processes. Existing research has conducted preliminary explorations in this area.

Regarding the primary to junior secondary school stage, the focus of artistic enlightenment and basic training is on stimulating early interest and cultivating basic abilities. Students at this stage are young, highly malleable, but easily distracted. Therefore, cultivation should focus on stimulating musical interest, developing basic rhythm and pitch awareness, and establishing proper learning habits. Based on practical experience and existing research, the cultivation of music students should be systematically planned from the primary school stage onward to avoid "lastminute cramming" approaches—that is, starting intensive preparation only when junior high school is about to end. At the same time, attention should be paid to the early formation of learning habits and the overall classroom atmosphere. A positive classroom atmosphere can stimulate students' learning enthusiasm and foster healthy competition. However, in terms of curriculum articulation and standardization of teaching standards across different educational stages, specific operational plans are still lacking at present. For example, there are currently no clear standards for how music curricula should be articulated in content and difficulty between primary and junior secondary schools.

Regarding the junior to senior secondary school stage, the

standardization of selection criteria and processes is the core of articulation work. The main task at this stage is to select, from among the many students with musical talents, those who are suitable for further study in senior high school music classes. The main problem in current practice is the singularity of the selection mechanism, which overly emphasizes professional performance while relatively neglecting cultural foundations, leading to adjustment difficulties for some students after entering senior high school. For example, some students have excellent professional performance but weak cultural foundations, and after entering high school, they struggle to keep up with the pace of cultural course instruction. At the same time, students' perceptions of selection criteria also vary, and many students and parents are unclear about the specific requirements and processes of selection. This necessitates strengthened articulation guidance from the junior to senior secondary school stage, including the provision of admission information sessions and preselection counseling. The above problems indicate that the improvement of articulation and selection mechanisms requires further exploration in areas such as the development of quantitative indicators for selection criteria and the formulation of specific plans for crossstage curriculum articulation. For instance, how to establish scientific and reasonable selection criteria, and how to balance professional potential and cultural literacy in the selection process—these issues require indepth study.

In summary, existing research has preliminarily addressed the issue of articulation and selection models between primary and secondary schools, but most studies still remain at the level of empirical summaries. Regarding specific operational procedures for articulation across different educational stages, quantitative indicators for selection criteria, and specific plans for crossstage curriculum articulation, research is still relatively weak and requires further investigation. Future research needs to pay more attention to the detailed design of articulation mechanisms and how to implement these designs in practice.

6. Conclusion

This paper has systematically reviewed research on the cultivation of senior high school music students from four dimensions: class management, teaching curriculum and cultivation models, evaluation and progression mechanisms, and articulation and selection between primary and secondary schools.

Existing research has formed a preliminary consensus on cultivation concepts, namely shifting from the traditional "emphasize profession over culture" approach to an equal emphasis on cultural learning and professional training, and

has proposed specific suggestions such as "dualtrack integration of culture and profession" and diversified evaluation. However, overall, most existing studies remain at the level of empirical strategy summaries, and theoretical depth needs to be strengthened. Furthermore, the content of existing research is highly homogenized, and differentiated research on different school types and different professional directions remains relatively weak. In addition, the path from cultivation concepts to practical implementation is still unclear, and operable plans are still lacking in specific areas such as curriculum content articulation and the quantification of evaluation indicators.

Future research can focus on the following three areas. First, strengthen empirical research through methods such as surveys, interviews, and case studies to obtain more reliable data to support the optimization of cultivation models. Second, strengthen differentiated research by focusing on the specific needs of different school types, different professional directions, and different grade levels, and exploring differentiated cultivation plans. Third, focus on practical implementation research by refining cultivation concepts into specific curriculum designs, teaching strategies, and evaluation indicators, and developing replicable and scalable operational models, thereby promoting the cultivation of senior high school music students from empirical summarization toward systematic construction.

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