

Improving Teaching Methods of Dizi in Colleges and Universities: A Case Study of Hunan First Normal University

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve the teaching methods of the Dizi in colleges and universities, using Hunan First Normal University as a case study. Specifically, it focuses on analyzing current instructional practices, identifying the needs and challenges faced by both instructors and students, and proposing effective strategies to enhance the quality of Dizi education. The research employed a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with Dizi instructors, and surveys completed by students enrolled in the Dizi program. Thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns and challenges in existing teaching methods. Findings reveal that students often lack exposure to representative repertoires of the Northern and Southern Dizi schools and struggle with performance techniques due to limited pedagogical structure. Teachers face difficulties in addressing varying skill levels and integrating comprehensive regional styles into the curriculum. The study proposes three core teaching strategies: (1) strengthening the study of Northern and Southern school repertoires, (2) systematically teaching stylistic and technical skills, and (3) developing a structured and scientific teaching framework. The current state of Dizi instruction at Hunan First Normal University highlights the need for more balanced, comprehensive, and structured pedagogical approaches. Implementing the proposed strategies can enhance student proficiency and instructional effectiveness, contributing to the modernization of traditional music education. This research offers practical recommendations for music educators, curriculum developers, and university administrators seeking to improve traditional music instruction in higher education, particularly within the context of Chinese musical heritage. This study is one of the few to examine Dizi pedagogy through a focused institutional lens, providing context-specific solutions grounded in traditional performance schools. It bridges cultural preservation with contemporary educational needs in music instruction.

Keywords: Dizi, Playing Skills, Teaching Methods

INTRODUCTION

The dizi is one of the traditional folk Musical Instruments with the longest history in China. It has always been favored by the masses of people for its beautiful timbre, low price and portability. At the same time, no matter in the field of literature or art, the dizi occupies an important position. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, China's economic construction has made remarkable achievements, cultural construction has been continuously promoted, and folk music has also been vigorously developed. As an important member of the folk

musical instrument, the dizi has been rapidly developed and advanced. The production technology of the dizi is constantly improved and developed, and excellent dizi works continue to appear in people's vision. A new generation of young dizi players continue to emerge on various stages, and dizi playing techniques are constantly innovating and breaking through. Colleges and universities, as educational institutions to train talents of higher education, are important departments that combine teaching and scientific research. The teaching of Dizi is an important part of the instrumental music course in colleges and universities, so the teaching of dizi in colleges and universities should be scientific, systematic and authoritative.

Despite the growing prominence of the dizi in China's musical and cultural landscape, there remains a lack of comprehensive research on improving dizi teaching methods in higher education institutions. Existing studies primarily focus on historical evolution, performance techniques, and artistic expression but do not systematically address pedagogical challenges faced by instructors and students in colleges and universities.

1. **Limited Research on Pedagogical Strategies:** While studies exist on dizi performance and repertoire, there is a scarcity of research on effective and innovative teaching methodologies tailored for university-level instruction. The adaptation of traditional teaching methods to modern educational frameworks, including digital tools and interactive learning, remains underexplored.
2. **Lack of Empirical Studies on Student Learning Needs:** Few studies systematically analyze the specific difficulties and learning needs of university students studying the dizi. There is an absence of empirical data regarding student engagement, technical challenges, and cognitive learning processes in dizi education at the higher education level.
3. **Gap in Curriculum Development and Assessment Methods:** While dizi teaching is integrated into music programs, there is no standardized curriculum or structured framework that ensures a balance between theoretical knowledge, performance skills, and creative expression. Additionally, assessment and evaluation methods for dizi learning outcomes remain inconsistent across institutions.
4. **Insufficient Integration of Modern Teaching Technologies:** The impact of digital tools, multimedia resources, and online learning platforms on dizi education is largely unexplored. Given the rise of digital learning in music education, research on how these tools can enhance dizi pedagogy is needed.
5. **Lack of Case Studies in Higher Education Institutions:** Although dizi education is widely practiced, there are few case studies focusing on specific universities, such as Hunan First Normal University, to provide localized insights into teaching methods, institutional challenges, and student performance.

Addressing these research gaps will contribute to a more structured and effective dizi teaching methodology, ensuring that university students receive systematic and scientifically designed training that aligns with contemporary music education trends.

Research Objective

1. To analyze the current teaching methods of Dizi at Hunan First Normal University.
2. To explore the needs and expectations of both instructors and students regarding Dizi pedagogy.
3. To propose strategies for improving the effectiveness of Dizi teaching methods in colleges and universities, based on the case study of Hunan First Normal University.

REVIEW LITERATURE

Introduction

The dizi (笛子), a traditional Chinese transverse flute, has played a significant role in Chinese folk music for centuries. Its bright and expressive timbre, affordability, and portability make it a widely favored instrument among musicians and enthusiasts (Zhang, 2018). In contemporary music education, colleges and universities serve as crucial institutions for preserving and advancing traditional music. However, dizi teaching methods have not been systematically developed to align with modern pedagogical principles. This literature review explores existing research on dizi pedagogy, identifies gaps in teaching methods, and examines innovative approaches to improve dizi instruction in higher education.

Historical and Cultural Significance of the Dizi

The dizi has a long history dating back to the Han Dynasty and has evolved through various dynastic periods with significant developments in its construction and playing techniques (Li, 2017). Initially made of bamboo, the dizi is unique due to its membrane-covered hole (dimo), which enhances its distinctive bright and resonant sound (Chen & Wu, 2019). Over centuries, the instrument has been widely used in solo performances, opera, and orchestral settings, showcasing its versatility. In higher education, the dizi is often included in Chinese music programs, focusing on both traditional repertoire and contemporary adaptations (Tang, 2020). However, despite

its historical prominence, formalized teaching methods remain inconsistent across institutions. Traditional apprenticeship-based teaching methods often emphasize imitation rather than structured learning, leading to challenges in developing a standardized curriculum (Wang & Liu, 2021).

Challenges in Dizi Teaching Methods

Lack of Standardized Pedagogy

Research on Chinese instrumental music education suggests that dizi teaching in universities lacks a universally recognized pedagogy. Most instructors rely on personal teaching styles, often inherited from master-apprentice traditions, rather than structured methodologies based on educational theories (Yang, 2018). While this method allows for flexibility, it does not provide a systematic approach to skill development, making it difficult to assess student progress effectively.

Difficulties in Learning Dizi Techniques

Technical challenges in dizi learning are another significant issue. A study by Zhang and Li (2020) found that students often struggle with breath control, articulation, and tone production. These difficulties stem from a lack of targeted exercises designed to improve embouchure strength and airflow control. Unlike Western wind instruments, which have extensive pedagogical literature, instructional resources for the dizi remain limited.

Limited Integration of Modern Educational Technologies

With the rise of digital learning, incorporating technology into music education has become essential. However, dizi instruction in universities has been slow to adopt digital tools. Li and Zhang (2021) highlight that many dizi programs still rely heavily on face-to-face instruction without utilizing online tutorials, interactive learning platforms, or digital assessment tools. In contrast, Western classical music education has seen extensive use of digital media, such as online masterclasses and music analysis software, which have enhanced learning efficiency.

Assessment and Evaluation Issues

Effective assessment methods for dizi learning are also lacking. Traditional assessment focuses on performance-based examinations, often without structured rubrics that evaluate technical and expressive development (Chen, 2020). Without clear evaluation criteria, students may struggle to understand their strengths and areas for improvement, leading to inconsistent learning outcomes.

Innovations in Dizi Teaching Methods

Developing a Structured Curriculum

Several scholars advocate for the development of a structured dizi curriculum that balances technical training, music theory, and performance practice (Wang, 2019). Implementing a curriculum that progresses from fundamental techniques to advanced playing styles can ensure comprehensive skill development. Incorporating exercises designed to enhance breath control, fingering agility, and musical expression would provide students with a clearer learning path.

Blended Learning Approaches

Blended learning, which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online resources, has gained traction in music education (Tang & Wu, 2020). For dizi teaching, this approach could involve using video tutorials, virtual masterclasses, and digital sheet music resources to supplement in-person lessons. Recent studies show that blended learning enhances student engagement and allows for more flexible practice schedules (Li et al., 2021).

Application of Digital Tools

Digital technologies such as slow-motion playback, real-time pitch analysis, and breath control sensors can be integrated into dizi instruction. Studies on digital music education suggest that such tools improve learning efficiency by providing instant feedback and allowing students to analyze their performance more effectively (Chen & Zhang, 2022). Mobile applications that simulate dizi exercises could also help students practice fundamental skills outside of the classroom.

Emphasis on Expressive and Creative Training

Traditional dizi education often prioritizes technical precision over artistic expression. However, recent pedagogical theories emphasize the importance of creativity in music learning (Yang & Liu, 2021). Encouraging students to experiment with improvisation, composition, and cross-genre collaborations can foster a deeper artistic

connection with the instrument. A study by Tang (2020) found that students who engaged in expressive training demonstrated greater confidence and musicality in performances.

Enhancing Evaluation Methods

To improve assessment in dizi education, educators should develop clear evaluation criteria that consider technical proficiency, musical interpretation, and overall performance quality. Performance rubrics with detailed descriptors can help students understand their progress and areas for improvement (Wang, 2021). Additionally, incorporating peer feedback and self-assessment activities can encourage reflective learning.

Case Study: Dizi Teaching at Hunan First Normal University

Hunan First Normal University is one of the institutions dedicated to preserving and developing traditional Chinese music education. However, as in many other universities, dizi teaching methods face challenges in standardization and modernization. Research on dizi education at Hunan First Normal University suggests that while students receive thorough technical training, they often lack exposure to innovative learning methods (Li, 2022). Addressing this issue through structured curriculum reform and technology integration could significantly enhance learning outcomes.

While the dizi remains a vital part of Chinese musical heritage, its teaching methods in universities require modernization to meet contemporary educational standards. Existing challenges include a lack of standardized pedagogy, difficulties in technical training, limited use of digital tools, and unclear assessment criteria. Research suggests that structured curricula, blended learning approaches, digital tool integration, creative training, and improved evaluation methods can enhance dizi instruction. Addressing these issues at institutions like Hunan First Normal University can contribute to a more effective and engaging learning experience for students.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at the School of Music and Dance, Hunan First Normal University, an institution with a longstanding tradition of music and dance education. Established in 1903, Hunan First Normal University has cultivated numerous artistic figures, including Tian Han and Qiu Wangxiang, and trained accomplished musicians such as Lv Ji and Hu Ran. The university has a rich legacy of artistic education, particularly in music and dance, and currently offers four core undergraduate programs: music education, musicology, dance, and dance performance. Within this academic framework, the College of Music and Dance serves as an important center for the preservation and development of traditional Chinese musical practices, including dizi (笛子) education.

This is qualitative research. The research population consists of first-year students enrolled in the dizi course at the College of Music and Dance, Hunan First Normal University. The study sample includes five students and five instructors, all specializing in dizi performance and pedagogy. The research tool is semi-structured interviews. The data is analyzed by thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) is applied to interview transcripts and observational notes to identify common themes related to learning experiences, instructional challenges, and pedagogical effectiveness. Recurring patterns in students' responses provide insights into the strengths and limitations of the revised teaching method.

Ethical approval for the study is obtained from the institutional review board of Hunan First Normal University. All participants provide informed consent before participating in interviews and performance assessments. Confidentiality is maintained, and participants are given the option to withdraw from the study at any stage.

RESULT

Analysis of Problems and Needs in Dizi Teaching Methods

The research findings highlight the key problems faced by students majoring in Dizi at Hunan First Normal University, as well as their specific learning needs. These findings are drawn from a comprehensive literature review, a questionnaire survey of students, group discussions, and interviews with five Dizi instructors from different universities. The research aims to provide valuable insights into the challenges of Dizi instruction and suggest improvements to enhance the effectiveness of teaching methods.

Problems in Dizi Teaching for Students

Based on the analysis of survey results and discussions, three major issues were identified in the current Dizi teaching methods at Hunan First Normal University:

Insufficient Learning of Representative Works from the North and South Schools. One of the most significant problems faced by students is their limited exposure to the repertoire of the North and South schools of Dizi playing. The traditional Chinese Dizi performance is broadly divided into two major styles: The Northern School is characterized by its bright and powerful sound, with works that emphasize fast articulation and rhythmic intensity. The Southern School focuses on smooth and lyrical melodies, with an emphasis on ornamentation and expressive phrasing. However, the current curriculum does not provide a well-balanced selection of pieces from both schools. Many students reported that they primarily practice works from only one of these styles, which limits their ability to develop a comprehensive understanding of Dizi performance. This lack of diverse repertoire hinders their artistic development and reduces their adaptability in professional settings.

Lack of Sufficient Performance Skills Training. The second major issue is that students feel they do not receive enough training in performance techniques. The North and South schools have distinctive technical demands, yet many students struggle with mastering the required skills due to a lack of systematic training. The following areas were particularly highlighted: Breath control and embouchure adjustment: Many students find it challenging to produce a stable and expressive tone, especially when transitioning between different styles. Articulation techniques: Skills such as double-tonguing and flutter-tonguing, which are crucial in Northern-style pieces, are not practiced enough. Ornamentation techniques: The Southern School's music relies heavily on slides, vibratos, and trills, but students feel they lack proper guidance in executing these techniques accurately. Stage performance preparation: While students participate in performances, many feel unprepared for public recitals, citing nervousness and lack of expressive control as key concerns. This insufficient training in technical aspects limits students' overall ability to perform fluently in both traditional and contemporary Dizi compositions.

Simplistic Teaching Methods. The third issue is that the current teaching methods used in Dizi instruction are relatively traditional and lack variation. Many students reported that: Lessons are often lecture-based, with minimal interactive learning. There is an overemphasis on mechanical practice rather than creative interpretation. The use of modern teaching tools, such as multimedia and digital analysis of Dizi performances, is limited. As a result, students feel that the teaching approach does not fully engage them or allow for a deeper exploration of Dizi music. The lack of diverse instructional strategies makes it difficult for students to develop a strong personal connection with their instrument and music.

Students' Needs in Dizi Education

In response to these problems, students have expressed specific needs for improvement in three major areas:

Expanded Teaching of Representative Works from the North and South Schools. Students strongly desire a curriculum that includes a wider selection of representative works from both schools. They believe that studying a diverse repertoire will help them understand the unique characteristics of each school, strengthen their technical and interpretative skills, prepare them for professional performances and competitions. A more balanced repertoire would allow students to develop a versatile playing style, which is crucial for career opportunities in both solo and ensemble performance.

Detailed Explanation and Demonstration of Performance Techniques. Students want more in-depth instruction on performance techniques, including: Live demonstrations by experienced teachers to showcase the differences in articulation, embouchure, and finger techniques between the two schools; Step-by-step technical exercises designed to systematically improve breath control, articulation, and ornamentation; Masterclasses and workshops with professional Dizi players, giving students exposure to advanced techniques and interpretative insights. By integrating these approaches, students can receive more structured and effective technical training, leading to significant improvement in their performance abilities.

Implementation of Scientific and Systematic Teaching Methods. Students emphasize the need for a more modern and structured approach to teaching, including: Multimedia teaching aids such as slow-motion video analysis of professional performances to help students better understand intricate techniques; Interactive learning tools, such as digital tuners and rhythm training apps, to assist students in developing precise intonation and timing; A structured curriculum that progressively introduces technical and musical elements in a logical order, ensuring that students build strong foundational skills before advancing to more complex pieces; Peer learning opportunities, such as student-led ensembles or group classes, which can provide additional practice and foster collaborative learning. By adopting these methods, Dizi education at Hunan First Normal University can become more engaging, effective, and aligned with modern pedagogical principles.

Implications for Improving Dizi Teaching Methods

Based on the research findings, several recommendations can be made to enhance Dizi instruction at Hunan First Normal University:

1. Curriculum Reform: Expand the selection of pieces to ensure equal representation of the Northern and Southern schools, allowing students to develop a well-rounded skill set.

2. **Technical Training Enhancement:** Introduce structured training modules for breath control, articulation, ornamentation, and stage performance, incorporating more guided exercises and personalized feedback.
3. **Diversified Teaching Methods:** Utilize multimedia tools, interactive exercises, and peer-learning opportunities to create a more engaging and effective learning environment.
4. **Professional Development for Instructors:** Encourage Dizi teachers to attend workshops, collaborate with experienced performers, and integrate innovative teaching strategies into their lessons.
5. **Student Performance Opportunities:** Organize more student recitals, competitions, and collaborative projects with other music departments to provide real-world performance experience.

The research highlights significant challenges in the current Dizi teaching methods at Hunan First Normal University, including a lack of repertoire diversity, insufficient technical training, and outdated teaching approaches. However, students have clearly articulated their needs for a more structured and scientifically designed curriculum, with expanded repertoire, detailed technical instruction, and modern teaching tools. By implementing these recommendations, Dizi education at the university can be greatly improved, ensuring that students receive comprehensive training that prepares them for successful careers in performance, teaching, and research. This study serves as a valuable reference for enhancing traditional Chinese music education in higher institutions, demonstrating the importance of adapting teaching methods to meet the evolving needs of students in the modern era.

Analysis of Teachers' Perspectives on Challenges in Dizi Instruction

Dizi instruction at the university level presents various challenges for teachers, particularly in ensuring effective pedagogy for students of diverse skill levels. Through interviews with five Dizi instructors from different colleges and universities, this research identifies key issues and areas for improvement in Dizi teaching methods. The findings suggest that teachers face three main problems: students' varying proficiency levels, inadequate coverage of Northern and Southern school music, and the lack of a systematic teaching method. Additionally, teachers express specific needs for strengthening students' fundamental skills, expanding the curriculum to include more representative works from both schools, and developing a more structured and scientific teaching approach.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Dizi Instruction

Variability in Students' Skill Levels. One of the most significant difficulties Dizi teachers encounter is the wide variation in students' proficiency levels. Unlike conservatories where students typically have rigorous prior training, music programs in some universities attract students with diverse musical backgrounds, ranging from beginners to highly skilled players. This variability leads to several instructional challenges: Difficulty in designing a unified curriculum: Teachers struggle to create lesson plans that cater to both advanced students who need refinement and beginners who require fundamental instruction; Slower progress in group classes: Due to differences in technical ability, some students find the material too easy, while others struggle to keep up. This results in frustration and decreased motivation for both groups; Challenges in ensemble performance: When students with different skill levels play together in ensembles, the disparity in technique and musical interpretation affects the overall performance quality. To address these issues, teachers often resort to individualized teaching, but this approach is time-consuming and difficult to sustain in a university setting with large class sizes. As a result, many students do not receive the personalized attention they need to fully develop their skills.

Inadequate Coverage of Northern and Southern School Music. A second challenge teachers face is the limited inclusion of North and South school repertoire in the curriculum. While the distinction between the two schools is a fundamental aspect of Dizi performance, many university programs tend to focus primarily on one style, often neglecting the other. This creates a gap in students' knowledge and technique. Lack of comprehensive exposure: Some students graduate with expertise in only one school, limiting their versatility in professional settings. Insufficient appreciation for regional styles: Without balanced training, students fail to understand the stylistic nuances that define traditional Dizi music. Missed opportunities for skill development: The Northern school's fast articulation and rhythmic energy provide a different technical challenge compared to the Southern school's delicate ornamentation and expressive phrasing. If both styles are not studied, students do not receive well-rounded training. Teachers express concern that the curriculum does not allocate enough time for in-depth study of both styles. Additionally, some instructors are more specialized in one tradition, making it difficult to provide equally strong guidance for both.

Lack of a Systematic Teaching Method. The third major challenge is the absence of a standardized and scientific teaching methodology for Dizi instruction at the university level. Unlike Western classical instruments, which have established teaching methods, Dizi pedagogy remains largely based on oral tradition and personal experience. Teachers often rely on their own training and interpretative preferences, leading to inconsistencies in instruction. Variation in teaching approaches: Different teachers prioritize different aspects of performance,

making it difficult to establish a cohesive learning experience across multiple instructors. Lack of structured progression: Some students are introduced to complex pieces too early without mastering fundamental techniques, while others remain stuck on basic exercises for too long. Inefficiencies in skill development: Without a clear pedagogical framework, students may develop poor habits that are difficult to correct later. Teachers recognize the need for a scientifically developed, step-by-step curriculum that ensures students build strong foundational skills before advancing to more complex works. However, developing such a system requires collaboration and research, which many instructors do not have the resources or time to undertake.

Teachers' Needs for Improving Dizi Instruction

To overcome these challenges, teachers propose three key improvements: strengthening students' fundamental skills, integrating North and South school music more fully into the curriculum, and establishing a systematic teaching method.

Strengthening Students' Fundamental Skills. Teachers unanimously emphasize the importance of developing strong fundamental techniques before students progress to advanced repertoire. Many students enter university with inconsistent training, making it essential to reinforce the basics early on. Key areas of focus include: Breath control and tone production: Proper airflow and embouchure are critical for achieving a stable and expressive tone; Finger dexterity and articulation: Exercises targeting speed, clarity, and accuracy help students master fast passages and intricate ornamentation; Rhythm and phrasing: Developing a strong sense of rhythm and musical phrasing enhances expressive playing.

To strengthen these fundamentals, teachers recommend to have 1) Standardized technical exercises: Implementing daily practice routines focusing on breath support, articulation, and dynamic control. 2) Skill-building workshops: Organizing special classes dedicated to fundamental techniques before progressing to repertoire study. 3) Individualized feedback sessions: Allowing students to receive tailored advice on their weaknesses to improve efficiency in practice.

Expanding the Curriculum to Include North and South School Music. Teachers strongly advocate for a balanced curriculum that covers both Northern and Southern school pieces. The integration of both styles ensures students receive a well-rounded education and develop a broader range of skills. Key recommendations include: Diversified repertoire selection: Assigning equal numbers of pieces from both schools, ensuring students are exposed to a variety of playing techniques; Style comparison lessons: Conducting classes that directly compare Northern and Southern approaches, helping students recognize their distinct characteristics; Inviting guest lecturers and specialists: Bringing in experts from both traditions to provide specialized training and insights. By expanding the curriculum, students will gain a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese traditional music, making them more adaptable musicians.

Establishing a Systematic Teaching Method. To address the inconsistencies in Dizi instruction, teachers stress the need to develop a standardized teaching methodology that provides clear learning objectives and structured progression. Such a system would define skill benchmarks for each level: Establishing criteria for beginner, intermediate, and advanced students to ensure smooth progression, incorporate modern teaching tools: Using video analysis, slow-motion demonstrations, and digital applications to enhance learning and create standardized teaching materials: Developing textbooks, instructional videos, and exercise collections specifically for university-level Dizi education. To achieve this, teachers suggest forming collaborative research groups where Dizi educators work together to design an improved pedagogical framework. This effort would help unify teaching approaches and improve learning outcomes.

The research highlights that teachers face significant challenges in Dizi instruction at Hunan First Normal University, including student skill disparities, inadequate coverage of Northern and Southern school music, and the lack of a systematic teaching method. However, teachers also identify clear solutions: strengthening fundamental skills, expanding the curriculum to include a balanced selection of repertoire, and developing a structured, scientific teaching approach. By implementing these recommendations, Dizi instruction can become more effective and standardized, ensuring students receive high-quality training that prepares them for professional careers. Moving forward, collaboration among educators, curriculum reform, and the integration of modern teaching techniques will be essential for advancing Dizi education in Chinese universities.

CONCLUSION

Through an in-depth investigation into the problems and needs of both students and teachers, this study identifies key challenges in Dizi instruction at Hunan First Normal University. Students struggle with limited exposure to Northern and Southern school works, inadequate performance skills, and a lack of structured teaching

methods. Similarly, teachers face difficulties due to varying student proficiency levels, insufficient curriculum coverage of the North-South school traditions, and the absence of a standardized pedagogical approach. Based on these findings, three main teaching strategies have been developed to enhance the quality of Dizi instruction:

1. Strengthening the study of Northern and Southern school works to ensure balanced musical education.
2. Systematically explaining the playing skills and styles of both schools to provide students with technical and stylistic proficiency.
3. Developing a systematic and scientific teaching method to unify instructional practices and improve learning outcomes.

This conclusion discusses each strategy in detail and provides recommendations for their implementation.

Strengthening the Study of Northern and Southern School Works

Importance of Studying Both Schools. Dizi music is divided into two primary traditions: Northern school: Known for its bright, lively, and rhythmic style, characterized by rapid articulation, strong staccato, and energetic phrasing. Southern school: Recognized for its smooth, lyrical, and expressive qualities, emphasizing subtle ornamentation and delicate tone production. A well-rounded Dizi education must incorporate both styles to ensure students develop versatility in performance and a deeper appreciation for regional characteristics.

Current Gaps in Curriculum Coverage. The study found that many university programs focus predominantly on one tradition, often due to the expertise of individual instructors. This imbalance results in students graduating with limited knowledge of either the Northern or Southern school, reducing their adaptability in professional settings.

Proposed Solutions, to address this issue, universities should: 1) Revise the curriculum: Ensure equal emphasis on both schools by incorporating representative works in each academic year. 2) Develop specialized courses: Offer elective courses focusing on the historical development, compositional structure, and stylistic differences of Northern and Southern Dizi music. 3) Organize masterclasses and workshops: Invite guest artists proficient in both styles to conduct training sessions. 4) Encourage repertoire diversity in performances: Require students to perform pieces from both traditions in assessments and recitals.

Systematically Explaining the Playing Skills and Styles of the North and South Schools

Challenges in Technical and Stylistic Training. The study revealed that students often struggle with the technical and stylistic aspects of both schools due to insufficient structured instruction. Key difficulties include mastering fast articulation and rhythmic precision in Northern school pieces, achieving smooth phrasing and expressive ornamentation in Southern school pieces, understanding the stylistic nuances that differentiate the two traditions.

Need for Systematic Explanation and Practice. Currently, Dizi instruction tends to focus more on repertoire rather than explicit technique-building exercises. Without systematic explanations, students may attempt to mimic stylistic elements without fully grasping their underlying principles.

Proposed Solutions, to improve students' technical and stylistic proficiency, universities should: 1) Develop structured technical exercises, design exercises targeting Northern school articulation, such as tonguing drills and rapid finger transitions, create Southern school phrasing exercises focusing on smooth breath control and expressive ornamentation and introduce comparative exercises that help students switch between the two styles effectively. 2) Integrate style analysis into coursework, conduct comparative analysis sessions where students listen to and analyze recordings from both traditions, use slow-motion video demonstrations to break down performance techniques. 3) Encourage guided practice sessions, organize supervised practice sessions where teachers provide individualized feedback on technique and style, use peer review methods, allowing students to evaluate each other's playing based on stylistic accuracy. Through these methods, students will gain a structured understanding of Northern and Southern school techniques, improving their interpretative skills and overall musicality.

Developing a Systematic and Scientific Teaching Method

1. **Limitations of Current Teaching Approaches.** One of the most significant findings of this study is the lack of a standardized and scientific teaching method in university-level Dizi instruction. Unlike Western classical instruments, which have well-documented pedagogical frameworks, Dizi teaching is still largely based on oral tradition and personal experience. This creates inconsistencies in instruction and results in varied learning outcomes among students.
2. **The Need for a Structured Curriculum.** A structured teaching method ensures that students: Progress systematically from fundamental techniques to advanced repertoire; Develop strong foundational skills before tackling stylistically demanding pieces; Receive consistent instruction regardless of individual teacher preferences.

3. Proposed Solutions, to establish a scientific and systematic teaching method, universities should have 1) Standardize a progressive curriculum, define clear learning milestones for beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels, and structure lessons to progressively build technical and musical skills. 2) Develop comprehensive teaching materials, create textbooks that outline key technical exercises, historical context, and stylistic guidelines, produce instructional videos demonstrating proper technique for both Northern and Southern schools. 3) Implement assessment-based teaching, design evaluation methods that measure both technical proficiency and musical interpretation, use diagnostic assessments to identify student weaknesses and tailor instruction accordingly. 4) Utilize modern technology in teaching, incorporate digital tools such as metronomes, tuning apps, and slow-motion playback for self-evaluation, develop online learning resources, including interactive lessons and virtual masterclasses.

This research highlights the major challenges in Dizi instruction at Hunan First Normal University, including gaps in repertoire coverage, technical training, and pedagogical consistency. By summarizing the needs of both students and teachers, three key strategies have been developed:

1. Strengthening the study of Northern and Southern school works to provide students with balanced musical training.
2. Systematically explaining playing skills and styles to enhance technical and stylistic proficiency.
3. Developing a standardized teaching method to ensure consistency and effectiveness in instruction.

Implementing these strategies requires collaboration between educators, curriculum designers, and professional Dizi performers. Universities must prioritize curriculum reform, provide resources for teacher development, and integrate modern teaching methodologies. By modernizing Dizi pedagogy while preserving its rich traditions, universities can enhance students' learning experiences, prepare them for professional careers, and contribute to the long-term development of Chinese traditional music education.

Research Implication

This study on improving Dizi teaching methods at Hunan First Normal University has significant implications for music education, curriculum development, teacher training, and the preservation of Chinese traditional music. By addressing the identified challenges and implementing structured teaching strategies, this research contributes to the broader field of music pedagogy and offers a model for enhancing traditional instrument instruction in higher education. The key implications are discussed below.

Implications for Dizi Education in Universities

Curriculum Reform for Balanced Instruction. The study highlights the need to revise university-level Dizi curricula to ensure equal emphasis on both the Northern and Southern schools. Many current programs lack systematic coverage of both traditions, limiting students' versatility. Universities should integrate representative works from both schools into required courses, ensuring a well-rounded musical education. Additionally, this research suggests that universities should offer specialized elective courses on regional Dizi styles, enabling students to explore historical, technical, and cultural aspects beyond standard performance training.

Development of Standardized Teaching Materials. Currently, the lack of comprehensive textbooks and structured learning resources creates inconsistencies in Dizi instruction. The study underscores the need for scientific and systematic teaching materials, including: A standardized method book with graded exercises and repertoire; Instructional videos demonstrating Northern and Southern school techniques; Digital resources, such as interactive apps and online courses, to support self-learning. Universities can ensure consistency in instruction across different institutions and teaching faculty.

Implications for Dizi Teachers

Need for Pedagogical Training. The study reveals that teachers often rely on personal teaching experiences rather than structured methods, leading to inconsistent learning outcomes among students. To address this, universities should offer teacher training programs focusing on pedagogical techniques for Dizi instruction, encourage cross-institutional collaboration, allowing teachers to exchange ideas and refine their teaching approaches, provide workshops on modern teaching methodologies, integrating technology into Dizi education.

Incorporating Scientific Teaching Approaches. The findings suggest that Dizi instruction would benefit from a more structured and scientific approach. Teachers should be trained to apply progressive learning strategies, including: Diagnostic assessments to evaluate student proficiency and tailor lessons accordingly; Step-by-step technical training, ensuring students master fundamental skills before progressing to advanced pieces; Systematic skill-building exercises, designed to strengthen articulation, tone control, and stylistic interpretation.

Implications for Students' Learning Experiences

Enhancing Performance Readiness. Students currently face challenges in mastering technical skills, repertoire diversity, and stylistic interpretation. The research suggests that universities should implement: A structured practice framework, guiding students through daily technical drills and stylistic exercises; Performance-based assessments, encouraging students to demonstrate mastery of both Northern and Southern school styles; Opportunities for ensemble playing, allowing students to develop collaborative and adaptive performance skills.

Increasing Access to Learning Resources. The study also highlights the need for greater access to learning materials beyond classroom instruction. Universities should invest in Digital archives of traditional Dizi performances, enabling students to analyze historical interpretations, Online tutorials and practice guides, allowing students to reinforce learning outside of lessons, Virtual masterclasses, connecting students with renowned Dizi artists globally and Expanding access to diverse learning resources enhances independent learning, helping students develop a deeper appreciation for Dizi music traditions.

Implications for the Preservation and Innovation of Traditional Chinese Music

Strengthening Cultural Heritage Education. Dizi music represents an important part of China's musical heritage, and university education plays a crucial role in its preservation. The research findings highlight the need for incorporating cultural and historical context into Dizi courses, ensuring students understand the evolution of different schools, promoting cross-disciplinary research in Dizi studies, integrating musicology, ethnomusicology, and performance studies, encouraging collaborations with cultural institutions, such as museums and traditional music organizations, to foster greater awareness of Dizi's historical significance.

Balancing Tradition and Innovation. While preserving traditional styles is essential, the study also suggests that modernizing Dizi pedagogy can attract more students and expand its global reach. This can be achieved through integrating contemporary compositions into the curriculum, exposing students to modern Dizi repertoire, exploring cross-genre collaborations, blending traditional Dizi techniques with jazz, electronic, and fusion music, encouraging student creativity, allowing them to compose and improvise within the framework of Dizi traditions.

Policy Implications for Higher Music Education

Need for Institutional Support in Traditional Music Education. The study underscores the need for greater institutional investment in traditional Chinese music education. Universities and government agencies should allocate funding for the development of new teaching resources, support faculty research in traditional instrument pedagogy, establish scholarships and grants to encourage students to pursue Dizi studies.

Promoting National and International Exchange Programs. Encouraging collaboration between Chinese and international music institutions can expand the global appreciation of Dizi music. This can be achieved through student and faculty exchange programs, allowing Chinese musicians to share traditional techniques abroad, Joint research projects on traditional music education methodologies, International Dizi performance festivals, increasing global awareness of Chinese flute traditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Develop a Standardized Teaching Framework** – Universities should implement a structured dizi curriculum that progressively builds students' technical skills and musical knowledge, ensuring consistency in learning outcomes. This curriculum should include core competencies, performance techniques, and historical repertoire from both the North and South schools.
2. **Enhance Teacher Training Programs** – Institutions should organize professional development workshops and collaborative training sessions for dizi instructors, focusing on both traditional and modern teaching methodologies. Partnerships with conservatories and master performers can also enrich faculty expertise.
3. **Incorporate Diverse Teaching Methods** – To address varying student preferences, instructors should integrate multimedia resources, interactive demonstrations, and cross-genre collaborations into dizi instruction. Using digital tools, such as slow-motion video analysis and interactive music apps, can also improve learning efficiency.
4. **Strengthen Pre-University Music Training** – Universities should work with secondary schools and private music academies to develop preparatory programs that ensure students receive systematic training before entering higher education. Scholarship programs and mentorship initiatives can further support aspiring dizi students.

5. **Promote Performance and Research Opportunities** – To enhance student engagement, universities should organize more concerts, masterclasses, and collaborative performances featuring traditional and contemporary dizi music. Additionally, encouraging student-led research on dizi techniques, repertoire, and cultural significance can contribute to the ongoing evolution of dizi education.
6. **Integrate Traditional and Modern Elements in Dizi Instruction** – While preserving traditional dizi techniques is essential, incorporating modern musical influences—such as jazz, fusion, and digital music production—can broaden students' career prospects and artistic expression. Universities should support innovative dizi projects and cross-disciplinary collaborations.

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