

on bel canto learning. Future teaching should focus on the diversity of methods, the complementarity of course formats, and the integration of extracurricular factors to improve teaching quality.

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**PROBLEMS IN MODERN PIANO TEACHING METHODS  
FOR CHILDREN**

Piano education is an important part of aesthetic education for children worldwide. In recent decades, with the rapid development of economy, culture and educational technology, piano learning has become increasingly popular among families. However, behind the prosperous appearance of children's piano education, there exist many deep-seated problems in teaching concepts, teaching methods, curriculum design, teacher training, family participation and educational evaluation. Modern piano teaching for children is often trapped in utilitarianism, overemphasis on technical skills, rigid teaching modes, inappropriate use of digital tools, neglect of individual differences and separation between theory and practice. These problems not only reduce children's interest in music, but also damage their physical and mental health, and deviate from the essential goal of aesthetic education.

Based on pedagogy, psychology of music, child development and modern educational theory, this paper systematically combs the current problems in modern children's piano teaching methods, analyzes their internal causes from social, family, school and individual aspects, and puts forward targeted and operable improvement strategies. This paper holds that children's piano teaching should return to the child-centered education concept, balance skill training and artistic expression, reasonably apply modern educational technology, establish a diversified evaluation system, and build a cooperative education mechanism among schools, teachers and families. Only in this way can children's piano education truly realize the cultivation of musical literacy, emotional perception and creative personality, and promote the all-round development of children.

**The aim** of the study is to identify and systematically analyze the problems in modern piano teaching methods for children (including utilitarianism, overemphasis on technical skills, rigid teaching modes, inappropriate use of digital tools, and neglect of individual differences)

**The main part.** In the context of globalization and rapid popularization of quality-oriented education, art education has been paid unprecedented attention. As one of the most representative forms of instrumental music education, piano education plays an irreplaceable role in cultivating children's sense of music, aesthetic taste, coordination ability, patience, concentration and emotional expression. For a long time, piano learning has been regarded as an important way to improve children's comprehensive quality and expand their artistic vision.

With the improvement of people's living standards, more and more families choose to let their children receive piano education at an early age. The number of piano learners is increasing year by year, and the piano training market is expanding rapidly. At the same time, modern educational technology, multimedia teaching, online courses, intelligent piano and other new tools and modes continue to emerge, which brings new possibilities for children's piano teaching.

However, in the actual teaching process, many problems have become increasingly prominent. A large number of children start learning piano with curiosity, but soon fall into endless practice of etudes and scales; many parents take piano grading certificates as the only goal; many teachers still adopt traditional cramming teaching methods, ignoring children's psychological characteristics and cognitive rules; digital teaching tools are abused or misused, and become a new burden instead of effective assistance. These phenomena make more and more children lose interest in piano, and even produce weariness and resistance. In severe cases, they may cause physical discomfort such as finger strain and myopia, as well as negative emotions such as anxiety and inferiority.

Therefore, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to systematically study the problems existing in modern children's piano teaching methods, explore their deep-seated causes, and put forward scientific and reasonable solutions. On the one hand, this study can enrich the theoretical system of children's piano education and provide reference for the research of music pedagogy. On the other hand, it can guide piano teachers, parents and educational institutions to correct their educational concepts, optimize teaching methods, and make piano learning really become a happy experience for children, so as to promote the healthy and sustainable development of children's piano education.

The theoretical basis of the research relies on an interdisciplinary synthesis of pedagogical, psychological, and musical-performance concepts dedicated to teaching children to play the piano. It integrates classical and contemporary

works by domestic and foreign scholars, focusing on issues of utilitarianism, technicism, and neglect of individuality in teaching.

L.S. Vygotsky, in his works "Thinking and Speech" (1934) and "Psychology of Art" (1925), developed the cultural-historical theory, emphasizing the role of the zone of proximal development in children's musical learning. He demonstrated that through joint activity with a teacher, a child masters musical skills, developing emotional perception and creativity, which is relevant for overcoming the gap between theory and practice in the piano classroom.

J. Dewey, in "Democracy and Education" (1916), substantiated the child-centered approach, where music education is an active process of self-discovery through art. His ideas on balancing skills and artistic expression form the basis for recommendations to abandon "crammed" etudes in favor of creative tasks for children aged 6–12.

N.A. Terentyeva, in the monograph "Methods of Teaching Piano Playing" (2005), systematized the principles of initial training, emphasizing the development of auditory representations and emotional responsiveness. She showed that ignoring psychological characteristics leads to decreased motivation, proposing the integration of games and etudes for harmonious formation of pianistic skills.

L.N. Orlova, in "Issues of Piano Pedagogy" (1974), studied the mental mechanisms of music perception in children, identifying stages from sensory acquaintance with the keyboard to creative interpretation. Her experiments confirmed the need to account for age-related cognitive patterns to avoid physical issues like finger strain and emotional burnout.

E.V. Nazaykina, in the article "Theory of Piano Training" (circa 2010s), emphasized the connection between auditory representations and motor skills, proposing methods of knowledge accumulation through aesthetic experience. She argued that the first lessons shape attitudes toward music for years to come, criticizing the utilitarian focus on certificates.

D.B. Elkonin, in "Psychology of Play" (1978), analyzed the role of play in developing musical coordination and concentration in preschoolers, proving that neglecting the emotional sphere hinders comprehensive development. His model of leading activity is applicable for creating a "musical environment" in family-school partnerships.

E.Yu. Kodiseva, in her dissertation "Methodological Approaches to Teaching Piano Playing" (2020s), generalized the experience of Russian Children's Music Schools (DShI), identifying problems of rigid methods and misuse of digital tools. She proposed a systems approach with data triangulation (surveys, observations), justifying the need for a competency-based model for assessing musical literacy [1].

Ch. Tsytszy, in "Didactic Foundations of Teaching Piano Playing" (2023), systematized foreign experience (schools of K. Fechner, A. Cortot),

demonstrating the effectiveness of problem-oriented learning over technicism. The author highlighted the role of multimedia in balancing theory and practice, minimizing risks of anxiety and myopia in students.

G. Nevinshaya, in "Methods of Teaching Piano" (PDF guide, 2020s), described a stylistic approach, integrating the performance of works from different genres with the development of accompaniment and ensemble playing. She focused on psychological-pedagogical characteristics of preschoolers, proposing exercises and individual repertoire selection for overload prevention.

The theoretical basis forms a child-centered teaching model, where Vygotsky and Dewey provide the philosophical foundation, Terentyeva and Orlova – the methodological, and modern authors (E.Yu. Kodiseva, Ch. Tsytszy) – the empirical. This enables the analysis of problem causes (social, family-related) and the proposal of strategies: from diversified assessment to school-family cooperation.

Children's physical and mental development has obvious stages and individual differences. Before the age of 6, children are in the critical period of sensory development, imagination and interest formation. Their attention span is short, they are curious, like games, stories and interesting things, and are not good at long-term mechanical repetition. During the period of primary school, children's cognitive ability, logical thinking and self-discipline gradually develop, but they still need encouragement, positive feedback and interesting teaching content.

Piano teaching must conform to the laws of children's physical and mental development. If we ignore the characteristics of children's age and psychology, force them to carry out high-intensity skill training, and take adult standards to require children, it will inevitably lead to children's weariness and resistance, and even affect their physical health.

Aesthetic education takes cultivating people's aesthetic feeling, aesthetic taste and creative ability as the core. The essential goal of piano education is not to train every child into a professional pianist, but to enable children to feel beauty, appreciate beauty and express beauty through piano learning, so as to enrich their spiritual world and improve their comprehensive quality.

In modern piano teaching, any method that separates from aesthetic education, only pays attention to skills and ignores feelings, and only pursues speed and progress but not musicality, is a deviation from the essence of education.

Modern education advocates taking students as the main body and teachers as the leaders. Children's piano teaching should establish a child-centered teaching concept, respect children's personality, interests, needs and individual differences, stimulate children's initiative and creativity, and let children take the initiative to explore and experience the beauty of music instead of passively accepting knowledge and skills.

Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory shows that human intelligence includes many aspects such as musical intelligence, linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence,

bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence. Piano learning can help develop children's musical intelligence, coordination ability, concentration and emotional perception. Piano teaching should help children develop diversified intelligences rather than one-sidedly pursue single skill indicators.

The most prominent problem in modern children's piano teaching is overemphasis on technical skills and serious neglect of musical expression.

In many piano classes, teachers take a lot of time to correct hand position, finger strength, touch type, rhythm accuracy and speed, and require children to repeatedly practice etudes, scales and broken chords. Children are trained to accurately play every note, but they do not understand the meaning of the music, do not know how to control strength, speed and timbre, and cannot express emotions through the piano.

Many children can play complex pieces skillfully, but their playing lacks vitality, appeal and musicality. They are like "playing machines" that can complete instructions accurately, but they cannot feel the beauty of music, let alone convey their inner feelings. This kind of teaching takes skill as the ultimate goal, reverses the means and purpose of education, and makes piano learning lose its artistic connotation and aesthetic value.

Long-term skill-oriented training will lead to children's gradual loss of sensitivity to music. They pay more attention to whether they play wrong notes than whether the music is beautiful. Over time, children will feel that piano learning is boring and tedious, and their initial love and curiosity will be worn away little by little.

With the increasingly fierce social competition, utilitarianism has seriously affected children's piano education. More and more parents regard piano learning as a tool to add points for further education, show off their children's talents, and meet their own vanity. Piano grading certificates, competition awards and performance experience have become the most important evaluation standards.

Under the influence of utilitarianism, piano teaching has the following abnormal phenomena:

1. Teaching content serves the examination. Teachers and parents only select the pieces required for grading, and ignore the cultivation of basic abilities such as sight-reading, ear training, improvisation and music theory.

2. Blindly pursuing progress. Many families require their children to skip grades and rush for quick success, regardless of their children's foundation and acceptance ability.

3. Neglecting daily practice quality. Parents only care about how many hours their children practice every day, but do not care whether their children really understand and enjoy the music.

4. Over-participation in competitions. Children frequently participate in various competitions and performances, and bear pressure far beyond their age.

This kind of exam-oriented and utilitarian piano education violates the law of education. It turns beautiful music learning into a kind of pressure and burden, which is not conducive to the cultivation of children's artistic literacy, but may cause children's anxiety, tension, inferiority and other psychological problems.

Modern children's piano education suffers from rigid methods, such as traditional cramming through imitation without creativity, which keeps students passive and deprives classes of vitality. Additionally, irrational use of technology – replacing in-person lessons with videos featuring incorrect demonstrations – harms health and forms bad habits, while uniformity ignores children's differences, causing frustration. As a result, the separation of theory and practice leaves children without musical literacy, and parental pressure intensifies stress and aversion to music.

These issues stem from social factors like impulsive utilitarianism and underestimation of art's aesthetics; family-related ones – wrong expectations and criticism; pedagogical – teachers' lack of professionalism and outdated programs; as well as psychological – methods mismatched to children's cognitive traits, leading to loss of interest.

To address them, return to aesthetics via a child-centered approach, balancing skills and expression: introduce games, ensembles, personalization, and pre-playing listening. Apply technology rationally as support with time limits, combined with offline correction; create diverse assessment based on interest, creativity, and skills; integrate theory into practice for full literacy. Finally, foster school-teacher-parent cooperation to ensure a positive atmosphere and comprehensive development.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, modern children's piano teaching is in an era of both opportunities and challenges. The popularization of piano education and the development of educational technology have brought favorable conditions for children's music learning, but at the same time, problems such as utilitarianism, skill-orientation, rigid methods and digital abuse are also very prominent. These problems deviate from the essence of aesthetic education, damage children's physical and mental health, and restrict the healthy development of piano education.

Through the analysis of this paper, we can see that the key to solving the problems of modern children's piano teaching lies in returning to the child-centered educational concept, abandoning utilitarian and quick-success educational thinking, balancing skill training and artistic expression, optimizing teaching methods, reasonably applying modern technology, respecting individual differences, and constructing a cooperative education mechanism among teachers, parents and institutions.

Children's piano education is not to cultivate a group of skilled performers, but to plant the seeds of beauty and art in children's hearts, so that they can have the ability to feel beauty, appreciate beauty and create beauty in their lives. Only when piano teaching really conforms to the laws of children's physical and

mental development and the essence of music education can it truly realize the educational value of cultivating people and promote the all-round and healthy development of children.

In the future, children's piano education needs the joint efforts of the whole society. Teachers should continuously improve their professional quality and teaching level; parents should establish correct educational concepts and reduce unnecessary pressure; educational institutions should adhere to educational orientation and put quality first; the whole society should establish a correct view of art education. With the joint efforts of all parties, children's piano teaching will move towards a more scientific, humanistic and healthy direction, and bring happiness and growth to more children.

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### **THE ROLE OF IMPROVISATIONAL PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT IN DEVELOPING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS IN PRESCHOOL AND PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN**

Children of preschool (4–6 years) and primary school (7–12 years) age are actively forming social and emotional competencies, but often experience difficulties with establishing contact, expressing emotions, and self-regulation. The main goal of pedagogical intervention is to promote the development of communicative skills, emotional resilience, and behavioral adaptability. Traditional methods focused on verbal learning and structured tasks are often insufficiently effective for children with varying levels of interaction readiness, leading to limited results. Music, as a universal channel of sensory and emotional experience, overcomes language barriers. Improvisational piano accompaniment allows real-time adaptation of rhythm, melody, and dynamics to the child's reactions, reducing communication barriers and stimulating emotional engagement. In pedagogical practice, this method achieves targeted impact through musical interaction, personalized melodic adaptations, and rhythmic guidance. In modern music education, improvisational accompaniment requires systematization of approaches, considering issues of uniform forms and specialist training. Researching its role is key to enhancing the effectiveness of social and emotional skill development in children.

**The aim** of the study is to identify and systematically investigate the role of improvisational piano accompaniment as a means of developing social and emotional skills in preschool (4–6 years) and primary school (7–12 years)