

A Survey Study of the Status of Assessment in Teaching Singing at School Music Programs in Northern Taiwan

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Summary

Singing is one of the most important teaching activities at the school music program. It should contain the learning of solfa techniques, vocal skills, song repertoire, and singing attitude. Therefore, in the process of teaching singing, music teachers need not only to concern students' learning condition at vocal techniques, but also song knowledge and singing attitude.

However, some music teachers use only the global approach to assess students' song singing skills for the mid-term or final evaluation. This method cares less about students' voice changing and developing during the learning process. It also neglects students' learning outcomes in the cognitive and affective aspects. Accordingly, music teachers could not obtain more useful and effective information from this assessment to adjust their teaching objectives, contents, materials, methods, and strategies. Moreover, students also could not realize their learning achievement at specific singing skills from this assessing procedure to enhance their positive learning attitude.

Since 1983 Howard Gardner proposed the theory of Multiple Intelligences, the discussion of the needs of multiple assessments became the central issue of educational reform. The principle of multiple assessments concerns all three educational objective domains: cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. It also emphasizes the use of multiple ways to observe and inspect the conditions of students' learning process and outcome. In addition, it should include various contents, methods, time periods, participants, and reporting

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systems in order to improve student's learning and teacher's instruction.

Based upon the background stated above, the method of multiple assessments certainly could provide important and valuable information, such as students' vocal traits, skill development, music understanding, attitude changing, and ensemble techniques for teaching singing in the school music program. The application of multiple assessments in the class is not the end of teaching singing, but the beginning of the effective singing instruction and self-motivator of learning to sing.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the status of the assessment in the process of teaching singing at the school music programs. The survey method was utilized in this study. The target population was music teachers who taught at the public elementary, middle, and high schools in the Taipei City, Taipei County, and Keelung City during the spring semester 2007. The method of stratified random sampling was used to select 660 subjects. There were 540 effective questionnaires. The return rate was 81.8 %.

After a thorough literature review, the research instrument "The Survey of Practice Status of Assessment for Teaching Singing at School Music Programs" was developed by the investigator. The main contents of the questionnaire consisted of four parts. In the first two parts concerning educational objectives and assessing purposes of teaching singing, the Likert 5-points rating scale was used to investigate the degree of subjects' real situation in accordance with the questions. The multiple-choice format was utilized in next two parts in order to inspect the assessing contents and strategies which subjects often included in singing evaluation.

Table 1: Structure of the Questionnaire "The Survey of Practice Status of Assessment for Teaching Singing at School Music Programs"

Categories	Subcategories	Responding Ways
1. Educational Objectives	(1) Psychomotor Domain of Singing (2) Cognitive Domain of Singing (3) Affective Domain of Singing	Likert 5-points Rating Scale
2. Assessing Purposes	(1) Readiness Evaluation (2) Placement Evaluation (3) Formative Evaluation (4) Diagnostic Evaluation (5) Summative Evaluation	Likert 5-points Rating Scale

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3. Assessing Contents	(1) Vocal Techniques	Multiple Choice
	(2) Song Knowledge	
	(3) Learning Attitude	
4. Assessing Strategies	(1) Number of Students	(2) Participants
	(3) Time Periods	(4) Assessing Methods
	(5) Grading System	(6) Grade Recording
	(7) Assessing Standards	(8) Result Reporting

The principal findings revealed the following points: (1) The music teachers' views of educational objectives for teaching singing were most inclined toward the affective domain, second to the psychomotor domain, and then to the cognitive domain. (2) The music teachers' views of assessing purposes for teaching singing were most inclined toward summative evaluation, and then to diagnostic and formative evaluations. (3) While assessing their students' singing, the music teachers often included various contents, such as melodic and rhythmic accuracy, lyric meaning, listening to each others, and familiarity. (4) The music teachers tended to use more singular strategy to evaluate their students' singing, including individual solo test, teacher evaluation, performance-based assessment, numerical scores, global approach, criterion-referenced assessment, and number point reporting.

Based on the above results, the researcher made two suggestions: (1) There is a need to enhance music teacher's professional knowledge and ability concerning the principles and methods of multiple assessments applied in teaching singing. (2) There is a need to design the instruments with multiple aspects, and provide them to music teachers as examples for evaluating singing.

Keywords: evaluation for singing, evaluation for teaching singing, multiple assessments, teaching singing

