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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the pedagogical problem of the effectiveness of various methods in teaching the saxophone in the People's Republic of China. The relevance of the research topic is due to the fact that in China the saxophone is gaining popularity every year, so it is necessary to more carefully select teaching methods for saxophonists in music universities. Evaluation results of pedagogical observation in two groups of 1st year students of the music university were used as research materials. The general sample of students was 150 people. The representative sample was 50 people selected by mechanical sampling. Two groups of 15 students, participated in the experimental sessions, and one control group (20 students) were selected. The material was collected in several stages, conditioned by the research logic and objectives. The research methodology is based on a systematic approach and includes the methods of the general scientific group (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction); as well as special methods: content analysis of scientific literature, the method of included pedagogical observation, statistical analysis using the advanced analytics program Neural Designer. The method of analysis proposed by us made it possible to convert the qualitative results of pedagogical observation into quantitative data. Based on the data obtained, the author came to the following conclusion: the most effective in the development of the performing art of saxophonists in China is demonstrated by the techniques of jazz playing and the technique with elements of the Chinese folk musical tradition.

Keywords: China, saxophone, pedagogy, music teaching, Chinese folk traditions.

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of the problem is due to the fact that the rapid growth of interest in the study of the saxophone in China contributed to the development of saxophone pedagogy. From Western methods and ways of learning to play and adapting them according to national characteristics, saxophone training in China currently has a number of specific features (Guo, 2002; Li , 2020).

Based on the research goal, the following tasks were set: to consider the current state of saxophone education development in China in the pedagogical aspect, to conduct a content analysis of the scientific works by Chinese authors in the field of saxophone pedagogy, to identify the learning features for saxophone playing in China that exist at the present time.

The research scientific novelty is due to the fact that the article for the first time attempts to comprehensively analyze the specifics of saxophone pedagogy in China at the level of methodology, forms, training content, technical guidance and educational equipment, scientific and methodological support. The integrated approach makes it possible to reveal to the maximum extent for the main features of learning to play the saxophone in China. The effectiveness of musical and pedagogical practice is possible through the use of technical teaching means, the organization of scientific and methodological support, and the improvement of the content and education forms.

The theoretical understanding of the tasks, proposed in this paper, is aimed at understanding the current state of the practice of learning to play the saxophone in China, and at identifying its main features. The practical significance is due to the results of the study, which can be used as reference material in the development of teaching methods for playing the saxophone.

In recent years, learning to play the saxophone has been especially popular in China (Akutsu, 2022). In this regard, the number of studies devoted to modern trends in musical and pedagogical practice in this area in the PRC is growing.

Many of them are descriptive and raise questions about the existence of problems in saxophone training (Bader, 2021). Nevertheless, at present, the Chinese system of learning to play the saxophone, despite its late appearance, is distinguished by a number of specific features.

Their identification and analysis make it possible to form a general idea of the practice of teaching the saxophone in China. This determines the relevance of the topic, since familiarization with the Chinese experience of the educational process in the saxophone class corresponds to the general trend of mutual exchange of pedagogical experience between countries.

At the present stage, many theoretical studies on saxophone pedagogy are being carried out in Chinese academic circles. Some of them are devoted to the study of the theoretical and technical aspects of learning to play this instrument (Braasch, 2019), at the same time, there are works on the current state and prospects for the development of learning to play the saxophone (Garrett, 2005). When studying saxophone pedagogy in China, many researchers pay special attention to the history of its development and the spread of saxophone performance in the country (Kraus, 1989; Bledsoe, 2015). The Chinese saxophone school was influenced by French and North American traditions, while the latter proved to be the most stable (Good-Perkins, 2021). At the first stage of the Chinese academic saxophone development, the orientation of leading teachers to the traditions led to significant differences in the instrument interpretation.

Some Chinese teachers consider the French school as the main and the best (for example, Li Manlon, professor at the Chinese Conservatory in Beijing), while others (Li Yusheng and his school) prefer the American saxophone (Bledsoe, 2015).

For example, Zhu Wang notes that music education in China has already learned a lot from foreign experience and continues to develop in contact with it (Zhou, 2021). The Chinese system of music education is consistent with the European one in terms of methodological guidelines, but differs significantly from the latter in terms of methodological and organizational solutions (Kraus, 1989).

The researcher also distinguishes two systems of teaching saxophone in China: public and professional academic methods (Kraus, 1989).

The public education system aims to develop the skill of performing the simplest popular compositions for saxophone, mainly pop music. This system is characterized by accelerated learning with a predominance of the practical component in the content of training, related to the development of basic skills and techniques that allow to master playing the saxophone. Students exclusively study the basic performing skills, without paying much attention to the theoretical component of training. As a result of this technique, students can use their own skills in performances exclusively at recreational events. At present, the public music education system is the most widespread in China.

The modern training of Chinese instrumentalists, including saxophonists, is dominated by an empirical component, while musical and theoretical training is at a rather low and, as practice shows, very primitive level. Mastering the technical skills of playing the instrument (as early as possible and to perfection) is a key task for students in the saxophone class, and the main method is constant and repeated exercises, training on the instrument (Stetsiuk, 2019).

This approach contradicts one of the fundamental principles of developing musical education, adopted in European music pedagogy, aimed at increasing the theoretical classes capacity (Stetsiuk, 2019). The academic system of education refers to vocational training.

One of the founders of the academic saxophone school in China is the famous Chinese saxophonist, Li Yusheng. According to this school, professional traditions of performing and teaching in the academic saxophone have been developing in China for just over two decades, and the activation of this process was associated with the influence of foreign saxophone performance (Stetsiuk, 2019). The academic music education system, in addition to the performing skills formation, pays more attention to musical theory (Kraus, 1989).

Accordingly, in order to get an academic saxophone education, more effort and time is required for both the student and the teacher, which does not meet the needs of the Chinese broad masses who want to master the instrument as quickly and with little effort as possible. Moreover, the academic system of education makes higher demands on students, which raises the threshold for those who want to learn how to play the saxophone, and, therefore, is less accessible, but at the same time – more prestigious. Each of the systems is based on Western educational methods, modernized in accordance with the needs and goals of teaching Chinese saxophonists.

In Chinese music universities, three forms of educational practice for teaching saxophonists are implemented: individual training; training in small groups; training in large groups. The main principles for teaching saxophonists in large groups is to focus students, who have a small gap in basic saxophone, to study in the classroom at the same time. Usually, one large group consists of 10 to 14 people. According to the mode of teaching activities carried out by the Chinese professional saxophone training group, more than half of the students practice in small groups, and about 40% in large groups (Good-Perkins, 2021).

In general, analyzing the directions, approaches and research methods presented in modern scientific works, we can note that the study of the saxophone and various aspects of performance on it develops from the general to

the particular. The vector of movement is determined by the understanding of the instrument meaning in the context of the politics development, culture and society in China, up to various aspects of music education (creativity of leading performers, technical issues of performance).

At the same time, there are not enough scientific works related to understanding the genre and style aspects of musical works written for the saxophone; studies devoted to works created for various ensemble forms, both including the saxophone and for the saxophone ensemble. Modern compositions for saxophone by Chinese composers are poorly studied.

The noted problems of modern musicological research require the deepening of specific issues related not only to the peculiarities of the repertoire formation, but also to methodological solutions to the issues of performing difficulties in playing the saxophone, revealing the figurative and artistic world inherent in compositions for this instrument in the musical practice of China. To fill these gaps in the historiography of the topic under study, we conducted an empirical study among first-year saxophonist students in the music university.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

As a material, the estimated results of pedagogical observation of 1st year students in a music university were used. Pedagogical observation is direct perception, knowledge of the pedagogical process in natural conditions (for example, in the process of studying extracurricular work, etc.). Observation have been done in accurate fixation of pedagogical facts, objective pedagogical analysis. Observation is a rather time-consuming method of research.

The difficulties of using observation as a method of collecting primary information are a consequence of its features and are divided into subjective, associated with the personality of the researcher, and objective, independent of the researcher. The subjective difficulties of observation included the fact that the researcher understands and interprets the behavior and actions of students through the prism of our experience, through his system of value orientations. First of all, the limited time of observation should be attributed to the objective difficulties. In addition, not all pedagogical facts lend themselves to direct observation – especially in distant learning format. In order to obtain the information necessary for the purposes of the study, not to miss any important facts or significant information of the object under study, it is necessary to develop a program of pedagogical observation in advance. To overcome these difficulties, we have compiled a monitoring program according to three criteria (Table 1).

Table 1. Methods for assessing students' groups result.

Criterion	Methods
Academic system of saxophone playing	Selective collection of information about criteria
Chinese traditional folk music elements	Continuous method for collecting information about a criterion
Jazz saxophone technique (French version)	Recording all selected information

At the university of music, we managed to involve 40 people in the study. A representative sample was made on the basis of the mechanical selection method (every fourth student). There were two groups of 20 students who took part in the experimental sessions, and one control group of 10 people. All materials of pedagogical observation were recorded in the teacher's electronic diary.

Table 2: Three stages, timing and rating scale of empirical research.

Empirical research stages	Survey schedule	Rating scale for performing skills
Related works research	1-17. 11. 2021	1-3 low level; 4-6 average level; 7-10 high level
Pedagogical observation with statistical analysis	18-20. 11. 2021	1-3 low level; 4-6 average level; 7-10 high level
Processing of the received results in Neural Designer program	21-30. 11. 2021	1-3 low level; 4-6 average level; 7-10 high level

The methodology of the study is based on a systematic approach.

A systematic approach is a direction in the methodology of scientific knowledge, which is based on the consideration of an object as a system: an integral complex of interrelated elements; sets of interacting objects; collections of entities and relationships.

The main principles of the systems approach used in our empirical study are:

1. Integrity, which allows considering the system at the same time as a whole and at the same time as a subsystem for higher levels.
2. Hierarchy of the structure, that is, the presence of a plurality (at least two) of elements located on the basis of the subordination of elements of a lower level to elements of a higher level. The implementation of this principle is clearly visible in the example of any particular organization. As known, any organization is an interaction of two subsystems: managing and managed. One is subordinate to the other.
3. Structuring, which allows to analyze the elements of the system and their relationships within a specific organizational structure. As a rule, the process of functioning of the system is determined not so much by the properties of its individual elements, but by the properties of the structure itself.
4. Multiplicity, which allows using a variety of cybernetic, economic and mathematical models to describe individual elements and the system as a whole.

Consistency, the property of an object to have features that are different from the features of the elements of its constituents.

We used the methods of the general scientific group (analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction); as well as special methods: content analysis of scientific literature, pedagogical observation, statistical analysis.

The application of the methods we have chosen made it possible to solve the following research problems:

- 1) identify relevant analysis criteria based on related papers;
- 2) trace the general trend in the preparation of students for each experimental method;
- 3) identify the main problems in conducting classes according to the proposed methods.

This analysis technique allows to summarize the assessments of 40 students for each of the analysis criteria. Based on the analysis of scientific literature, we have identified three main methods for teaching the saxophone in China as criteria for empirical research: 1) academic system of education; 2) system with elements of Chinese traditional folk music, 3) jazz saxophone technique (French version). To analyze the effectiveness of these methods, we conducted experimental classes to improve the professional skills of first-year saxophonists.

RESULTS

As a result of a preliminary assessment of the professional skills of saxophonists in three groups of students (two experimental groups and one control group), we obtained the following results (Figure 1).

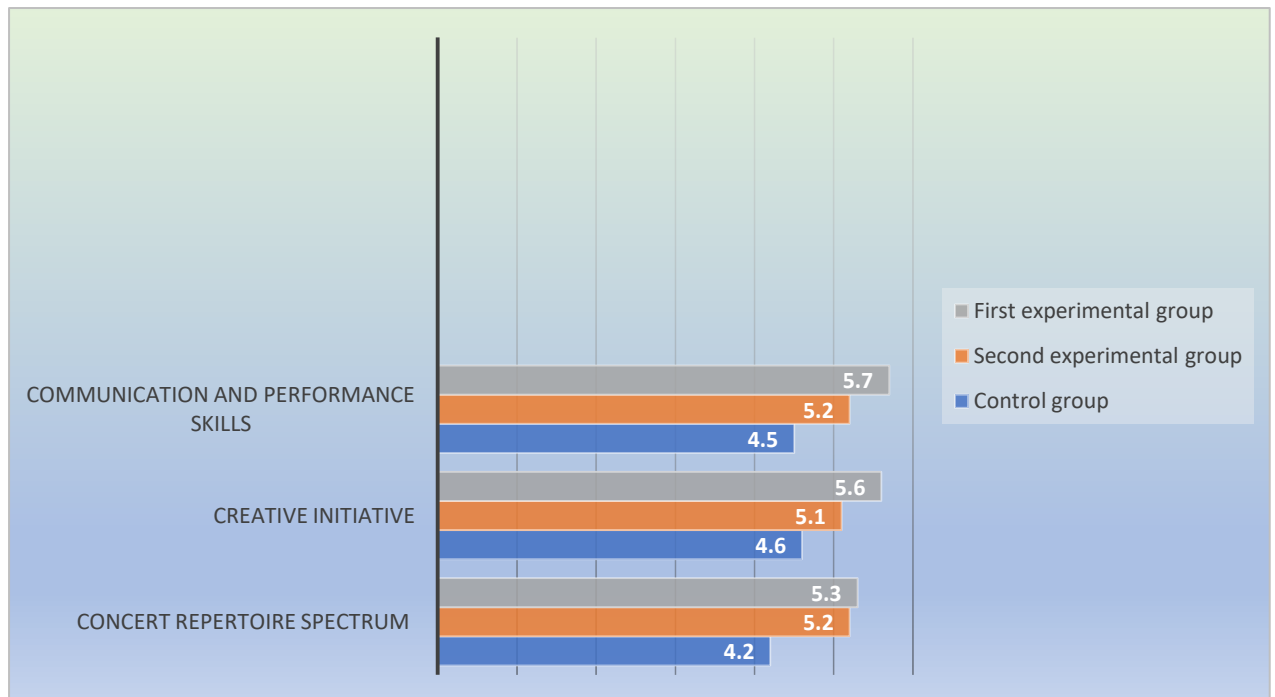


Fig.1: Results of a preliminary assessment of the level of professional skills in the control and two experimental groups (compiled by the author using the Neural Designer program)

As can be seen from the data, shown in Figure 1, an average level of professional skills was revealed in three groups of saxophonist students.

In order to increase this indicator for the three elements we have identified, we conducted classes on three methods – academic, a method with elements of Chinese folk music and a jazz saxophone method.

The results of applying the first technique are shown in Figure 2.

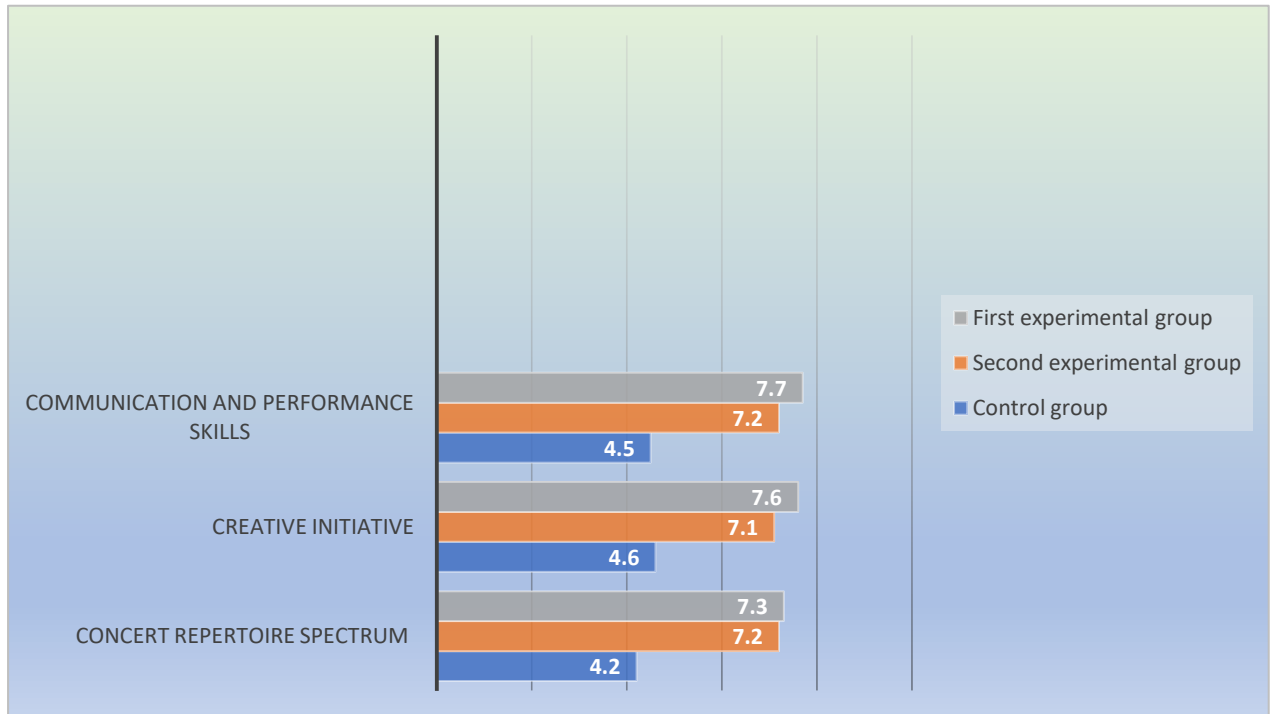


Fig.2: The effectiveness of the academic method of teaching saxophone in a Chinese music university (compiled by the author using the Neural Designer program)

As can be seen from the data shown in Figure 2, after conducting classes according to the academic methodology (classical repertoire adapted and arranged for saxophone), we received some growth in three criteria of professional skills among 1st year saxophonist students.

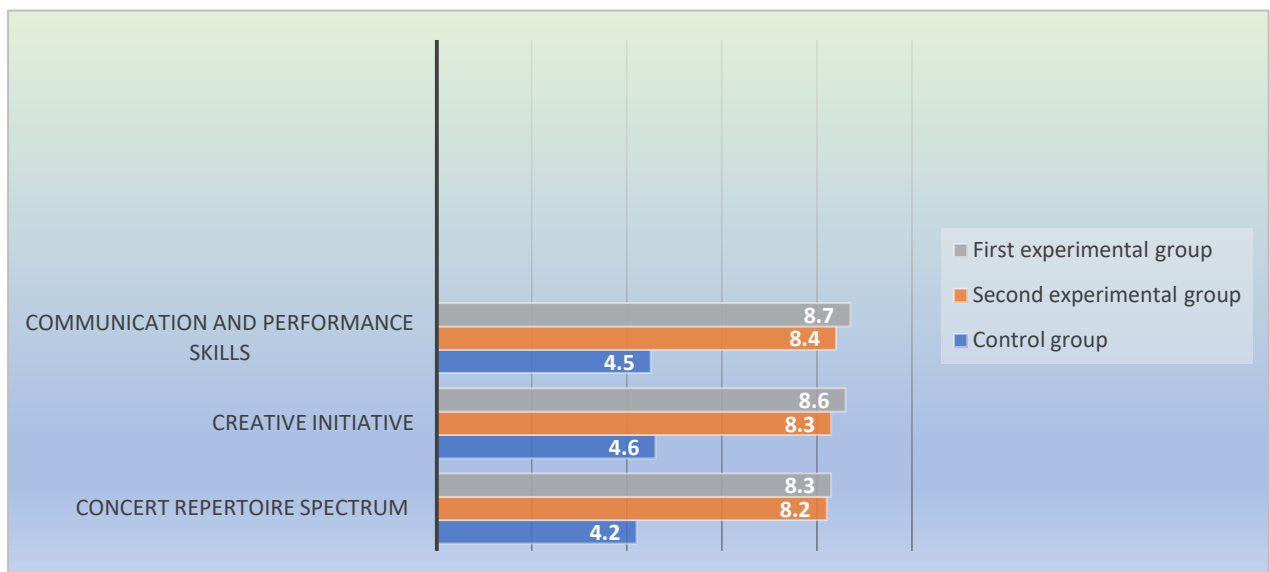


Fig.3: The effectiveness of the traditional (folk) method of teaching saxophone in a Chinese music university (compiled by the author using the Neural Designer program)

As can be seen from the data in Figure 3, the indicator of professional skills, after conducting classes according to the methodology with elements of Chinese folk music, increased to a high level. This result shows the high efficiency of this technique.

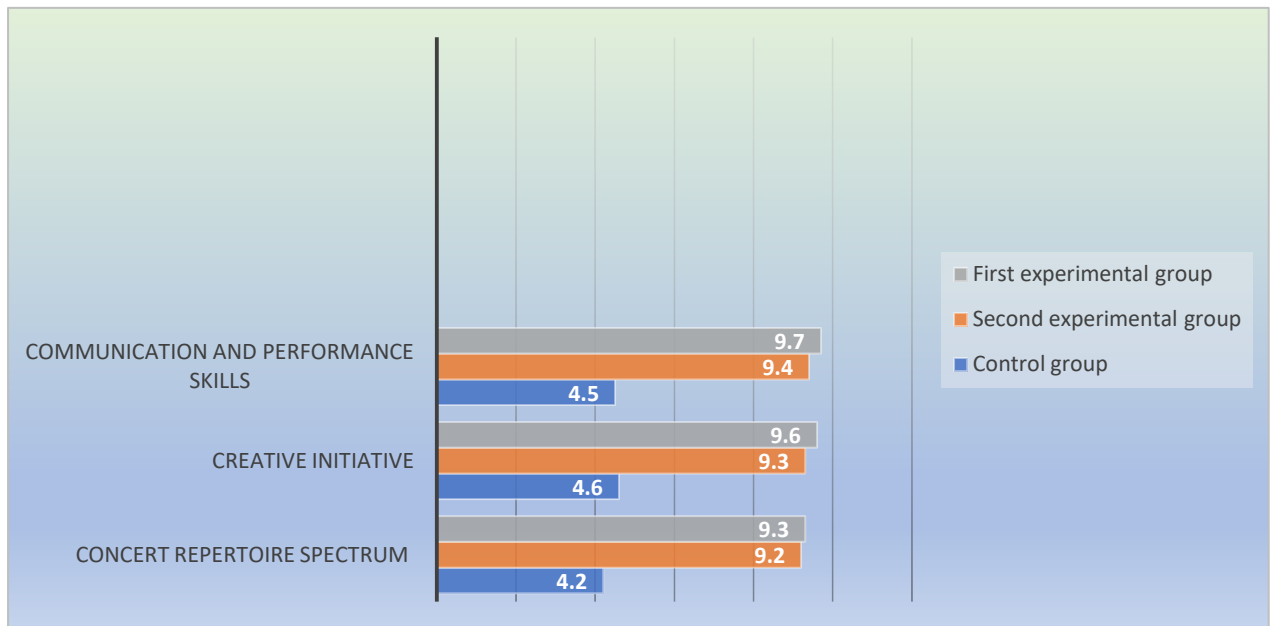


Fig.4:Effectiveness of jazz saxophone teaching in a Chinese music university (compiled by the author using the Neural Designer program)

As can be seen from the data shown in Figure 4, the most effective method of teaching saxophone turned out to be the jazz method.

At the same time, the works of French composers aroused the greatest interest among 1st year students. As a result, we can conclude that in order to improve the level of professional skills among Chinese saxophonists, it is necessary to apply not only the academic methodology, but also two other pedagogical technologies.

DISCUSSION

Our results are confirmed in the works by such authors as Akutsu (2022), Bledsoe (2015), Braasch (2019), Garrett (2005), Good-Perkins (2021).

Our theses about the low effectiveness of the methodology of academic saxophone teaching are confirmed in the works by such authors as Gudzyk (2021), and Cross (2015).

In modern Chinese musical pedagogy, the effectiveness of involving folk music elements in teaching to play the saxophone has also been revealed. For example, this technique is well described in the works by such authors as Johansen (2020), Liang (2022). Martin and Waters (2015), Ponkina (2019a, 2018b).

The theses of our study are also partially confirmed in the works by such authors as Stefanova and Stefanov (2021), Zhou (2021).

Nevertheless, our analysis of the scientific literature showed that additional empirical research is needed for the topic research. In the course of an empirical study of the current state in the musical and pedagogical practice of teaching the saxophone in China, conducted in different educational groups through a survey of students, we came to the conclusion that it is necessary to separate saxophone education in the country into two areas - amateur and professional education. In each of the directions, the researcher identified its characteristic features. The professional saxophone education groups were selected in university, which has two majors in music: music education and musical performance.

CONCLUSION

As a result of our study, the rational use of teaching methods was revealed. We were faced with the task of organizing a stable mode of conducting musical and pedagogical practice, which is concentrated in accordance with a certain educational thinking or theory, as well as the rules and criteria of training. Much attention was paid to the complex of procedures and criteria for conducting educational activities, teaching methods, in particular, such characteristics as typicality, stability and comfort of learning. As a result, it was found that two methods are the most popular among students: the method using Chinese folk music and the jazz method of teaching saxophone.

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