

## DISTANCE CHORAL CONDUCTING FORMATION OF FUTURE MUSIC TEACHERS

### *FORMAÇÃO DE REGÊNCIA DE CORAL A DISTÂNCIA DE FUTUROS PROFESSORES DE MÚSICA*

### *FORMACIÓN DE DIRECCIÓN CORAL A DISTANCIA DE FUTUROS PROFESORES DE MÚSICA*

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**ABSTRACT:** The article reflects the results of the study, with the purpose of identifying the distance educational approach's potential and determine its role in the conduct and choral formation of a future musician teacher. The study examines the situation in the conduct and choral formation of a future musician teacher, identifies the problems, and compares traditional and modern methodology. The study was conducted based on the Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication of Kazan Federal University in three stages. It was based on the integrated application of literature analysis and practical experience, the study of teaching materials, pedagogical monitoring, and pedagogical experience generalization. During the distance approach, analysis of applications in educational practice of Kazan Federal University, it was determined that the conditions for the format of implementation of distance education in conduct and choral formation are: provision with the material and technical base and special methodological support in the form of digital educational resources in conduct and choral disciplines; the availability of specialist teaching aids for independent conduct and choral formation and the possibility of receiving distance pedagogical advice. The effectiveness of conduct and choral formation is determined by the balanced use of contact and distance learning with a well-defined educational strategy and methodological support.

**KEYWORDS:** Pedagogy of art. Online learning. Music education. Chorus conductor.

**RESUMO:** *O artigo reflete os resultados do estudo, com o objetivo de identificar as potencialidades da abordagem educacional a distância e determinar seu papel na condução e formação para coral de um futuro professor músico. O estudo examina a situação da conduta*

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*e formação para coral de um futuro professor músico, identifica os problemas e compara a metodologia tradicional com a moderna. O estudo foi realizado com base no Instituto de Filologia e Comunicação Intercultural da Universidade Federal de Kazan em três etapas. Baseou-se na aplicação integrada da análise da literatura e da experiência prática, o estudo do material didático, o acompanhamento pedagógico e a generalização da experiência pedagógica. Durante a abordagem a distância, análise das aplicações na prática educacional da Universidade Federal de Kazan, foram determinadas as condições para o formato de implantação da educação a distância em conduta e formação para coral: disponibilização do material e base técnica e suporte metodológico especial na modalidade de recursos educacionais digitais em disciplinas de conduta e formação em coral; a disponibilidade de auxiliares pedagógicos especializados para a conduta autônoma e a formação em coral e a possibilidade de receber aconselhamento pedagógico a distância. A eficácia da conduta e da formação para coral é determinada pelo uso equilibrado do contato e da educação a distância com uma estratégia educacional bem definida e suporte metodológico.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Pedagogia da arte. Aprendizagem online. Educação musical. Regente de coral.*

**RESUMEN:** *El artículo refleja los resultados del estudio, cuyo propósito es identificar el potencial educativo del enfoque a distancia y determinar su papel en la conducta y formación coral de un futuro profesor de música. El estudio examina la situación en la dirección y formación coral de un futuro profesor de música, identifica los problemas y compara la metodología tradicional con la moderna. El estudio se realizó sobre la base del Instituto de Filología y Comunicación Intercultural de la Universidad Federal de Kazán en tres etapas. Se basó en la aplicación integrada del análisis de la literatura y la experiencia práctica, el estudio de los materiales didácticos, el seguimiento pedagógico y la generalización de la experiencia pedagógica. Durante el análisis de la aplicación del enfoque a distancia en la práctica educativa de la Universidad Federal de Kazán, se determinaron las condiciones para la implementación del formato a distancia en la formación de conducta y coral: provisión con la base material y técnica y apoyo metodológico especial en forma de recursos educativos digitales en conducta. y disciplinas corales; la disponibilidad de ayudas didácticas especializadas para la conducción autónoma y la formación coral y la posibilidad de recibir asesoramiento pedagógico a distancia. La eficacia de la formación en conducta y coral está determinada por el uso equilibrado del aprendizaje presencial y a distancia con una estrategia educativa y un apoyo metodológico bien definidos.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Pedagogía del arte. Aprendizaje en línea. Educación musical. Director de coro.*

## Introduction

Conductor-choral pedagogy is relatively young discipline - the foundation of conducting classes at the St. Petersburg and Moscow Conservatories (the 1920s) is considered to be the date of birth of the domestic conductor school. By the end of the 20th century, they developed a fundamental domestic methodology for the training of choral conductors, where the personal-

activity approach made the organizational basis. A verified combination of conduct-choral, musical-theoretical, performing disciplines; a balanced combination of individual and group forms of classes; effective methods of leading teachers - everything was aimed at a choirmaster training. Note that the developed methodological basis of the conduct-choral training of future experts at higher musical and musical-pedagogical educational institutions was uniform, the differences were in the level of the educational repertoire complexity and the distribution of academic hours. Thus, all graduates had a choirmaster education in their pedagogical arsenal, which allowed them to work successfully with children's, adult educational and amateur choirs.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the processes of modernization in the field of higher education in the homeland entailed the change in educational paradigms, the introduction of educational and professional standard system, and legislative approval of the competency-based approach. The development of technological innovations and their effectiveness have led to the development of distance learning practice. Today we can say that the modernization processes in modern higher education have made significant changes in the organization of all professional training of future musician teachers, including the choir conductor.

Firstly, the introduction of universal and general professional competencies into priority results has led to the optimization of individual hours devoted to the development of music and performance disciplines. This made it necessary to abandon the individual way of work in the conducting class and actualized the search for new group contact and distance learning.

Secondly, educational guidelines in the form of standards actualized the creation of a practice-oriented learning environment at the university, the search for new pedagogical approaches and the methods of conduct choir discipline mastering.

Thirdly, in order to enhance student self-education, the teaching load was redistributed from the classroom to extracurricular, which resulted in a significant amount of students' independent work. This circumstance required the development of pedagogical support aimed at the conductor-choral self-education organization and support for student musicians.

Understanding was developed that conduct choral training of experts in modern conditions is possible solely based on a new built methodological system, in the structure of which the remote approach will fulfill its functions.

The purpose of the study: to identify the possibilities of the remote approach use in conduct and choral education, as well as to determine its role in the future.

## Method

The study is based on the analysis of musical and pedagogical literature, the study of methodological materials, the pedagogical monitoring of student performance, an expert evaluation of student work, interviews, surveys, and pedagogical experience generalizations.

Special contents of conduct and choral disciplines for distance offline training were posted at MOODLE. It included the lectures on conduct and choral performing, audio and video materials, scientific and creative assignments, and assessment resources. The online learning format was carried out on the Microsoft Teams platform, where educational and creative interaction was organized: case studies, pedagogical demonstrations, counseling, and discussion.

The study was conducted at the Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication of Kazan Federal University from 2016 until 2020. The study involved 197 students applying for a bachelor's degree in music teacher education and 3 teachers. The study was carried out in three stages. At the first stage, they carried out the analysis of the existing situation in educational practice, musical-pedagogical and methodological literature was studied; the problem and purpose of the study were formulated; the methods were defined; the research plan has been drawn up. At the second stage, they developed training materials, teaching aids, special distance courses, electronic educational resources. At the third stage, distance learning was implemented in offline and online formats, its results were obtained.

## Results and Discussion

The development of the problem of the remote approach application in music education has begun to gain momentum in recent years. The emergence of digital educational resources provided by the media culture space for the educational process (online educational platforms *Coursera*, *Udemy*, *Stepik*, online schools, e-courses, video lectures, video classes, training packages, etc.) and their accessibility have led to the development of a separate trends of musical pedagogy - musical and pedagogical self-education (VALEEVA; KARKINA; STARCIC, 2018; NARITA, 2017). Replacement of traditional means with digital ones, the rapid development of information and communication technologies served as the source for developing the issue of the digital environment capabilities and communication tool use in music education (SAVAGE, 2010; KRUSE *et al.*, 2013). The introduction of an arsenal of technical innovations in educational practice: Learning Management System (LMS), educational platforms (*MOODLE*, *Google Classroom*, *Microsoft Teams*, *Azure-PaaS*, etc.),

video conferencing programs (*Zoom, VooVMeeting, Jitsi*, etc.) served as an impetus to the development of their application methodology in musical and pedagogical education for pedagogical researchers and pedagogical practitioners (NURGAYANOVA; KARKINA; MENA, 2019; LI, 2017; ABDULLAH; SULONG; RAHIM, 2020).

Currently, the practice of remote offline and online music education in the digital age has already become a subject for scientific reflection among domestic and foreign researchers. They studied the possibilities of distance learning based on MOODLE for musical pedagogy in high school (KARKINA; SINGH; VALEEVA, 2019); they considered technical and pedagogical problems of signal synchronization in online learning of instrumental music relevant for all types of musician practice performance (STEVENS; MCPHERSON; MOORE, 2019); generalized pedagogical experience in the development of instrumental and performing competence of future music teachers within the modular organization of educational content by means of distance education (HAVRILOVA *et al.*, 2019). The advantages and disadvantages of distance learning use in music education have been determined (KOUTSOUPIDOU, 2014; KARKINA; HALITOV; KAMALOVA, 2018; KRASILNIKOV, 2012); they assessed the prospects for the development of online musical education within the musical-theoretical and musical-performing fields of training in higher education (KARASEVA, 2020).

Let us turn to the practice of the distance learning format use in conduct and choral education of a student-musician at Kazan Federal University. The conductor-choral training of experts at the university is carried out in the form of mixed learning: contact and distance. The proportion of distance learning format is determined by the subject content of the discipline. For example, the content of the lecture course “History and Theory of Choral Performing” covers the history of choral culture, the theoretical issues of choral studies, the history of conduct and choral performing, and the main problems of conduct and choral practice. The discipline is accompanied by an electronic course in the MOODLE education management system, designed to organize the student's independent work. Presentation of independent work results is carried out in different genres of research work: abstract on vocal and choral composition, essay, research project, scientific report, and article. Educational and pedagogical interaction takes place during contact classes, during which the discussion of current issues is held, personal judgments are made, counseling and protection of student work are carried out.

The structure of the practical discipline “Class of choral conduct and reading of choral notes” is represented by three modules: 1) “Study of the school repertoire”, 2) “Choral conducting”, 3) “Reading of choral notes”. The subject matter of the discipline is theoretical knowledge about the technology of conducting, conducting skills of choral sonority

management, the horizon in the field of school and choral repertoire, knowledge and skills in the field of working on the choral notes in theoretical, practical and artistic aspects. Contact training is organized in group lessons within the format of a vocal-choral workshop. It implements a practice-oriented approach that organizes the work of student musicians in the mainstream of practical experience and the development of specific and standardized universal, general professional, and professional competencies.

At the same time, a significant proportion of the workload falls on the extracurricular work of students, during which a student selects a vocal-choral repertoire; preliminary work is being done on the choral composition (playing the scores on the piano, vocal study of the choral part voices, conductor control of the choral part voices, writing abstracts for the vocal and choral work). For methodological support, the authors of this study developed electronic textbooks: "Self-preparation of a student-musician for practical work with the choir", "Independent work of students: written abstract creation for vocal and choral works", an electronic course was created on the module "Studying school repertoire" in the MOODLE system. Given the self-understanding difficulty of the professional "secrets" of a choral conductor by teachers, distance counseling is used using the communicative capabilities of instant messengers, social networks, and video communication programs. The contact-remote form of this discipline mastering has successfully proved itself, as a student-musician is guaranteed to acquire a formed bank of knowledge, skills and abilities of conduct choral singing; readiness for practical work with various compositions of choral groups; knowledge of the technology of working on a vocal-choral composition with schoolchildren; mastery of self-education technologies of a musician teacher.

The discipline "Choral class and practical work with the choir" is the key in conduct and choral preparation of the future teacher-musician. Here, the student-musician holds the positions of a choir singer and a choirmaster. As a singer, the student develops vocal-choral and singing-auditory skills, which will fulfill two functions: personal mastery of vocal technique, the technology of the singing voice staging and development. Working with the choir collective as a choirmaster, the student acquires the skills of vocal-choral work; communication skills in the following areas: visual, verbal, manual, pantomimic, volitional, auditory, musical and expressive. The development of this discipline is carried out in the mode of choral rehearsals, the distance form is used only in individual work with students during choral part practice.

To determine the impact of the distance approach on the educational results of choral conduct and training of future music teachers, was carried out pedagogical monitoring, expert evaluation of students' independent work results, and systematic surveys. The surveys showed

that 182 students (92%) out of 197 praised the distance format from the perspective of an effective instrument of conduct choir self-education; 104 students (52.8%) noted that the distance format allowed them to develop an individual route of conduct-choral training; 196 students (99%) believe that the complex combination of traditional and distance learning allows them to master the necessary professional skills successfully. The comparison of survey results and monitoring results for single positions did not show significant differences and deviations from digital indicators.

## Summary

Based on the generalization of the study results, the authors came to a number of conclusions:

### *Terms*

- distance learning should be provided with the material and technical base and special methodological support in the form of digital educational resources on conduct and choral disciplines;
- the remote format of conduct and choral training requires special teaching aids for independent conduct and choral training and the possibility of distance educational advice obtaining.

### *Educational opportunities*

- systematic organization of conduct choir self-education process, based on the principle of a focused, intense, controlled independent student work activation;
- individualization of training, which provides an opportunity for a student-musician to compensate for educational gaps in conduct choir education, to realize educational and scientific-creative needs along an individual educational path;
- a flexible combination of contact and distance forms in conduct and choral training of a future teacher-musician allows to achieve a balanced educational result.

## Conclusions

The study showed that the distance approach in music education cannot be a 100% alternative to traditional in person music education. At present, it is impossible to use it in training for ensemble and collective types of musical performance (accompanists, instrumental musicians of a chamber ensemble and orchestra, symphony and choral conductors in conditions

of the need for ensemble or “live” sound control) due to the irreparable time delay of the signal. Moreover, the distance format in choir conduct education has successfully established itself in lecture and seminar practice, educational control, and the organization of professional self-education.

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