

COVID-19: A New Challenge to the Teaching Management at a Conservatory of Music in China

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Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

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The coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, hereinafter referred to as COVID-19, has provoked huge numbers of infections and deaths on a global scale, and become a public health emergency all over the world [1]. COVID-19 can have person-to-person transmission through sneezing or cough-caused respiratory droplets from the mouth or nose of the infected [2]. Prevention constitutes the prime way to the control of COVID-19 transmission. Measures include promoting all-round information and sound understanding about the disease, urging the public to maintain positive attitudes, and cultivate favorable health habits like washing hands with a soap for no less than 20s, keeping at least a two-meter distance from others, using the facemask, etc [3,4]. Thus, public understanding, attitudes and actions are of vital importance to the deployment and reinforcement of the hygiene measures in the fight against COVID-19. University is a place with a large fluid population, and obviously, the awareness of COVID-19 prevention among university teachers and students plays a critical role in reducing the spread of the disease [5]. The prevalence of COVID-19 has brought a huge challenge to university education [5,6]. We are working in a conservatory of music in Tianjin, China. Tianjin is the largest port city in northern China. By February 7, 2021, a total of 346 COVID-19 cases had been confirmed in Tianjin. Although the outbreak is under initial control, the number of cases is still increasing. Due to the particularity of music curriculum, a large number of teaching tasks cannot be completed simply by using the network teaching method. How can the school guarantee the health and safety of teachers and students, while ensuring the quality and progress of the teaching work? In response to these problems, our school has developed relevant measures and methods during the COVID-19 epidemic. By February 7, 2021, the school had maintained a record of “zero COVID-19 infection” among all the teachers and students (about 3,000 people).

First, the school arranges students to return to school according to different grades and majors, thus avoiding the concentration of a large number of students. We keep a detailed record of each student’s travel experience and health status in the 14 days before their return to the school. For students from areas with reported cases, they need to go to a unified isolation site for isolation and return to school. During the COVID-19 epidemic, the general public are likely to experience anxiety [7,8]. Psychological interventions that reduce fear need to be made available to the students. We encourage teachers and students to have a correct, rational and scientific view of the COVID-19 epidemic, build up confidence and courage to overcome the epidemic, and employ professional doctors to conduct psychological counseling. We also conduct online education and training concerning the epidemic for teachers and students, and organize them to watch popular science videos such as “How to Prevent COVID-19”, “Six Steps to Wash Your Hands ” and “Correct Selection and Use of Masks”.

We use social media (WeChat, Facebook, etc.) to communicate the health information of teachers and students [4]. The main symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough, tachypnea, and shortness of breath [3]. Therefore, as soon as suspected symptoms such as fever and dry cough are found, temporary isolation should be conducted immediately, and the situation should be reported to the school clinic. After the preliminary appraisal of the school doctor, the suspected case will be sent to the hospital for diagnosis and treatment. Those in contact with the patient will also be quarantined.

In terms of teaching, the “one-to-one” teaching mode is mostly adopted. Fig. 1 shows the one-to-one teaching scene in the Pipa class. Pipa is one of the traditional Chinese musical instruments. In teaching, both the teachers and students wear a face mask, the seats are separated with an interval of more than two meters, and one window is kept open for ventilation. The Dance Department and the Drama Department need to organize rehearsals, basic training and other courses on the spot. Under the premise of taking proper protective measures, the teaching tasks are conducted in groups and in batches. In principle, no audience will be allowed to attend the graduation examinations and concerts in the Department of Music Performance and Music Education. Composition and composition technical theory, drama, film and television art design and other majors will no longer arrange performances and exhibitions. For the students who are temporarily unable to attend the school or temporarily separated, professional guidance, graduation examination, thesis defense and other links will be arranged online.

In summary, our efforts seem to have reduced the spread of COVID-19 to some extent on campus (The

preventive measures are summarized in Fig. 2). However, the feasibility of our approach in other countries needs further study, and the limitations of our initiatives may involve our ignorance of the patients without respiratory symptoms, especially asymptomatic infected persons.

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Ethical statement

In this study, we used a photograph of a one-on-one teaching session and we have received authorization of agreement from two ladies in the photograph. No ethical approval was required for this manuscript as this study did not involve human subjects or laboratory animals.

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Figure legend

Fig. 1. One-to-one teaching in Pipa class.

Fig.2. The preventive measure.

