

# Conditions and Problems of Instructional Management in Saxophone Practical Skills Course in Higher Education Institutions in Thailand

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## Abstract

The objectives of this research were 1) to study the conditions and problems of instructional management in the Saxophone Practical Skills course in higher education institutions in Thailand, and 2) to propose guidelines for developing the instructional management in the Saxophone Practical Skills course in higher education institutions in Thailand. It is qualitative

research. It applied the method of interviewing and observing instructors teaching the Saxophone Practical Skills course in higher education institutions in Thailand, a total of 9 people. The data was then analyzed, the content synthesized, and descriptive reports were written. The research results showed that 1) instructional management in the Saxophone Practical Skills course uses two teaching principles and methods: Classical Saxophone and Jazz Saxophone. Problems encountered in the instruction are the embouchure, air support, tone quality, articulation, performance techniques, understanding of musical performance, the condition of the learner's instruments, and the insufficient places of training for the learner, and 2) the guideline for developing the instructional management consists of to choose the suitable teaching method that the individual learners, encourage students to perform soloists or band members, and attend musical performances.

**Keywords:** Conditions and problems of instructional management, Saxophone Practical Skills course, Higher education institutions in Thailand

## 1. Introduction

Higher education institutions are part of the country's development, playing an important role in producing graduates with knowledge and abilities in various fields. As a graduate producer who is a citizen of the country, Higher education institutions need to adapt to be able to produce quality graduates for society (Pituphumnak, 2019). The music curriculum is one offered in many higher education institutions across the country. Higher education institutions in Thailand developed a music curriculum and opened for the first time in 1957 in the form of an appreciation for music subject, in the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University by Ajarn Kamthorn Sanitwong Na Ayudhya (Sutthasit, 2012). Then, music curricula were developed and expanded in many fields of study, and many institutions, both government and private institutions. At present, higher education institutions have developed more than a hundred music curricula spread across the country (Thuntaweck, 2017).

Music courses are responsible for creating music graduates in various fields, such as music teachers, musicians, composers, researchers/music scholars, etc., to be personnel with competence according to the line of work. Moreover, they can create works according to their ideas freely (Pituphumnak, 2019).

In music instructional management in higher education, students are required to study one major musical instrument throughout the course. It is characterized as a continuous practice course and it is a compulsory course. There is a teaching and learning process from adjusting the fundamentals of playing together with the process of thinking, analysis, synthesis, and critical thinking. It starts from easy to difficult. Then it gradually increases the intensity according to the ability of the learners, respectively (Mee-A-Sa, 2016). In addition, students must devote time to training to be successful. The Saxophone Practical Skills course is taught in higher education institutions throughout Thailand according to the context of each area.

The saxophone is a wood blower instrument that is very popular in Thailand. It is easy to access, priced from 5,000 to 1,000,000 baht, and it can play a variety of musical styles such as classical, jazz, and pop. Especially in the Northeast, northeastern folk music brought a

saxophone to play in a form known as Mor Lam Sing, so it is widely known. It is also another factor that makes people interested in playing the saxophone because it can earn a living. In addition, it is not only popular for playing the saxophone, but it is also popular for learning in higher education institutions. Some students chose the saxophone in the entrance examinations for higher education with a large number of music courses. It is a study to further develop skills to pursue a career in the future.

The Saxophone Practical Skills course is a practical subject in the music curriculum in higher education institutions which are offered both in fields aimed at producing music professionals and in education or Bachelor of Education. There is a process to teaching the Saxophone Practical Skills course with the basic elements such as breathing techniques embouchure, sound quality, and performance techniques in various ways to provide students with the knowledge of soloists or band members. Furthermore, they can transmit knowledge and saxophone practice (Mee-A-Sa, 2017).

In each higher education institution in Thailand, naturally, there are different types of teaching, especially in the field of musical instrument skills. In Bangkok, it is ready to provide instruction both in terms of location, and personnel. It also includes access to activities such as concerts of the orchestra of various bands both domestically and internationally or performances by famous artists who frequented the performances and conducted workshops or various types of music competitions. This is another thing that promotes the learning of the students. In addition, it was shown that at the conclusion of saxophone educational sessions, teachers may not engage in reflection-oriented discussions with students. There is no way to predict what aspects of saxophone practice require development or improvement (Sisiadngam, 2019). As well as making sure that the songs and exercises used in the course are appropriate, they should be chosen so that they fit the learner's basic skills and habits. This will help the learner and keep practical learning well (Utarapong, 2008). By modifying the cognitive learning process of the instructor and learner, the patterning of the learning process should be aligned with the curriculum (Phakharattananavich, 2022).

Therefore, the researcher would like to study the conditions and problems of instructional management in the Saxophone Practical Skills course in higher education institutions in Thailand to know the current problems of instructional management of such subjects and take the suggestions of instructors to analyze, summarize and propose guidelines for developing the instructional management in Saxophone Practical Skills course in higher education institutions in Thailand to be appropriate and are up-to-date with the changes in the current world.

## **2. Research Methodology**

### *2.1 Population and Sample*

The researcher selected the key informants by purposive sampling method and considered the key informants who can provide useful information to answer the research questions leading to the theoretical content or various concepts by selecting teachers who teach practical skills

in saxophone courses, a total of 9 higher education institutions. They were saxophone teachers with a record of practical skills, a music performance, full-time teachers with more than 5 years of teaching experience, or special lecturers in higher education institutions with more than 3 years of teaching experience and are represented by 9 institutions of higher education in each region, namely:

- (1) College of Music, Mahasarakham University;
- (2) Duriyaslip College of Music, Payap University;
- (3) Western Music Department, Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Thaksin University;
- (4) Faculty of Music and Performing Arts, Burapha University;
- (5) Department of Music, Faculty of Humanities, Kasetsart University;
- (6) College of Music, Mahidol University;
- (7) College of Music, Bansomdejchaopraya Rajabhat University;
- (8) Conservatory of Music, Rangsit University;
- (9) Faculty of Music, Silpakorn University.

## *2.2 Research Tools*

The tools used in this research were teaching observation and structured interviews created by the researcher. The interview form is divided into 2 parts, namely general information, the status of the interviewee, and information about the condition and instructional management, etc. The research tool passed the quality check of the tool from all 3 experts.

## *2.3 Data Collection*

For data collection, the researcher conducted field data collection using the interview method and teaching observation form.

## *2.4 Data Analysis*

The researcher analyzed the data of the qualitative research principles by analyzing the conditions and problems of instructional management in the Saxophone Practical Skills course in higher education institutions in Thailand. The data was then analyzed, the content synthesized, and descriptive reports were written about guidelines for developing instructional management in the Saxophone Practical Skills course in higher education institutions in Thailand.

## *2.5 Content Scope*

- (1) Curriculum;
- (2) Instructors;
- (3) Instructional management;

- (4) Repertoire technique;
- (5) Assessment and performance display;
- (6) Media and learning resources;
- (7) Problems in teaching and learning.

### **3. Research Results Summary**

3.1 For the conditions and problems of instructional management in the Saxophone Practical Skills course in higher education institutions in Thailand, the researcher presents the analysis of the information about conditions and problems in teaching and learning management in all 7 aspects: 1) Curriculum 2) Instructors 3) Instructional management 4) Repertoire technique 5) Assessment and performance display 6) Media and learning resources and 7) Problems in teaching and learning. The details are as follows:

3.1.1 Curriculum used in teaching and learning can be divided into 3 courses: 1) Bachelor of Music; 2) Bachelor of Fine and Applied Arts (Music); 3) Bachelor of Arts (Western Music). Most of them are in the form of classical music and then extend to jazz, pop, or classical music at a higher level in contemporary music styles.

3.1.2 Instructors who graduated in music and saxophone practice from higher education institutions in Thailand and abroad have teaching work, academic works, and works in the field of musical performances. They are experts in playing and teaching the saxophone in Thailand.

#### **3.1.3 Instructional Management**

##### **3.1.3.1 Teaching Preparation**

(1) Make an instructional management plan and review students' problems in the past semester to be useful in choosing chapters, songs, exercises, or skill development to suit the students.

(2) Determine assessment criteria such as attendance, technical scores, exercises, midterm exam, and final exam.

3.1.3.2 Teaching methods in Saxophone Practical Skills course in higher education institutions in Thailand, students are required to study 1 lesson per week. Each higher education institution has managed to teach private lessons and group classes. In teaching each time, the instructor divided the contents into 3 areas: 1) scale playing in various forms and techniques; 2) etudes, and 3) repertoire. In the saxophone, the jazz section has instrumental content, transcription, or playing the improvisational melody from a phonograph record.

3.1.3.3 Teaching techniques: all instructors pay attention to sound quality, embouchure, air Support, accent, tone quality, playing the scale, articulation, etc., mainly practicing on the scale. They also focus on the use of exercises that strengthen the technique of playing for each student. The instructor always plays along with the students until the students are

confident and then lets the student play alone or the instructor performs as an example switching with students.

### C Major (Full Range)



Figure 1. Articulation using scales

Source: The Scales by steps and by Intervals by Jean-Marie Londeix.

3.1.4 Repertoire technique emphasizes understanding the musical performance and the importance of articulation and dynamic performance.

3.1.5 Assessment and performance display: Instructors have teaching recordings to follow up on teaching results every time and assess the Saxophone Practical Skills course with a division of the score collection such as the midterm exam, final exam, attendance, homework, etc. When students study in the last semester, a senior recital exam is required as a graduation exam.



Figure 2. Senior Recital, College of Music, Maharakham University

Source: Jungate (2022).

3.1.6 Media and learning resources: Instructors use CD, Youtube, or applications such as Spotify, and Apple Music to sample songs and etudes 50 Easy and Progressive Studies by Guy Lacour, Berbiguier las Marcel Mule, Exercises for Saxophone by Franz Wilhelm Ferling and repertoire were used. For Saxophone Jazz instruction, Jazz improvisation “The Goal-Note Method” by Shelton Berg, Inside Improvisation Volumes 1-7 by Jerry Bergonzi.

### 3.1.7 Problems in Teaching and Learning

#### 3.1.7.1 Learners

- (1) Learners have breathing difficulties. The use of wind in performance.
- (2) Some learners have adaptation difficulties in higher education.
- (3) Some learners do not rehearse or practice homework that the instructor gives them or have less practice, so the teaching plan was delayed and inaccurate.
- (4) Some learners do not have the funds to buy their own saxophone, so they have to borrow from educational institutions which only have a borrowing period during official hours. There was difficulty in rehearsing part-time because it can only be used during office hours.

(5) Practicing saxophone in the house or dormitory may disturb others.

(6) Some learners may have band activities and homework for other subjects in each institution's curriculum causing stress

(7) Some learners work as musicians at night too. This makes training time for practical skills less and causes insufficient rest.

#### 3.1.7.2 Instructors

Some instructors have a department or faculty executive position, increasing the workload of instructors which may affect the time to teach the practical skills in saxophone courses.

#### 3.1.7.3 Teaching and Learning Support

(1) Musical instruments of each institution may be damaged, incomplete, and have insufficient numbers for students.

(2) Some regional institutions have too many students per instructor, causing the ratio of students to be unbalanced per instructor. This may cause the instruction in terms of practical skills not to be as effective as it should have been.

(3) The place to practice does not keep sound and there is not enough.

3.2 Guidelines for developing instructional management in the Saxophone Practical Skills course should be as follows:



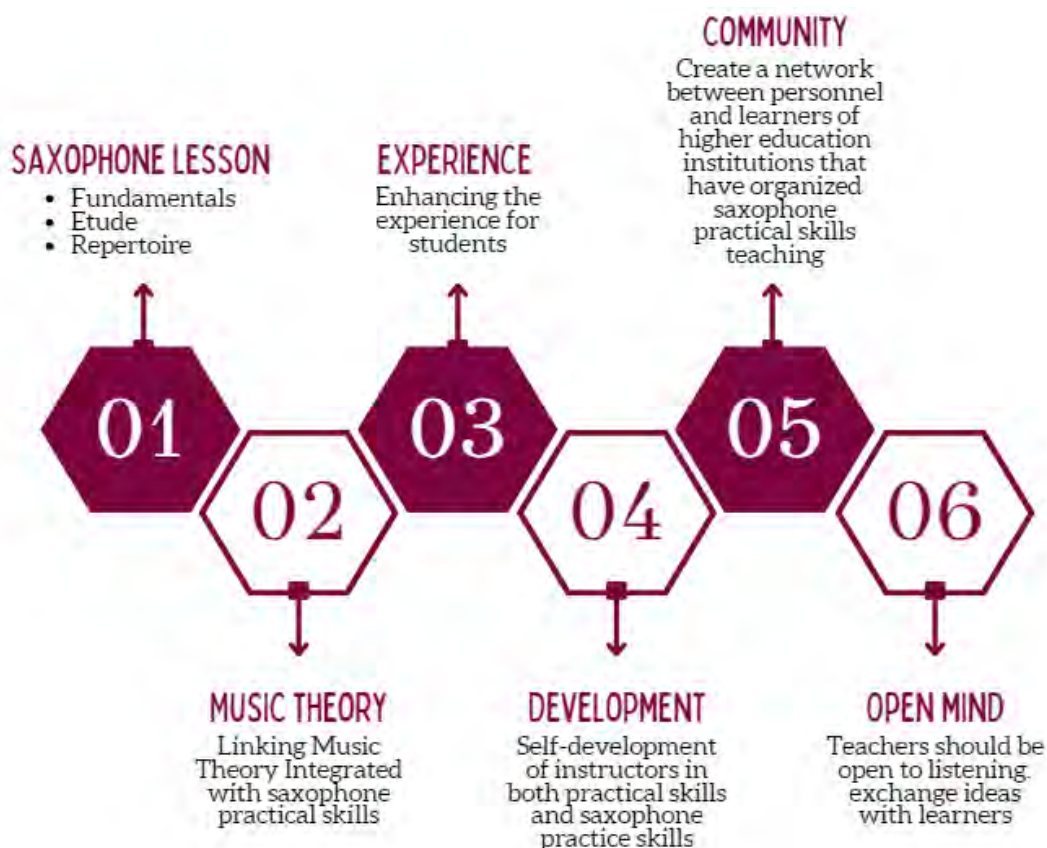


Figure 3: Guidelines for developing instructional management in the Saxophone Practical Skills course

Source: Jungate (2022).

3.2.1 Instructors should focus on teaching the basics of playing, such as embouchure, breathing, and the use of wind in playing, scale playing, and understanding the importance of the fundamentals of playing. This affects the performance of the repertoire at different levels and chooses the etudes for the repertoire suitably for each learner as well. It is aimed at a pragmatic perspective based on Bowman (2003).

3.2.2 Instructors should link music theory, such as the analysis of various scales, etc. It is an integration of music theory with Saxophone Practical Skills.

3.2.3 Instructors should organize activities, projects, and music performances for students to enhance musical performance skills, whether it is a solo, a saxophone quartet, or a saxophone ensemble or send students to participate the various contest competitions. This can enhance the experience for the students. It also emphasizes on practice perspective based on the concept of Bowman (2003). In addition to learners learned saxophone practice skills, learners must be open to listening to other types of music, which is based on the concept and theory of Reimer (1997) in balancing instrument practice and listening to music. It also includes how

learners can develop further when graduation. Furthermore, this teaches students to respond emotionally to music.

3.2.4 Instructors should develop saxophone practice skills and teach practical skills in saxophone courses.

3.2.5 Creating a network among personnel, and learners of higher education institutions that have managed to teach Saxophone Practical Skills course by organizing academic seminars or co-management to exchange learning in saxophone.

3.2.6 Instructors should be open to listening and exchanging ideas with learners by focusing on the suspicion of the learners, focusing on questioning, and considering with Perspective of Critical Theory based on the concept of Bowman (2003).

#### **4. Discussion**

(1) The results of the study of the conditions and problems of instructional management in Saxophone Practical Skills course in higher education institutions in Thailand found that each higher education institution in Thailand has 3 curriculums used in teaching and learning that can be divided into 3 courses: 1) Bachelor of Music; 2) Bachelor of Fine and Applied Arts (Music); 3) Bachelor of Arts (Western Music). The number of credits: 128-135 credits. In instructional management in the Saxophone Practical Skills course in higher education institutions in Thailand, there are classical Saxophone and Jazz Saxophone. In each institute, students will study one hour per week of saxophone practice skills, in which one hour the instructor covers basic playing topics such as embouchure, air support, and accent. tone quality, the performance of the scale, articulation, etc. Repertoire techniques and musical techniques, most of which are taught in private lessons to observe and improve the saxophone playing skills of each student. It aims to develop a pragmatic perspective in each lesson. In each class, the instructor has a record of every instruction to monitor the development and homework to practice. In addition, private lessons learning allows the students to discuss and exchange with the teachers directly. Moreover, instructors exchange ideas with learners by focusing on suspicion, asking questions, and considering the Perspective of Critical Theory. In addition, the students have their own musical instruments. It also streamlines personal training sessions, but it is different from students who still borrow the musical instruments of higher education institutions for studying and practicing because they have time to borrow and can only be used during office hours. If the saxophone is used repeatedly by many learners, musical instruments may be damaged. This makes training and studying not at full efficiency, resulting in the development of saxophone practice skills not being good as well. Assessment is divided into attendance, homework, midterm exam, and final exam. The final exam will also be attended by a committee of other majors. Assessment criteria were evaluated in terms of 1) Tone Quality, 2) Intonation, 3) Rhythm, 4) Articulation, 5) Interpretation, which was consistent with the research of Sisiadngam (2020) who studied "Measurement and evaluation for wind instrument performance of the higher education institutes" and Herwitt who proposed that the criteria used to measure and evaluate the wind instrument that should consist of 1) Tone Quality, 2) Intonation, 3) Rhythm, 4) Articulation, 5) Interpretation.

(2) The results of presenting guidelines for developing instructional management in the Saxophone Practical Skills course by analyzing and synthesizing the data found that the development of instructional management in the Saxophone Practical Skills course should contain: 1) Emphasis on teaching the fundamentals of playing, understanding the importance of the fundamentals of playing, and choosing etudes of repertoire suitable for the learners. This is consistent with the research of Sisiadngam (2019), who said that saxophone teaching and learning should consist of techniques, repertoires, and musicality in practice by selecting content individually to suit each learner and the ability of each learner; 2) Linking music theory subjects integrated with saxophone practice skills; 3) experience enhancement; 4) Self-development of instructors in terms of practical skills and teaching of saxophone performers; 5) Creating a network among personnel and learners in the Saxophone Practical Skills course; 6) instructors should allow listening and exchanging ideas with students. According to the concept of Bowman (2003) and Theerapan and Woramitmitree (2020) have studied “Conditions and Problems of Instructional Management in Practical Skills in Western Vocal Course in Higher Education Institutions in Thailand” and found that the development of instructional management in the subject singing in the west of Thailand should consist of 1) selecting an appropriate teaching method; 2) enhancing the experience of singing for both learners in the classroom and outside the classroom; 3) creating a network between personnel and student; 4) Self-development of singing instructors and singing and teaching; 5) Promotion of music education research, especially in the field of the western choral music.

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