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The Integration's Problem of Specialized Musical Disciplines into the Distance Education

Abstract. The presented study reveals the key issues of integration of the professional aspects of teaching professional music disciplines, namely, "Special Instrument" and "Ensemble Class", with the remote education process in the context of the global COVID-19 pandemic and the martial law throughout the territory of Ukraine. Many practical professional-specific difficulties of teaching the disciplines "Special Instrument" and "Ensemble Class", namely – physiological and psychological neural individualisation, timbre, and colour perception of the sound of instruments (voice), ensemble-synchronous nature of the artistic and creative performance process, the issues of interaction between the teacher and the student, with the group of students in ensemble music necessitate the conduct of this investigation. The purpose of the study is to identify the key challenges of introducing specialised music disciplines into distance learning. The study applied such methods as surveys, observations, interviews of teachers and students, extrapolation method, comparison, and structural-functional methods. It was determined that distance learning in specialised musical disciplines significantly reduces the possibilities of professional pedagogical activity involving a number of means of artistic expression. The fact of lack of opportunities to master the ensemble specifics of musicianship was established. The decline in the level of organisational abilities of students is investigated. It is noted that there are no professional academic musical instruments directly in the households of students. A significant decrease in the psychological and communicative abilities of students and teachers in the process of integrating specialised musical disciplines, in particular, "Special Instrument" and "Ensemble Class", into the distance learning form was determined

Keywords: integration, academic discipline, professional abilities, distance form, communication

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INTRODUCTION

As the most dynamic and mobile form of education and training, distance learning is proving increasingly effective in the training of specialists in many fields, including the academic musical arts. However, if in the light of music-theoretical subjects the situation with online learning is quite well-proven and established in its high quality and results, then in a number of practical, specialised musical disciplines, namely "Special Instrument", "Ensemble Class", "Orchestra Class", the distance form of learning is

paired with the broad problem of integration of educational musical-individual specificity with a remote form of pedagogical communication.

Certainly, a wide range of articulatory and strokes gradations of a particular musical instrument (voice), a variety of timbre and colouristic spectrum of professional musical sound, maximum individualized approach to many performances and technological issues of the instrument (voice), issues of training intonation and phrase

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culture of performance of pieces of different cultural and historical periods, produces a lot of questions to distance learning of specialised musical disciplines.

Today, this kind of pedagogical-educational communication can be generated into an independent, yet little-studied topical area of distance learning in music, namely, distance and specialised training in musical disciplines. This disciplinary-practical crystallisation of distance learning is quite clearly recognised by practitioners (implementers), but unfortunately has not yet been outlined by any fundamental studies in the field. The main causes of this case are not only the diversity of the specifics of practical mastering of a particular academic musical instrument (voice), the variety of personal and physiological peculiarities in the process of the professional performance apparatus of a musician, but also as I.V. Malykhina states: “insufficient amount of special technical knowledge of the teaching staff” [1].

At the same time, it is important to emphasise that the study of issues of distance-specialised teaching of music disciplines should be carried out by teachers-performers, and the authors of such a type of scientific and methodological achievements should become scientists-practitioners. Here one can hardly disagree with C. Fjol'desh and V.P. Furmanova's assertion that “the authors' specialisation largely determines the focus of their research approach” [2]. Moreover, the sphere of musical and Performing Arts itself is the location where some new language forms, a new language, are introduced. “It is very important that the searching for a new language, including the label of the temporal regime itself, takes place primarily in the realm of art and, more broadly, culture or social sentiment, which is nevertheless still reflected in culture”. [3].

The novelty of the presented research is determined by the identification of musical and performing, practical problems of mastering a musical instrument (voice), ensemble music making, directly, in the process of teaching specialised musical disciplines in distance education form.

The purpose of this study is the identification of the key challenges in introducing specialised musical disciplines, namely Special Instrument and Ensemble Class, into distance learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The process of integrating music disciplines into distance learning is a phenomenon with a broad theoretical base of research, a bright arsenal of practical applications of this phenomenon, and the vast availability of computer-based music software.

A multitude of learning programmes, including those based on the innovative Moodle learning course management system, offer the most meaningful content for professional training in specialist musical disciplines. Thus, the joint research activities of music teachers N.K. Nurgayanova, S.V. Karkina and J. Mena made it possible to create on the basis of the Moodle virtual learning environment the possibility of learning vocal performance basics for the future music teacher through students' comprehension of intonation system of folk tunes and features of traditional musical culture, which as a result will “improve the quality of the professional creative realization

process of the future music teacher, through interaction with vocal” [4].

UK scholars D. Gammeren and A. Szram based at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance (London), by dynamising reflective learning in professional online music education, generated asynchronous interaction between students in a virtual environment based on the performance practice of observing each other's differences in creativity, which in turn led to “a greater awareness of their own musical identity and culture. In this course, educational technology allows musicians who normally never meet due to distance and cultural barriers to work together and synthesise their learning experiences into new and original musical interpretations” [5].

In the light of the issue of integration of specialised musical disciplines into a distance learning form the model of shaping professional abilities of musicians-performers by means of information technologies, created by pedagogue and scientist S.S. Lukasheva, attracts particular attention. The researcher identified a mutually interlinking sequence of elements-values in the development of the performer's professional skills, namely the goal, activity, content and process and outcome elements. The performance-technological aspect of the evolution of the musician-practitioner's abilities is concentrated in the procedural element of the proposed model. At the same time, it was generated “...through a special course developed for students “Electronic musical instruments, sound synthesis and processing instruments” and an electronic textbook “MIDI technologies of musical composition creation” [6].

The appeal to electronic musical instruments, in particular the piano, as a way to integrate specialised musical disciplines into distance learning can also be seen in the results of studies by I.V. Malykhina [7]. The professional music educator usually focuses scholarly attention on the rapidly increasing popularity of the hybrid musical instrument “Disklavier”, “...which is an acoustic piano (piano or piano) with an integrated electronic system consisting of sensors, solenoids, servos, and other elements that are controlled by a special operating system” [1].

This innovative musical instrument can record a wide range of performance and technological characteristics of the musician-pianist, reproduce, through the movement of certain keys and pedals of the recording of piano performances, combine in professional teaching work different types of hardware (computer, video camera, etc.), maintain an internet connection with another disklavier, which certainly gives the widest possible scope for distance learning, master classes, concerts, festivals, open lessons, various formats of musical training, etc.

Of particular interest is the study by I.V. Malykhina “Foreign experience of innovative technologies in the piano class” [7] in which the researcher analyses the scientific developments by A. Hadjakos [8]. Thus, investigating the problems of pianists' performing apparatus, A. Hadjakos sets the task of recording and processing data concerning the difference between the primary (purposeful) hand movements of a musician and the secondary movements (which are already beyond the performer's conscious control), using specially designed armbands, and states the possibility of precise recording of primary and secondary

movements of the pianist, which "...may help students to better understand the structure of their performing apparatus" (how fingers, hand, elbow and arm are interconnected) [7].

It is important to note that in a number of undeniably useful features of innovative technologies, special devices, disklavier aimed at professional performance analysis, pedagogical correction of playing, distance communication of the teacher and the student, no description of the training process of the performing apparatus staging of a musician (hands, arms, head, performing breathing, embouchure, physiological resonators, etc.) is found; neither can one find the reconstruction of the performing apparatus staging in its deepest individual characteristic work of antagonist muscles of one or another component of the playing apparatus of a musician-performer. At the same time, the great musical and practical specificity of the performance process on academic stringed and bowed instruments, as well as on professional woodwind and brass instruments, should be particularly emphasised.

This crystallises the relevance of maximally profiling questions about the sound production in the sense of "how?", which are equally important for the birth of sound (the beginning of sound) for the pianistic touch, for the wind attack, for the resonance clamping of the vocalist and for the plucking or bowing of string players on academic instruments.

And only after a kind of pedagogical sacrament of the performing apparatus formation is accomplished, the student acquires sustainable professional skills of instrument (voice) possession, which is formed in the synthesis of the joint and mutually conditional work with auditory (intonation, timbre, dynamics), visual (visual fixation of the components of the instrument), motor (reflex and muscle mobility) analysers of the student, possible remote pedagogical activities – correction of some or other performing skills of a musician.

It is important to note that it is the specifics of the process of setting the performing apparatus in relation to this or that artistic and expressive means (strokes, attack, timbre, articulation, dynamics, sound power, etc.) that form the basis of non-acceptance of the distance learning form of specialised musical disciplines by many prominent performance educators. For example, Alexander Trostyansky, a famous violinist, professor of the Tchaikovsky Moscow Conservatory, and Honoured Artist of Russia, speaking about the distance learning process, states that "it is not comparable to an ordinary lesson, it is to a large extent profanation. It is difficult to evaluate the quality of sound, such tasks are obtained "by sight", and not "by ear". Besides, the contact is not the same, I do sometimes touch people's hands and shoulders" [9]. Alexei Volkov, head of the Wind and Percussion Instruments Department at the M.M. Ippolitov-Ivanov Russian State Music and Pedagogical Institute and solo saxophonist of the Bolshoi Theatre Orchestra, states: "This format is not convenient for us. During classes, it is necessary to make lively contact with students, to see their eyes, their muscular condition, and their emotional state. Yes, I can hear 'higher-lower'

through the internet, but I can't really hear the shade and character of the sound" [9]. Pianist Alexander Bonduryansky, Professor at the Tchaikovsky Conservatoire, says: "As I am engaged in chamber ensembles, we have no opportunity to rehearse. If you are coaching someone who is preparing a solo programme, you can listen to the recording and comment. In my case, the idea of studying online is unproductive" [9]. Dynamizing the problem of ensemble music-making, in the context of distance learning and education, University of Pennsylvania professor Linda Thornton states: "There is currently no technological way to create music together, in real time, in remote locations" [10].

Certainly, the "live" psycho-physiological, psycho-neural level of teacher-student communication deserves special attention considering the distance form of teaching specialised musical disciplines. Art critic and teacher O.M. Bereghova writes: "When a musician touches the key, a sacrament of sound is born between the keyboard and the string. A similar sacrament takes place between the student and the professor during a class or during a lecture in the classroom and other creative interactions. Without this sacrament, the educational process in musical art will be impossible" [11].

In light of the above, modern professional music pedagogy increasingly generates new approaches to the practice of distance music education, namely the asynchronous method of distance learning of specialised musical disciplines, the mixed form of educational and training process (partial application of distance learning technologies), expanding the repertoire palette based on works written in solo performance form [12], undeniably here and the psychological basis of the distance process.

Thus, in the light of the maximum-professional criteria for teaching specialised musical subjects in distance learning, there is an increasing need for the emergence of foundational, basic research devoted primarily to crystallising and clearly identifying the most characteristic problems of integrating specialised (core) musical subjects into distance professional communication of the teacher with the student.

Based on the theoretical analysis of the above literature, the hypothesis is put forward that the introduction of a distance learning form for a number of specialised subjects in academic music pedagogy will reduce the level of professional skills of music students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The system of observation, collection and processing of the results was based on an activity-based criterion as the key means of assessment in the study of the professional skills and abilities of students in the sphere of modern music pedagogy. In a number of indicators of the activity-based criterion, the focus was on the organisational, professional-performance and psychological-communication abilities of the students. The levels of the activity criterion were defined in three positions – low, medium, and high (author's development) (Table 1).

Table 1. Indicators and levels of the activity-based criteria

Indicators	Activity criterion		
	Level		
	Low	Average	High
Organisational skills	The student has a poor grasp of the temporal sense of the day, unable to feel the structure of its temporal amplitude	The student tries to organise classes within the time structure of the day, but the non-musical environment negates the student's efforts	The student constantly monitors the time of classes, creating a clear organisational plan of classes
Professional and performing abilities	The student does not analyse and understand the professional and performing characteristics of the instrument	The student understands only some issues related to the professional and executive process	The student recognises the specifics of professional performance
Psychological and communication skills	The student does not experience psycho-communicative contact with the teacher	The student has a fragmented sense of psycho-communicative contact with the teacher	The student fully senses the psycho-communicative contact with the teacher

Source: developed by the author

The list of main channels for obtaining information included pedagogical observations, methodological reports and communications, as well as interviewing and questioning students, the results of which, according to each indicator of the activity-based criteria, were used to determine a score between 1 and 3. The data was combined to calculate a holistic level of the students' specialised skills (low – up to 250 points, average – up to 500 points, high – up to 750 points).

The study, which was conducted between March and June 2020, involved 84 students of the Bachelor's programme, the Department of Orchestral Instruments, Dnipropetrovsk Academy of Music (Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine). The department is the largest and most specific departmental unit at the academy and brings together the specialisations of orchestral wind and percussion instruments, orchestral string instruments, and the students of the "Piano Music Art" specialisation.

In view of the situation of strict observance of sanitary and epidemiological norms of strict quarantine regime in the city of Dnipro and, as a consequence, the termination of urban transport links, the full transition of the educational process to distance learning, a group of 70 people was selected, which was the experimental group of this study, conducting online classes. The remaining 14 students who did find opportunities to create real study encounters with teachers at their homes constituted the control group of students. Classes were held in both groups for Special Instrument and Ensemble Class with the same frequency, i.e., twice a week for Special Instrument and once a week for Ensemble Class.

It is important to note that the technical and communication support for distance learning was a traditional set of innovative communication tools. In addition to the stationary and laptop computers, students and teachers also used such smartphone-based messaging applications as Skype, Telegram, Viber, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, etc. All participants in the experimental and control groups were engaged in classes and did not suspend the educational process, due to the difficult situation of the pandemic in the city of Dnipro and the country as a whole.

During the final week of June 2020, within the framework of the academic departmental pedagogical readings, including the Department of Orchestral Instruments, using methods of comparative analysis, deduction and induction, empirical approaches of observation, generalisation along with survey and method of expert evaluations from numerous teachers of examination boards, research results were formed, characterising the performance of students in the above mentioned two groups (experimental and control).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data of the ascertaining stage of the study, which was formed as a result of interim control activities on the eve of the health restrictions and were marked at the meetings of the Orchestral Instruments Department, showed that most of the participants (students) of both groups had an average level of professional skills, a smaller number of students – low and high (author's findings) (Table 2).

Table 2. Level of student performance at the ascertaining phase, %

Ascertaining stage	Level		
	Low	Average	High
Experimental group	9 students = 13	47 students = 67	14 students = 20
Control group	1 student = 7	11 students = 79	2 students = 14

Source: developed by the author

Conducting systematic e-classes, the teachers of the students in the experimental group noted a number of important features of the distance education process concerning the specialised musical disciplines "Special Instrument" and "Ensemble Class".

Firstly, distance learning significantly negates the opportunity for the most detailed, professional-pedagogical practice of a number of means of artistic expression, namely timbre, strokes, vibrato, articulation, dynamics (sound volume) and other artistic expressive means. For example, in the Special Instrument course, the vibration amplitude of the vibrato technique, which is already audibly perceived by the student, can be analysed, but the phase of the sound vibration and its cessation, from an aesthetic and technological point of view, remains beyond the teacher's and student's analytical attention. The visualisation of the performance process in the permanence of its sound output, with the aim of conducting a pedagogical analytical-constructive analysis of this musical-performance technique, is also difficult to map and visually concentrate. The artistic and expressive palette of contemporary musical instruments is rapidly enriched by specific expressive techniques. Thus, when referring to saxophone A.M. Ponkina writes: "... the desire to stand out due to a new effective "manner of playing" leads to the introduction of many specific techniques, such as chord playing, *growl* and *slap*, which firmly strengthen the arsenal and become common for all saxophone groups" [14].

Secondly, in distance communication with students, teachers in the Orchestral Instruments department noted a complete lack of access to the natural ensemble specificity of music-making, especially characteristic of academic wind instruments (woodwinds, brass) and string-and-bow instruments. It has been stated that the ensemble class, which by its very nature is a collective training discipline, not only involves the process of performing together, but also the creation of a unified, common artistic and performing communication during the performance, the formation of an integral ideological and visual concept connected to the joint presentation of the imagery and artistic content of the musical composition. That is where the sense of metrythmic pulsation displayed in the gaze, in the outstretch, in the gestures of the ensemble musicians, in the so-called "elbow feeling" of the ensemble partner, which is not present in the distance learning of specialised music subjects, is so necessary. Teachers also noted that students were brilliant at memorising their own parts of an ensemble piece, but in playing music together as an ensemble, comprehending the skill of collective music-making was not achieved.

Thirdly, a low level of organisational ability among students was revealed. The home climate and, in general, the private domestic setting, with its family-established functional-obligatory environment, created many difficulties in relation to the disciplinary and hourly regime of the students. The organisation of systematic professional musical-pedagogical activity was difficult due to the lack of such motivating and stimulating factors as non-verbal musical-pedagogical communication, appearance culture,

and general emotional and psychological communication environment, with a pronounced bifunctional nature of student's life activity (educator ↔ student).

Fourthly, the process of integrating specialised musical disciplines into distance learning has also exposed the fact that many professional academic musical instruments are not directly available to students at home. For example, regarding the specialisation "Orchestral wind and percussion instruments", problems of instrument availability were noted by teachers regarding the bass trombone, tuba, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet, timpani, vibraphone, marimba, xylophone, percussion. Among the professional instrumentation of the Orchestral String Instruments specialisation, particular difficulties were noted in relation to the availability of the double bass, and in relation to the Pop Music Art specialisation, the problem of the lack of various types of modern electric guitars, specialised keyboard, and sound synthesizers, along with the necessary electro-sound support, was identified. This type of music-practice classes in distance learning fundamentally changed their orientation, namely from the practical vector of mastering the instrument, to its absolute theoretical acquisition. Thus, when teaching a class on the marimba, the following historical-theoretical perspective on teacher-student communication would be appropriate. "The origins of the method of holding four sticks together to play the marimba go back to the second half of the 18th century. And it is connected with the traditions of ensemble playing in Guatemala when several performers played on the same instrument" [15].

Fifthly, during the introduction of distance learning for specialised musical disciplines, teachers have noted a significant decrease in psychological and communicative abilities on the part of both students and teachers. The reasons for the decline of this most important feature of professional music-pedagogical communication have been identified by teachers in the Orchestral Instruments Department as the result of a weakening of the intuitive-profiling tangibility produced through neural contacts, ways to expand opportunities for joint learning of performance and technical and performance-technological issues.

In the control group, where classes with students were conducted in real professional and communicative "live" settings, the artistic and performance level of the students was noted as high, with a permanent tendency for the students to improve their professional and performance skills. The teachers underlined that the frequency of real meetings with their students during the quarantine period was lower (once a week) than in the traditional educational process (twice a week), but the content of the offline classes included a maximum list of all kinds of teaching material (scales, etudes, traditional and new exercises, artworks of different genres and styles, music from different cultural and historical periods).

Thus, as shown in Table 3, the data obtained during the experiment confirm the effectiveness of a real "offline" educational process, during vocational training in specialised musical disciplines such as "Special Instrument" and "Ensemble Class".

Table 3. Level of student performance at the control stage, %

Control stage	Level		
	Low	Average	High
Experimental group	45 students = 64	22 students = 32	3 students = 4
Control group	1 student = 7	3 students = 22	10 students = 71

Source: developed by the author

Thus, the above-mentioned hypothesis, about the decrease of musical and practical levels concerning the professional skills of music students with the introduction of distance learning for a number of specialised disciplines, namely “Special Instrument” and “Ensemble Class”, has been confirmed. The results indicate a high level of practical relevance to this music education problem. In a series of recommendations to maintain and certainly increase the professional level of teaching the discipline of “special instrument”, it is recommended to introduce into the artistic and repertoire list of students of higher music educational institutions the works written in the solo performing form, namely academic artistic solo compositions for a single performer on a concert stage, performed without the accompaniment of a concert pianist or an ensemble (orchestral) group. With regard to the ensemble class, it is recommended to use an asynchronous method of distance form of music-pedagogical communication, namely the use of alternating audio/video recordings and their further technical-innovative connection into a single artistic-music product, one ensemble artistic-music work. Thus, a sense of piecemeal ensemble communication is achieved which is as close as possible to the process of collective musical production. Certainly, it is the teacher’s responsibility to elucidate for students certain pedagogical-motivational attitudes concerning these kinds of decisions, because “... one of the central issues addressed in music education is motivation” [16]. The solo form of performance, namely its individualised character, which excludes the simultaneous comparison of the performing and social level of the student with other students, generates a solution to the problem of professional and social accessibility of music education, maximising “...theoretical and practical concepts of social justice in education” [17].

Special attention in the process of music-pedagogical application of the performing form of the solo and asynchronous method of a distant form of music-pedagogical communication should be paid to the psychophysiology of performing practice, as well as to the evolution of artistic thinking of a musician, namely – it is necessary “... to develop psychomotor skills with the help of musical actions” [18] and learn “...to connect vivid associative impressions with intonational phenomena and processes” [19].

The above notions can be applied at different stages of professional music education, including both

the initial and middle levels of the music and education system. “The COVID-19 crisis has not spared the world of education, and schools and universities, including music colleges, have had to re-imagine their teaching methods. Music teachers had to mobilise the digital tools at their disposal to perform their educational tasks” [20].

CONCLUSIONS

According to the results of the experimental study, the integration of specialised musical disciplines into distance learning has a detrimental effect on the professional growth of the performing skills of music students, in particular, representatives of the performing specialisations “Orchestral Wind and Percussion Instruments”, “Orchestral String Instruments”, “The Art of Pop Music”.

To the most extent, the unsatisfactory, negative results of distance learning, concerning the disciplines “Special Instrument” and “Ensemble Class”, is a consequence of many professional and pedagogical issues, among them the impossibility of detailed analytical work with a number of means of artistic expression (timbre, dynamics, vibrato, attack, strokes, articulation) and a certain functioning of components of the performance apparatus of a musician (professional breathing, resonators, embouchure, body-muscle placement of sound-forming apparatus, etc.); lack of opportunities to comprehend the ensemble, collaborative nature of music-making, the process of collective creation of ideological, imaginative, artistic content; certain difficulties of the disciplinary regime, marked by the complexity of organisational issues, both on the part of the student and the teacher; absence of professional academic musical instruments and certain communication-technical equipment at home; inability to generate at the neural level professional intuitive-profiling tangibility of hidden performance-technological processes in a student, e.g. tension of certain parts of a musician’s muscular system (phases of performing inhalation and exhalation on academic wind instruments, etc.).

The above-mentioned problems require follow-up investigation into all the various angles of the issue under study, which would be a very promising topic for future studies. At the same time, the findings of the study presented may be of professional interest to teachers at secondary and higher music education institutions, and to numerous students as future teachers and musicians.

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Проблеми інтеграції спеціалізованих музичних дисциплін у дистанційну форму навчання

Анотація. У презентованій науковій статті виявляються найбільш характерні питання взаємопроникнення професійних особливостей викладання фахових музичних дисциплін, а саме – “Спеціальний інструмент” та “Клас ансамблю”, з дистанційною формою сьогочасного навчально-освітнього процесу, зумовленою страхітливими наслідками пандемії COVID-19 у світовому масштабі та військовим станом на усій території сьогочасної України. З урахуванням багатьох практичних професійно-специфічних складнощів викладання дисциплін “Спеціальний інструмент” та “Клас ансамблю”, а саме – фізіологічна та психологічно-нейронна індивідуалізація, темброво-користичне сприйняття звучання інструментів (голосу), ансамблево-синхронна природа художньо-творчого виконавського процесу, актуальними постають питання взаємодії викладача зі студентом, з колективом студентів у ансамблевому музикуванні, що й зумовлює необхідність здійснення даного наукового дослідження. Мета статті – виявити найбільш специфічні проблеми введення спеціалізованих музичних дисциплін у дистанційну форму навчання. У роботі задіялися такі методи як опитування, спостереження, інтерв’ювання викладачів та студентів, метод екстраполяції, порівняння, а також структурно-функціональний метод. Було визначено, що дистанційна форма навчання спеціалізованим музичним дисциплінам суттєво зменшує можливості професійної педагогічної роботи із низкою засобів художньої виразності. Встановлено відсутність можливостей опанування ансамблевої специфіки музикування. Досліджено динаміку зниження рівня організаційних здібностей студентів. Наголошується на відсутності професійних академічних музичних інструментів безпосередньо у домашньому побуті студентів. Визначено суттєве пониження психолого-комунікаційних здібностей студентів та викладачів у процесі інтеграції спеціалізованих музичних дисциплін, зокрема “Спеціальний інструмент” та “Клас ансамблю”, у дистанційну форму навчання

Ключові слова: інтеграція, навчальна дисципліна, професійні здібності, дистанційна форма, комунікація

