

## **Analysis of Effective Pathways for Music Majors' Participation in Project Research**

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**Abstract:** College students must learn theoretical knowledge, and develop practical problem-solving skills to boost their employability. Currently, however, many lack the ability to apply theory to practice, are unprepared for project-based research, and are unsure how to engage in such activities. This study focuses on the innovation training projects conducted by music majors participating in the College Students' Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition. It examines the importance and value of student involvement in research projects, describes the project itself and its implementation, and highlights enhanced capabilities for music majors post-participation, including improved proficiency, enriched teaching experience, and better teamwork. The project, "Sister Qianqian Talks Music—100 Essential Pieces of Classical Music for Children," illustrates how music majors can gain broader exposure to other initiatives and develop the comprehensive skills needed for future research participation. The paper outlines effective strategies for music majors engaging in research projects and offers recommendations on methodological choices, providing valuable insights for their career advancement and success.

**Keywords:** Music; College Students; Project Research; Innovation and Entrepreneurship

### **1. Research Background**

The population of college students continues to grow; by 2024, the number of participants in the national college entrance exam reached 13.42 million. Universities serve as a bridge between students and society. Beyond textbook learning, students must learn how to apply theoretical knowledge in real-life situations and professional settings. While

successful college entrants excel in absorbing theoretical knowledge, their early education emphasizes comprehension and memorization over practical application. This exam-focused approach yields high grades but falls short in equipping students to tackle real-world challenges. As a result, they often struggle to integrate theory with practice when faced with practical activities or competitive events, leading to confusion and imbalance.

During university, there are numerous opportunities for project research, which require college students to possess relevant professional knowledge and comprehensive skills, such as innovation, the ability to explore and solve practical problems, and teamwork attributes like responsibility, leadership, and collaboration. Participating in projects is a valuable exercise that shifts students from a passive knowledge-receiving mode to one of autonomous learning and problem-solving.

The skills needed for project research are essential for job-seeking graduates. According to statistics, there were 11.79 million university graduates in 2024, an increase of 210,000 from the previous year. Consequently, many companies and employers have raised their hiring standards, often preferring vocational college graduates with specialized skills over those with broader theoretical knowledge. The inability to apply knowledge practically diminishes the employability of university graduates significantly. Thus, choosing suitable project research to enhance one's capabilities becomes crucial, offering a transformative opportunity for personal growth.

### **2. "Sister Qianqian Talks Music" Project Introduction**

On July 24, 2021, the relevant department issued the *"Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Students' Homework and Off-campus Training in Compulsory Education,"*

marking the start of deep reforms in the education sector. Under the current “double reduction” policy, the ultimate aim is to lighten the load on children, encouraging participation in aesthetic education and other practical activities, while ensuring a reasonable allocation of time. This aims to maximize the quality of compulsory education and promote the holistic development of students. The relevant department recently revised the “*Compulsory Education Curriculum Plan and Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition)*,” optimizing the curriculum structure. For Grades 1 through 7, the focus is on music and art, incorporating elements of dance, drama, and film and television. For Grades 8 and 9, specific subjects are chosen. However, decades of neglect towards music education, inadequate facilities, and a severe shortage of qualified music teachers have compromised the quality and quantity of music classes [1]. As a result, the widespread promotion of music in our country faces significant challenges, making foundational music education critical for enhancing the nation's musical literacy. Music contributes to enhancing children's IQ. Scientific studies indicate that the human brain has distinct roles for each hemisphere, with the left hemisphere handling numerical analysis and the right hemisphere processing audio-visual information. Early music education helps achieve balanced development of both hemispheres [2]. Music fosters children's imagination and emotional intelligence, nurturing strong imaginative skills and innovative thinking [3]. It expands imagination and enhances emotional intelligence. As a product of human imagination, music conveys emotions, teaching children to discern various feelings while developing their imagination and emotional expression. Music education also guides young children's physical and mental development, engaging vital organs like the heart, lungs, and respiratory system, promoting healthy bodily growth [4]. In imparting ethics education, music relies not on coercion but on its inherently vivid and persuasive nature, [5] thereby fostering moral development. Additionally, music has therapeutic properties. Ancient texts like the “*Inner Canon of Huangdi*” mention “five-tone therapy,” and during the world wars, music demonstrated significant healing effects. In 1950, the first national music therapy

association was established in the United States [6]. Music therapy is a form of psychological intervention with notable impacts on cognitive function and personality. The project is titled “Sister Qianqian Talks Music – 100 Essential Classical Pieces for Children,” launched in June 2023. The team comprises students from the School of Music and the School of Educational Science at Hubei Normal University. The project leader is a second-year student majoring in Piano Performance from the Class of 2021 at the School of Music. Other members include a third-year student majoring in Piano Performance from the Class of 2020, two second-year students majoring in Music Education, and a first-year student majoring in Pedagogy from the Class of 2022 at the School of Educational Science. The team's early music education has fostered an interest in and understanding of classical music. Moreover, the project aims to address challenges in contemporary children's music education. Classical music, considered the optimal choice for music education, is renowned for its historical depth and rich cultural heritage. It enhances children's musical appreciation and refinement, profoundly influencing their future lives, making them more cultured and open-minded individuals. By implementing the project, the team creates a curated list of essential classical pieces for elementary school children, sparking their interest in classical music and laying a foundation for music appreciation and learning, thereby contributing to the enhancement of the public's musical literacy and aesthetic appreciation.

### **3. “Sister Qianqian Talks Music” Project Implementation**

Through meeting discussions, the project team defined the overall criteria for selecting tracks based on children's psychological traits, educational methodologies, and musical styles. By dividing tasks and collaborating, the team gathered and analyzed pertinent materials, initially compiling a list of 100 tracks. Given that the team members are also college students with limited exposure to professional theories and practical experiences, and constraints in knowledge about child psychology, they found it challenging to make scientifically sound decisions despite having a general direction for selection. Following

consultations with several experts from the School of Music and the School of Educational Science at Hubei Normal University, the team analyzed and organized the classical music compilation from multiple angles, including track background and child psychology.

The final list of 100 tracks encompasses a diverse range of well-known classical pieces. While there are many familiar classics, the team focused on selecting tracks that are not overly lengthy but feature pleasant melodies and vivid emotional expressions to capture children's interest and sustain their attention. To maximize engagement, the team chose pieces known for enhancing children's cognitive abilities, such as Mozart's "Sonata for 2 pianos in D, K.448" and "Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart." Additionally, they included tracks with strong rhythms and distinctive styles, like Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" and Chopin's "Minute Waltz Op.64/1," enabling children to move freely and develop their sense of rhythm and coordination. According to different situations in daily life, parents can play Chopin's nocturnes in the bedroom before their children go to bed, and play Johann Strauss's waltzes when they play in the living room, emphasizing the creation of a language-like environment, focusing on cultivating curiosity and an inquiry spirit towards music, and further stimulating children's active interest in learning music. [7]

After selecting the tracks, the project team began preparing for field research at primary schools. This actual research selected Shifu Road Primary School in Huangshigang District, Huangshi City, Hubei Province. With advancements in technology and the rise of platforms like TikTok, children are mostly exposed to vulgar and meaningless internet hits, rarely listening to classical music, let alone symphonies. This is insufficient for children's music education and hinders the improvement of the nation's music literacy. Classical music masters are called masters because their works encompass a wide range of themes, rich emotions, and profound content. Therefore, this actual research uses a specially crafted classical music enlightenment playlist combined with engaging presentations to capture children's attention. Emotional experience is a key component of music education. Primary school is a period of rapid physical and mental growth for children.

Integrating body and mind helps primary school students enhance their emotional experience of music [8]. This allows them to understand the stories and depths within classical music, feel its charm, and foster a love for classical music.

In lesson preparation and courseware creation, the project team members have studied music education, pedagogy, and psychology as college students. However, they lack practical experience and teaching expertise, making it difficult to integrate theory with practice. Therefore, the project team actively maintains communication with professional teachers within the university, seeking teaching advice and learning how to succinctly convey the profound emotional content behind the tracks. They also learn how to analyze children's psychology based on their classroom behavior. Simultaneously, they consult with the instructors at Shifu Road Primary School, the external practice site for the project, to refine all preparatory work for the practical aspects of the project.

#### **4. The Significance of the "Sister Qianqian Talks Music" Project**

Though the project's implementation is ongoing, the project team members have broadened their knowledge and learned valuable skills for participating in research projects. Future music majors who join the project can reflect on their career paths through hands-on experience: identifying areas for improvement in their future careers. For instance, the project team members are music students at Hubei Normal University who aspire to become music teachers. Through their involvement, they realize the need to not only hone their musical skills but also delve into various educational methods and psychological knowledge. Participation in the project also facilitates greater interaction and communication with mentors outside of class, enhancing learning capabilities and providing more practical opportunities. This helps develop the ability to integrate theoretical knowledge with practice, equipping members with real-world problem-solving skills. They learn to support each other in a team environment, work collaboratively, and take responsibility for their individual tasks while coordinating with others.

By implementing the project, it demonstrates

ongoing significance for music majors. It offers an effective avenue for project-based research. Music majors can gain a range of skills throughout the process, including reinforcing and expanding music theory, enriching music classroom teaching experiences, and learning teamwork, innovation, and research skills. Completing the project not only achieves its objectives but also equips participants with valuable skills that aid in securing employment post-graduation.

The “Sister Qianqian Talks Music” project is conceived against the backdrop of current educational reforms. Its initial intent is to contribute to enhancing the nation’s music literacy. The goal of the music enlightenment stage isn’t to have children master instrument playing or complex theory; music skills require long-term practice and accumulation. For instance, it’s typically advised to start learning instruments around ages 5 to 7, avoiding rushing progress [9]. The focus should be on nurturing musical potential and interest. Consequently, the project team carefully selected tracks for their melody and appeal, compiling a list of 100 pieces ideal for children’s classical music enlightenment, greatly aiding in building a solid musical foundation. During childhood, students are introduced to aesthetic education. The “double reduction” policy mandates a multifaceted approach to teaching arts, showcasing vibrant characters and intense emotions in songs [10]. Teachers must inspire a love for the arts, alleviate academic pressures, and help develop wholesome personalities, fostering a well-rounded worldview and aesthetic appreciation. Hence, the project aims to offer a convenient method for music enlightenment, benefiting both children and project participants by enhancing their comprehensive abilities.

### **5. Effective Path for Music Majors to Participate in Project Research**

Project research opportunities available to contemporary college students are increasingly diverse, ranging from various professional competitions, challenge contests, scientific research and experimental projects, technological innovation projects, to research and teaching initiatives. However, these projects share a common limitation: they are typically confined to in-school projects. Opportunities for music majors to engage in

experimental or innovative projects are limited, further narrowing the choices available. Commonly, music majors participate in music competitions or join their professional tutors’ research and teaching projects.

“Sister Qianqian Talks Music—100 Essential Classical Pieces for Children” is part of a college students’ innovation and entrepreneurship competition, another form of project research. After joining the innovation training program, the project team members started by discussing the research direction with their mentor, exploring areas they excel in or are passionate about to identify innovative extensions. They determined the project’s direction, name, and content. Meetings were held with team members to discuss specifics, analyzing strengths and weaknesses and formulating plans. They divided tasks, collected and organized data, and prepared for the project’s launch. They then implemented and conducted practical research, continuously refining the project. Throughout this process, the project team acquired substantial knowledge and skills. Initially, members were unfamiliar with initiating project research upon entering Hubei Normal University. However, they progressively learned how to define research directions and advance projects under their mentor’s guidance. Alongside enhancing their music-related knowledge, they gradually mastered the skills required for participating in project research.

For example, when collecting and sorting out the songs, the project team needs to combine the connotations of the songs with the psychological characteristics of children, applying teaching and psychology theories in practical contexts. When exchanging teaching experience with professional teachers, members transition from “how to fully convey knowledge to students” to “how to make students love listening and learning the knowledge taught.” Members can also participate in their tutors’ teaching research projects, increasing opportunities to engage in additional projects. During holidays in the project, members participated in community volunteer tutoring activities, providing learning guidance for unsupervised children. This practical experience enhanced teaching skills, allowed observation of children’s psychology, and provided valuable insights for later practical research. It helped solve issues such

as designing survey classroom segments and collecting and organizing questionnaires. Such holiday practices themselves serve as a form of project research, meaning that participating in one project often involves being involved in multiple projects simultaneously. On the other hand, after participating in the innovation competition, members gain opportunities to exchange ideas and learn from many experienced teachers across different majors and departments at Hubei Normal University and even throughout Huangshi City. During this period, college students can access tutor-led research projects and those from external organizations that they would not normally hear about through recommendations and introductions from these experienced teachers. There are many stages in the entire college students' innovation and entrepreneurship competition project that allow project members to connect with more projects, broadening their previously limited knowledge sources and opportunities to participate in projects. Therefore, music majors can choose to break through information barriers by engaging in project research, increasing interactions with experienced tutors, and broadening their options for other research projects. This also demonstrates that the innovation training project of the Dachuang Competition is an effective pathway for music majors to participate in project research.

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