

# Factors Influencing Students' Learning Preferences in College Piano Teaching and Countermeasures

Xiaoxiao Jia\*, Malang Ma. Esperanza (Adviser)\*

Graduate School, Angeles University Foundation, Angeles City 2009, Philippines

\* Correspondence: jia.xiaoxiao@auf.edu.ph

\* Correspondence: malang.maesperanza@auf.edu.ph

**Abstract:** In the course of higher education development, piano teaching plays a vital role in fostering students' basic musical literacy, guiding them to form good music learning habits, helping them establish a fundamental understanding of music knowledge, and thereby enhancing their music appreciation abilities. Due to the diversification of educational environments and the increasing personalization of student demands, in order to improve the quality of piano music teaching and stimulate students' potential, it is crucial to study students' learning preferences from various angles. This forms an important foundation for personalized teaching. Therefore, university piano teaching still needs continuous improvement in teaching strategies. Piano teaching should be adjusted according to course requirements, abandoning outdated piano education concepts and rigid methods, and analyzing from multiple dimensions to clarify the connection between students' learning preferences and the effectiveness of piano teaching. This helps students master piano playing techniques and strengthen their skills, equipping them with solid basics and advancing college piano education to new heights.

**Keywords:** College Piano Teaching; Learning Preferences; Influencing Factors.

## 1. The Significance of Researching Students' Learning Preferences in College Piano Teaching

Studying the factors influencing students' learning preferences in college piano teaching is of great significance as shown in Figure 1. It helps teachers better understand individual differences among students, thus enabling tailored instruction and enhancing teaching effectiveness[1-2]. It also helps uncover students' potential and improve their initiative, aiding in their personalized development. By analyzing

students' learning preferences in depth, teachers can more accurately grasp students' interests and challenges, using these as a basis to optimize and refine teaching content and adjust teaching plans, ensuring piano teaching meets students' actual needs. The process of researching the factors affecting students' learning preferences is also a deep dive into understanding students, where teachers can actively interact with students to clarify their actual needs, build a harmonious classroom atmosphere, and lay a solid foundation for students' comprehensive development and enhancement of artistic literacy.

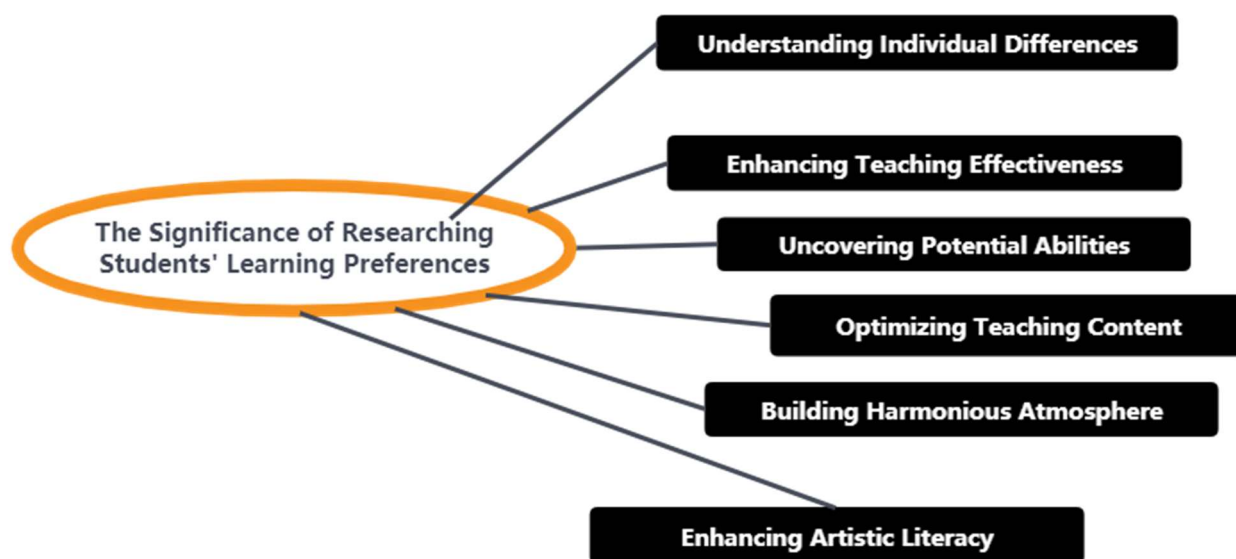


Figure 1. The Significance of Researching Students' Learning Preferences

## **2. Factors Influencing Students' Learning Preferences in College Piano Teaching**

### **2.1. Hardware Facilities**

In college piano teaching, students' learning preferences are closely influenced by various factors, among which hardware facilities play a crucial role. Pianos, being large and expensive instruments, present unique challenges. Due to the high number of students in college piano programs, the allocation of pianos as essential teaching hardware is often insufficient [3-4]. As a result of such limitations, some colleges experience a shortage of pianos, causing students to endure long wait times for limited practice sessions. This shortage directly affects subsequent piano instruction, diminishing the quality of teaching and reducing students' enthusiasm over time. Consequently, this issue leads to a gradual decline in students' overall professional abilities and hinders their development.

### **2.2. Teaching Content**

The development of individual students' learning preferences is a complex and multifaceted process. A rational allocation of teaching content plays a critical role in this regard. Traditionally, piano instruction has emphasized the establishment of students' fundamental theoretical frameworks but has often lacked practical courses essential for improving their performance abilities. The specialized nature of piano textbooks, which include works such as Czerny's exercises, Chopin's études, Bach's Well-Tempered Clavier, Mozart's sonatas, Beethoven's sonatas, and Liszt's compositions, necessitates long-term training for students to achieve a high level of coordination and artistic expression. However, due to the influence of traditional teaching practices, the absence of sufficient practical components has made it challenging for students to meet performance requirements and accurately interpret musical works with artistic depth. To align with the principles of quality education, instructors should emphasize the cultivation of students' performance skills by adjusting teaching practices and textbook selection. Integrating theory with practice and tailoring instruction to meet students' individual developmental needs is essential for fostering well-rounded musical proficiency.

### **2.3. Teaching Methods**

In the context of college-level piano instruction, one of the primary obstacles to teaching innovation and student development is the rigidity and uniformity of traditional teaching methods. The conventional approach typically involves teachers beginning with theoretical explanations, followed by performance demonstrations. Students then observe, imitate, and receive critiques and corrections from their instructors [5-6]. While this model primarily focuses on solo performances, it fails to foster students' collaborative skills and limits opportunities for mutual learning and peer feedback. Consequently, the overall quality of learning is constrained, making it difficult for students to achieve personalized development in piano performance and emotional expression. Furthermore, each student differs in terms of foundational piano skills, learning capabilities, and emotional sensitivity. Applying a one-size-fits-all teaching

model cannot adequately address the diverse needs of individual learners. This approach often results in some students falling behind their peers, thereby widening the achievement gap and impeding the development of their innovative abilities. To overcome these challenges, adopting more flexible, student-centered teaching methodologies is crucial for promoting both individual growth and collective progress.

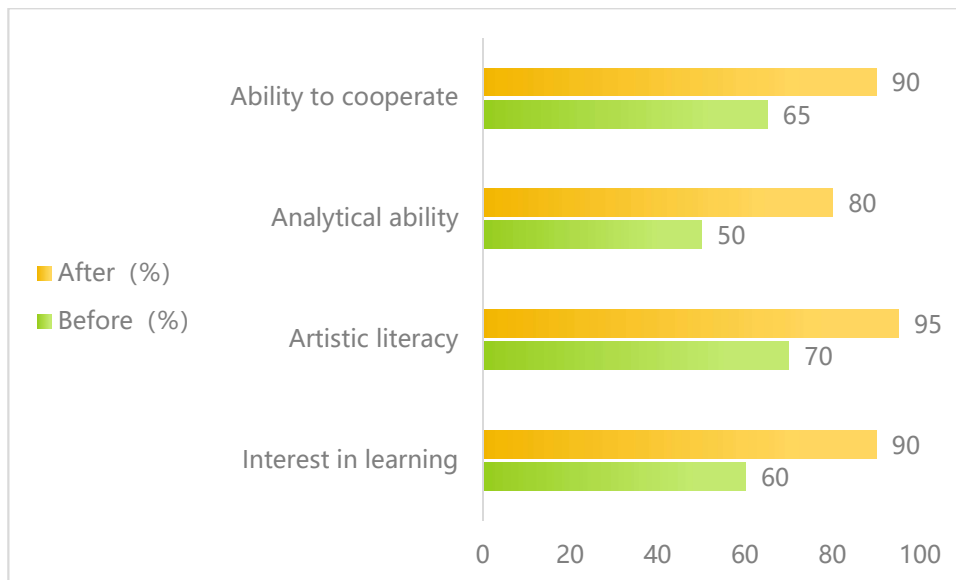
### **2.4. Evaluation System**

Teaching evaluation is a benchmark for measuring teaching effectiveness and a compass for adjusting and optimizing teaching strategies. Although the current college piano teaching evaluation system differs from exam-oriented professional courses, it still has limitations. The comprehensive analysis of the current piano teaching evaluation system in colleges reveals that its assessment content is limited to students' scores on in-class tests, periodic exam results, and daily classroom performance, lacking standards for evaluating students' innovative abilities and emotional expression in piano art. A comprehensive teaching evaluation system needs to assess teaching effects at each stage, which is the main basis for adjusting piano teaching details. However, continuing the traditional teaching evaluation system makes it difficult to fully understand students' comprehensive professional cultivation in piano and hinders the development of their independent innovative abilities.

## **3. Countermeasures Based on Students' Learning Preferences to Improve Teaching Methods**

### **3.1. Innovating Piano Teaching Concepts**

With continuous deepening of educational reforms, the upgrading of teachers' concepts has laid a solid foundation for teaching innovation. Advanced educational philosophies guide teachers' actions. Piano teaching, as a core part of music arts education, bears the responsibility of passing down skills and cultivating students' artistic literacy and innovative capabilities. In their daily teaching activities, teachers can combine score analysis with piano teaching, guiding and focusing on students' independent analysis abilities to further conduct piano teaching activities. For this purpose, teachers should fully respect students' subjectivity and actively uncover their potential. In the phase of memorizing scores, teachers can lead students to find the development rules of various chords, extracting fixed chords, and, if necessary, extend these to the use of the same chords in other pieces to enhance students' interest in learning, thereby reducing the difficulty of memorization and helping students master playing techniques, making teaching methods more personalized[7]. Additionally, in finger exercise guidance, each student has unique finger movement capabilities, and teachers should focus on uncovering these abilities, devising finger training plans based on students' performance skills, following the basic principles of progressing from slow to fast and from easy to difficult, to enhance students' keyboarding abilities and coordination, allowing students to genuinely feel their progress and increase their enthusiasm for practice (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** The promotion effect of innovative teaching concepts

### 3.2. Enriching Piano Teaching Methods

In the process of deepening reforms in college piano teaching, teachers should consider "what kind of people to cultivate, how to cultivate people, and for whom to cultivate people" as the core of optimizing education. Innovative teaching methods can significantly improve the effectiveness of piano teaching. In the current stage of piano teaching, Western art works occupy a large proportion, resulting in a lack of local content in the curriculum. Although Western piano art has a long history and has produced many world-renowned masterpieces, a comprehensive analysis of works from various periods and countries shows that the main motivation for piano artists' creation is humanistic elements. Chopin's piano works are a typical example; his music is closely connected with the fate of Poland and contains deep national music elements, demonstrating his profound love for his homeland. Whether in France, Italy, or Russia, national music themes are selected for creation, giving piano art more national characteristics. For this reason, when conducting piano music teaching activities, it is necessary to not only clarify the factors affecting students' learning preferences but also enhance the national characteristics of piano art. To enable students to discover the artistic charm of piano pieces and inherit Chinese piano culture, teachers should offer courses with general content analysis, introducing literature, history, philosophy, aesthetics, and other disciplines, guiding students to focus on the development of national music art in relation to nature, production, customs, and other aspects, expanding the analysis range of Chinese piano pieces, and equipping students with more knowledge conducive to creating Chinese piano works, thus strengthening students' appreciation and creative abilities.

### 3.3. Respecting Individual Differences Among Students

In the practical context of piano teaching, creating an interactive classroom environment can significantly enhance teaching quality. Such an environment allows teachers to rapidly assess students' learning outcomes, enabling students to identify their areas of improvement and receive timely feedback. This process comprehensively enhances teaching effectiveness. To achieve this, teachers should assess various

aspects of students' learning abilities and outcomes during teaching activities, understand the individual differences among students, and recognize each student's unique strengths and weaknesses. Only by fully grasping these elements and providing targeted instruction can the overall quality of students' education be comprehensively improved [8-9]. Furthermore, teachers should be aware of the inherent differences among students and the factors influencing their learning preferences, acknowledging that such issues objectively exist. When teaching classical pieces, instructors should first group students based on their mastery of existing knowledge, skills, and interest in the teaching content, providing a solid foundation for individualized analysis. After grouping students, teachers should tailor the teaching content and objectives for each group. For groups with strong overall abilities, higher teaching goals and more rigorous performance training should be set to enable polished interpretations of musical works. Conversely, for groups with more limited abilities, the primary teaching objectives should focus on mastering basic playing techniques and developing a foundational understanding of the emotional aspects of the pieces, followed by positive guidance to gradually enhance all students' abilities.

### 3.4. Developing and Utilizing Course Resources

With the rapid advancement of modern information technology, "Information Technology + Education" has emerged as a significant driver of educational modernization. This development presents new opportunities for piano education. Teachers can integrate real-world scenarios with new media technology by creatively applying digital resource collection, presentation, and dissemination into teaching media. For example, establishing an online music appreciation platform allows students to evaluate similar piano pieces, stimulating their artistic thinking about piano music while jointly exploring style, central themes, creative techniques, and performance approaches with their instructors. Additionally, students can collect pieces according to their preferences, which, after teacher approval, can be incorporated into tailored piano teaching plans. Prior to each class, digital resources can be utilized to play piano music, creating an artistic atmosphere, stimulating students'

auditory senses, guiding them in music appreciation, and encouraging associative thinking. This approach allows students to apply previously acquired piano knowledge during class activities. Moreover, identifying integration points between teaching highlights and digital resources and combining these elements can optimize the use of digital resources in piano instruction, further enhancing the learning experience.

### 3.5. Constructing a Scientific Evaluation System

In the traditional college piano teaching evaluation system, the focus is overly on single-result evaluations, which are somewhat one-sided and fail to fully reflect students' learning situations, even potentially discouraging students. A correct, reasonable, and rigorous evaluation system is crucial for enhancing students' comprehensive music literacy. Therefore, during the piano course teaching process, teachers should play an important role in evaluation, analyzing the factors influencing students' learning preferences one by one, adopting result-oriented evaluations, process-oriented evaluations, and multi-dimensional evaluations as shown in Table 1, to fully utilize the evaluation mechanism and thereby enhance students' initiative and learning abilities[10-13]. Compared to others, this evaluation mechanism features multi-dimensional characteristics and cannot be single-faceted, one-sided, or mechanized. For this reason, teachers can evaluate students from multiple aspects, such as skills, appreciation, and knowledge reserves. Additionally, teachers can encourage students to conduct self-evaluations, allowing students to comprehensively review their own learning during the evaluation process, recognize and identify various problems in piano courses, and correct them under the guidance of teachers, which is conducive to students' self-development[14]. Finally, students can also evaluate each other, which can be conducted in class or outside of class, and teachers should encourage students to critique and correct their classmates and partners, as well as accept such criticism and correction, to improve their own learning abilities[15].

**Table 1.** Key Elements of Constructing a Scientific Evaluation System

Evaluation dimension	Description	Mode of implementation
Evaluation of results	The traditional single evaluation method may frustrate the enthusiasm of students	Exam results, in-class tests
Process evaluation	Analyze the factors that affect students' learning preferences and improve their subjective initiative	Skills evaluation, classroom performance
Diversified evaluation	From the skills, appreciation, knowledge reserves and other aspects of the comment	Teachers' comprehensive evaluation, students' self-evaluation and mutual evaluation

## 4. Conclusion

As discussed above, under the backdrop of quality

education, piano teaching has become an important content of the college teaching system. To further enhance students' comprehensive piano art literacy, teachers should deeply realize the important responsibilities they bear, analyze the factors affecting students' learning preferences from various angles, and use traditional teaching concepts and methods as the basis for targeted educational adjustments and enhancements. In addition, teachers should also technically adjust and improve piano teaching content, establish objective teaching evaluation systems, and guide students to flexibly use various piano playing techniques, thereby continuously enhancing students' innovative abilities and cultivating more versatile talents.

## References

- [1] House, R. J., & Wigdor, L. A. (1967). Herzberg's dual-factor theory of job satisfaction and motivation: A review of the evidence and a criticism. *Personnel Psychology*, 20(4), 369-389.
- [2] Krueger, P. J. (2000). Beginning music teachers: Will they leave the profession?. Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 19(1), 22-26.
- [3] Hoekstra, H. A. (2011). A career roles model of career development. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 78(2), 159-173.
- [4] Edwards, K., & Quinter, M. (2011). Factors influencing students career choices among secondary school students in Kisumu municipality, Kenya. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 2(2), 81-87.
- [5] Li, Y. A., Whalley, J., Zhang, S., & Zhao, X. (2011). The higher educational transformation of China and its global implications. *The World Economy*, 34(4), 516-545.
- [6] Luo, R. & Guo, L. (2016). The dilemma and countermeasures of music teacher career development in agriculture and forestry colleges. *Teacher*, 32, 124-126.
- [7] Luo, R. (2017). Research on the Career Development of Local Provincial University Musical Teachers--In the Cases of Hunan [Master dissertation, Hunan Agricultural University].
- [8] Heale, R., & Twycross, A. (2017). What is a case study?. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 21(1), 7-8.
- [9] Herzberg, F. (2017). *Motivation to work*. Routledge.
- [10] Heale, R., & Twycross, A. (2017). What is a case study?. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 21(1), 7-8.
- [11] Herzberg, F. (2017). *Motivation to work*. Routledge.
- [12] Maguire M., & Delahunt B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: a practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *All Ireland Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 8(3), 33501-33514. <http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/335>.
- [13] Jiang, X. Reflections on Practical Teaching of Piano Course in Music Major of Local Higher Normal Colleges. In 5th International Conference on Arts, Design and Contemporary Education (ICADCE 2019). Atlantis Press, August, 2019.
- [14] Lai, S. Development of Piano Teaching in Diversified Music Education Major, 2019.
- [15] Yan, W. U. Exploration on Teaching Reform of Vocal Music in Music Education Major in Colleges and Universities. *DEStech Transactions on Computer Science and Engineering*, (iccis), 2019.