

# **Creating Pipa Performance Exercise Book for Non-Pipa Major First Year Students at Shandong University of Arts, Shandong Province, China**

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## **Abstract**

This "Pipa Exercise Book" is designed for first-year university students who are not majoring in Pipa. It aims to provide comprehensive guidance, allowing them to grasp the basic techniques and knowledge of Pipa performance. The book covers fundamental aspects of the Pipa, such as its developmental history, structure, as well as techniques for both the left and right hands. Additionally, it includes simple melodies and practice pieces suitable for beginners, along with representative pieces for intermediate learners, intended to help students progressively enhance their performance skills. Through this book, students can systematically learn Pipa performance, establishing a solid foundation for their future studies and development in the field of music. This manual serves as a valuable learning resource for non-Pipa majors, enabling them to better understand and master this ancient and beautiful instrument.

**Keywords:** Pipa performance; practice guide; non-Pipa majors; basic skills; Pipa learning

## **Introduction**

Pipa, as a precious heritage of China traditional music culture, has a long history bearing rich emotions and profound cultural connotations. In the long development, the pipa has experienced many changes and improvements from ancient times, and reached its brilliant peak in the prosperous period of Tang and Song Dynasties. It used to be a courtyard musical instrument of noble scholars, and it was also an important part of court and temple music. Pipa inherits not only musical skills, but also China's culture, history and emotion (Jin, 2023). Nowadays, pipa has become an indispensable part of music education in China. Schools and music institutions offer pipa courses one after another, attracting learners who are interested in China traditional music. The teaching methods of pipa are increasingly diversified and mature. For beginners, the teaching will focus on the basic skills and postures of the pipa, helping students to correctly hold the pipa and master the basic playing skills (Li, 2023). This covers the cultivation of finger flexibility and accuracy, as well as familiarity with the unique playing method of pipa (Wang, 2023). The key to teaching lies in persistent practice and guidance. Students need to master the essence of pipa through long-term study and personalized guidance. Teachers often use workbooks, demonstration performances and individual tutoring to help students understand and apply what they have learned. Pipa, as a musical art, is not only a learning skill, but also a way to understand the cultural connotation of China traditional music. In teaching, students will gradually come into contact with a rich repertoire, from classic

traditional repertoire to modern playing works, and appreciate the unique timbre and musical charm of pipa (Lin, 2022).

With the progress of science and technology, pipa teaching has entered a new era. Online courses and multimedia resources provide students with more learning choices and convenience, which makes the ways of learning pipa more diversified and rich. Both traditional face-to-face teaching and modern online courses have opened up opportunities for students to explore the art of pipa.

### **Research Objectives**

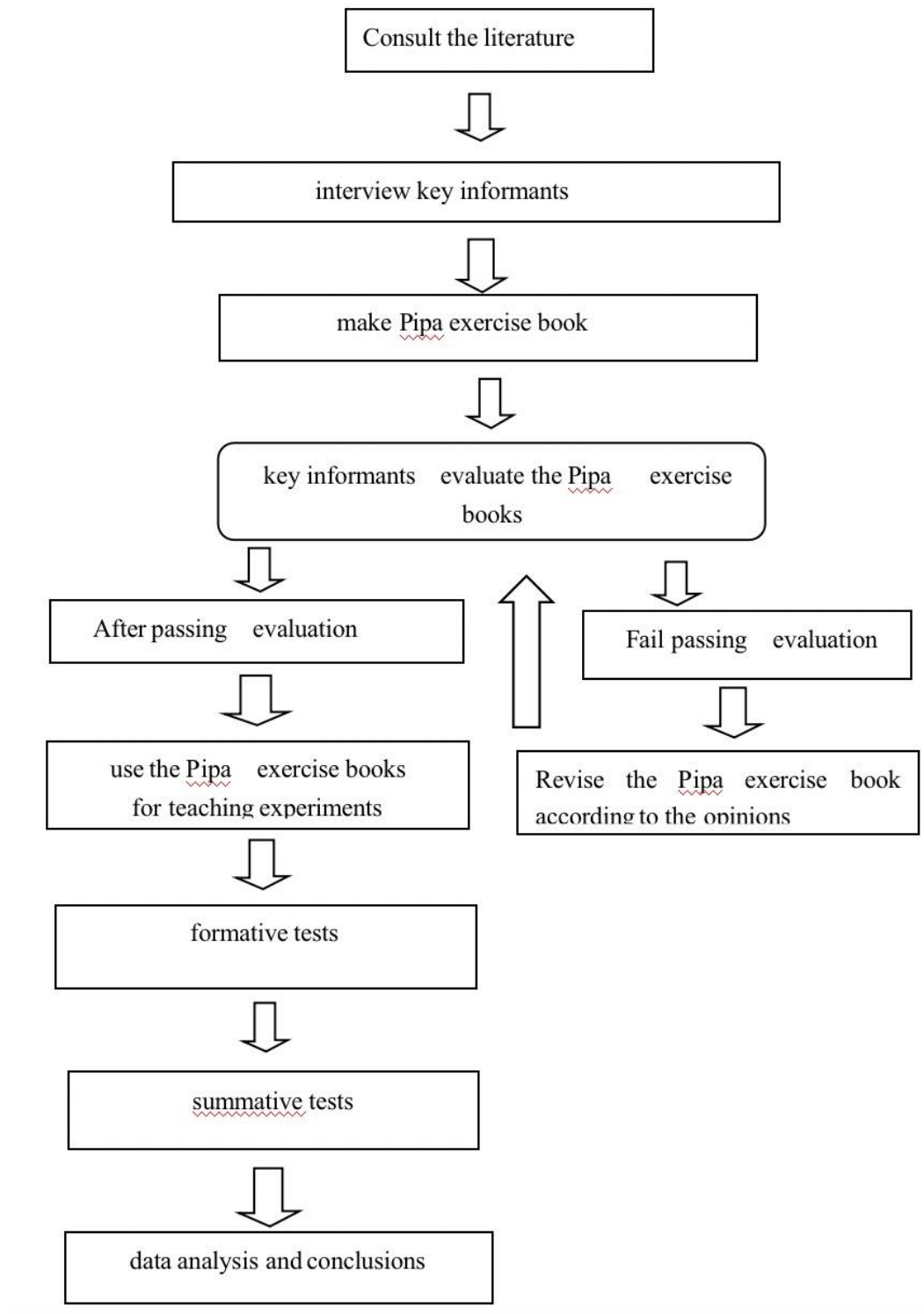
1. To study pipa technique.
2. To write pipa exercise book.
3. To teach students by pipa exercise book.
4. To evaluation the effect of teaching

### **Research Methodology**

This study adopts the method of combining qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research: interview experts to observe students' learning ability, performance and acceptance during and after the experiment. Quantitative research: This study tests students and sorts out and analyzes their test results.

The population of this study is 20 freshmen majoring in music in Shandong University of Arts, and the sample is 6 students who voluntarily choose Pipa. This study invites three experts, each of whom is a teacher who meets the requirements of four experts. Interview experts, collect information about pipa and pipa teaching, practice manuals and experimental courses, and evaluate experimental data.

## Research Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1** Research Conceptual Framework

## Research Results

Three experts from the expert group evaluated the feasibility of Pipa Practice Manual, and evaluated the consistency, feasibility and effectiveness of the project objectives through IOC.  $\text{IOC Index} = 1+1+1+1+0.67+1+1+1+0.67+1 = 9.34$ , the final Average of IOC is 0.934.

**Table1:**Expert evaluation of "Pipa Exercise Book" (IOC)

|         | Evaluation problem                          | EXP1 | EXP2 | EXP3 | Sum   | result  |
|---------|---|------|------|------|-------|---------|
| 1       | Cover design of Exercise book               | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1     | confirm |
| 2       | Pipa playing skills                         | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1     | confirm |
| 3       | Performance style of songss                 | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1     | confirm |
| 4       | Integration of theory into practice         | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1     | confirm |
| 5       | Reasonable arrangement of songss            | 1    | 0    | 1    | 0.67  | confirm |
| 6       | The difficulty is suitable for students.    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1     | confirm |
| 7       | Technical learning improvement              | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1     | confirm |
| 8       | The difficulty of the songs                 | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1     | confirm |
| 9       | Introduction to pipa skills                 | 1    | 1    | 0    | 0.67  | confirm |
| 10      | Introduction to the Basic Knowledge of Pipa | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1     | confirm |
| total   |   |      |      |      | 9.34  |         |
| average |   |      |      |      | 0.934 |         |

According to the data, the final score of IOC is 9.34, with an average of 0.934. This data value shows that the expert group is very satisfied with the feasibility of Pipa Practice Manual.

"Pipa Eexercise Book1" aims to help non-Pipa major music students learn to play Pipa. It contains the historical background, playing skills and representative tracks of Pipa, which can help students understand Pipa music. The wxercise book not only contains relevant theoretical knowledge, but also makes an in-depth analysis of technical difficulties in combination with actual performance and etudes, which helps students to understand the style characteristics of pipa music. At the same time, the guidebook contains four small and medium-sized pieces of music. These four pieces are representative works of pipa works, which are difficult to some extent, and also incorporate the methods and techniques of playing pipa, which can help students master pipa music more comprehensively in pipa learning.

The researcher conducted a 16-week experiment on six pipa students, one class per week, with a total of 16 classes. In order to further understand the experimental results, the researchers conducted three formative tests on students at the 3rd, 7th and 15th weeks respectively, and conducted a summative test at the 16th week. The form of the test is that students score the performance of a piece of music or an etude, and the score is divided into four grades: A (>85), B (80-85), C (70-79) and D (60-69).

**Table2** :Formative tests for students in Week 3

| Student | Scale of score(100)            |  |                             | Total score<br>(100) | Teacher<br>evaluation |
|---------|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
|         | Performance<br>ability<br>(60) | Master the<br>musical style<br>of pipa<br>(30) | Mood and<br>emotion<br>(10) |                      |                       |
| 01      | 40                             | 19   | 7                           | 66                   | D                     |
| 02      | 38                             | 18   | 6                           | 62                   | D                     |
| 03      | 39                             | 22   | 7                           | 68                   | D                     |
| 04      | 35                             | 23   | 7                           | 65                   | D                     |
| 05      | 45                             | 21   | 8                           | 74                   | C                     |
| 06      | 42                             | 20   | 8                           | 70                   | C                     |

In the third week of the course, all 6 students participated in the first Formative test, and each student independently played "Scale etude". The test results were: 4 students for D (60-69) and 2 students for C (70-79), and the average was 67.5. Because the students have no basic knowledge of pipa, they are not fully prepared for this exam, and they are not familiar with pipa skills, and their mastery of left-handed and right-handed playing skills is not accurate. However, through the test, the students' learning effect has been tested, and the teachers have a better understanding of the students' problems.

**Table3** :Formative tests for students in Week 7

| Student | Scale of score(100)            |  |                             | Total score<br>(100) | Teacher<br>evaluati<br>on |
|---------|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
|         | Performance<br>ability<br>(60) | Master the<br>musical style<br>of pipa<br>(30) | Mood and<br>emotion<br>(10) |                      |                           |
| 01      | 43                             | 20   | 8                           | 71                   | C                         |
| 02      | 39                             | 20   | 7                           | 66                   | D                         |
| 03      | 40                             | 23   | 8                           | 71                   | C                         |
| 04      | 38                             | 24   | 8                           | 70                   | C                         |
| 05      | 46                             | 22   | 8                           | 76                   | C                         |
| 06      | 43                             | 21   | 9                           | 73                   | C                         |

In the seventh week of the course, all six students took part in the second formative test, and each student played "Etudes of Wheel Fingers" independently. The test results are: 1 student in D (60-69) and 5 students in C (70-79), with an average score of 71.17. The students have made progress in mastering the playing skills of left and right hands. Through the test, students' learning effect has been tested, and teachers have a better understanding of students' problems.

**Table 4**:Formative tests for students in Week 15

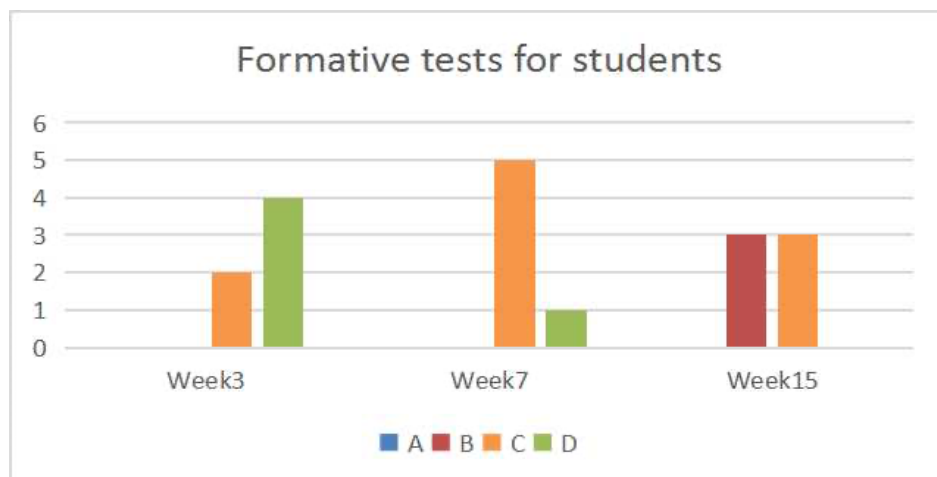
| Student | Scale of score(100)            |  |                             | Total score<br>(100) | Teacher<br>evaluati<br>on |
|---------|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
|         | Performance<br>ability<br>(60) | Master the<br>musical style<br>of pipa<br>(30) | Mood and<br>emotion<br>(10) |                      |                           |
| 01      | 45                             | 21   | 9                           | 75                   | C                         |
| 02      | 46                             | 20   | 8                           | 74                   | C                         |
| 03      | 46                             | 24   | 9                           | 79                   | C                         |
| 04      | 50                             | 25   | 8                           | 83                   | B                         |
| 05      | 51                             | 25   | 8                           | 84                   | B                         |
| 06      | 52                             | 24   | 8                           | 84                   | B                         |

In the 15th week of the course, all six students took the second formative test, and each student played “Fengyang Flower Drum” independently. The test results are as follows: 3 people got Grade B (80-85) and 3 people got Grade C (70-79), with an average score of 79.83. The students have made progress in mastering the playing skills of left and right hands. Through the test, students' learning effect has been tested, and teachers have a better understanding of students' problems.

**Table 5 :** Formative test Comparison of results form

| Level of results | Formative test Comparison of results |                  |                  |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                  | Formative test 1                     | Formative test 2 | Formative test 3 |
| A                | 0                                    | 0                | 0                |
| B                | 0                                    | 0                | 76(50%)          |
| C                | 72(33%)                              | 72.2(83.33%)     | 83.67(50%)       |
| D                | 65(66.67%)                           | 66 (16.67%)      | 0                |
| Average score    | 67.5                                 | 71.17            | 79.83            |

**Table 6:** Comparison of Formative Test Results



**Table 7:** Summative test

| Student | Scale of score(100)         |  |                          | Total score<br>(100) | Teacher evaluation |
|---------|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
|         | Performance ability<br>(60) | Master the musical style of pipa<br>(30) | Mood and emotion<br>(10) |                      |                    |
| 01      | 55                          | 25                                       | 7                        | 87                   | A                  |
| 02      | 54                          | 26                                       | 7                        | 87                   | A                  |
| 03      | 56                          | 28                                       | 7                        | 91                   | A                  |
| 04      | 52                          | 25                                       | 8                        | 85                   | B                  |
| 05      | 54                          | 26                                       | 7                        | 87                   | A                  |
| 06      | 51                          | 28                                       | 7                        | 86                   | A                  |

**Table 8 :**Comparison of results

| Level of results | Comparison of results |                  |                  |                |
|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
|                  | Formative test 1      | Formative test 2 | Formative test 3 | Summative test |
| A                | 0                     | 0                | 0                | 87.6(83.33%)   |
| B                | 0                     | 0                | 76(50%)          | 85(16.67%)     |
| C                | 72(33%)               | 72.2(83.33%)     | 83.67(50%)       | 0              |
| D                | 65(66.67%)            | 66 (16.67%)      | 0                | 0              |
| Average score    | 67.5                  | 71.17            | 79.83            | 84             |

During the 16-week course, all six students took the summative test, and each student played Zizhu Tune independently. The test results were: 5 students in Group A (> 85) and 1 student in Group B (80-85), with an average score of 87.2.

In the 16th week of this semester, six students took a summative test, which included asking them to play a solo piece they were learning alone, which must be performed formally in performance clothes. Compared with the results of the previous Formative test, it is obvious that after one semester's study, the students have made great progress in playing pipa skills.

## Discussion

The text presents a study focused on developing a Pipa Exercise Book for university students not majoring in Pipa. It aimed to aid their learning of Pipa performance, covering techniques, historical context, and musical styles. The study used a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including expert evaluations and student performance assessments over 16 weeks.

The findings highlighted significant progress among the six students, evident through multiple formative and summative tests. These assessments tracked the students' improvement in Pipa-playing skills and understanding of musical styles. The consistent positive results indicated the effectiveness of the Pipa Exercise Book in facilitating their learning and skill development (Yang, 2023).

Ultimately, the study successfully met its objectives of creating a comprehensive resource for non-Pipa majors and evaluating its impact on their mastery of Pipa performance. The notable enhancements in student abilities throughout the experiment emphasized the book's effectiveness as a teaching tool (Li, 2023).

## Recommendation

### 1. Practical recommendation

Provide training and lectures for music educators, so that they have a clear understanding of the use of exercise books and teaching methods and use them correctly in teaching practice. Encourage students to apply for pipa performance elective courses, and improve students' practical experience and identity with Chinese traditional musical instrument pipa.

### 2. Recommendation for future research

Continuous improvement: regularly evaluate the teaching effect of workbooks, listen to the feedback from teachers and students, and constantly improve and perfect the contents and teaching methods of workbooks.

Generally speaking, the compilation of this Pipa Workbook provides a valuable teaching resource for the educators and students of Pipa elective courses in Shandong University of Arts, and also makes a positive contribution to the inheritance and development of Pipa. I hope this guide book can help students understand the unique charm of pipa and better inherit and carry forward this valuable local cultural heritage.

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