

Management of Research Projects Conducted by University Art Students in China: With the Fine Arts College of Sichuan Normal University as an Example

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Abstract

With the constant improvement of attention to students' activities in scientific research projects in Chinese universities, the students of university art majors are more positive in scientific research and the contents of such research are also get enriched. Observing the current situation, however, the work organization and its system for student research are not mature. Some deficiencies still exist in some aspects. By taking the Fine Arts College of Sichuan Normal University as the research object, this article therefore studies the measures on enhancing the management of the research projects done by the university art students with a wish to attract many valuable opinions.

Key words: University art students; Research project; Management; Strategy

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INTRODUCTION

Currently Chinese students are organized by universities step by step to engage in the research activities of science

projects. As a useful attempt in the education process of Chinese universities, this is good for the development of higher education and the overall quality improvement of students since it complies with the big development trend of quality education. So it is the concern of today's teaching staff and a problem to be earnestly settled on how to strengthen the management of research projects made by the university students. Being an important part in the management of university student research projects, the management of research projects done by the university art students has not only the general problems existing in the regular institutions of higher learning, but also some specific problems which are unique in art colleges. There are such typical general and specific problems concerning the management of research projects made by the art students in the Fine Arts College of Sichuan Normal University, which are worthy of the study and the discussion of the educators.

1. CONCEPT OF STUDENT RESEARCH

The undergraduate students in China, under the guidance of their teachers, may organize at present their respective teams so as to take research activities. Students are involved in research projects and play a leading role in research activities. Through the research of a concrete science project, the students may master the specific process and the research methods, which play an enlightenment role in undergraduate students' scientific research.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDENT RESEARCH

There are important meanings in organizing the university students for researching science projects. First, university education always neglect the practice activities of the students, leading to the severe disconnection between

the university education and the real life, which is hard to arouse the students' resonance in the process of teaching. The launch of student research activities in science projects is a good channel for their practice. The students can put the theory learned in classes into practice. This is good for students to master the knowledge. Second, although there's the gap between the undergraduates and those for master/doctor degree in terms of the extent of mastering the knowledge, the undergraduates have powerful learning abilities and innovation spirit. There will frequently be some surprising scientific achievements out of the research projects conducted by the undergraduate students—no doubt a push to the development in the scientific research field. Finally, students may improve their own comprehensive qualities and reap a good sense of teamwork during the communications and cooperation with other students through such research projects. Their sense of responsibility is also cultivated via the research and the cooperation. These will play a significant role in their future development. A number of students in the Fine Arts College of Sichuan Normal University established their own research group. A product designed by them took part in the activities sponsored by the Sichuan Museum and gained decent results. Later, the students turned this product into a science project for research under the guidance of their academic advisor. It unexpectedly became one of the *National Undergraduate Training Programs for Innovation & Entrepreneurship*. Though this is only a special case, it has great relevance in encouraging more students to participate in research projects and even works as a good demonstration in mobilizing all university students in China for scientific research.

3. PROBLEMS IN RESEARCH PROJECTS MADE BY UNIVERSITY ART STUDENTS

There are many general problems among our art universities in the management of student-conducted research projects. However, there are also individual problems in project management due to different departments/colleges among the universities. The author has made systematic study in respect of the management of research projects in the Fine Arts College of Sichuan Normal University and finds the problems in the management of research projects conducted by the art students. These problems seriously affect the development of science projects done by the university art students in China. In the following paragraphs, the author will give a brief description of some individual problems during the management of art student research projects together with the general problems in the management of research projects conducted by the art students in all universities.

3.1 Some Art Schools Do Not Give Due Attention

The neglect of student-oriented research is a universal problem among the universities in education in China, which is particularly serious in art schools. Because of the specialty of the education in art schools, students mainly focus on learning art knowledge. This is bad to conduct research projects. Art schools do not pay attention to the research projects made by the students as no good management system is available. The students are not well organized or guided to take scientific research during the teaching. Meanwhile, not much support is given to the student-engaged research projects. There are obvious deficiencies from scientific research management, tutorship to the fund input. Because art schools do not take seriously the management of research projects in the art field, the art students cannot do research sufficiently, which affects the all-round development of the art students and hinders the improvement of students' quality. The Fine Arts College of Sichuan Normal University, however, makes much account of student-made scientific researches. Although there are still some problems, their support to such projects is bigger than that of other universities. The College allocated special funds in recent two years to support the students to apply for 30 College-level projects. More than RMB 20,000.00 is used to support and encourage students to apply for the university, province or even higher levels of projects. The students winning one of the *National Undergraduate Training Programs for Innovation & Entrepreneurship* mentioned above started their research at the very beginning from applying for the College-level project.

3.2 Universities Do Not Put the Student Research Activities Under Scientific Research Management Departments

Observing the current situation of research projects carried on by the art students in China, many universities have the obvious problem of mismanagement of the research projects, which has a strong impact on the launch of student research projects. The reason of this problem is mainly because that these universities do not put the student research activities under the research management departments for systematic management. Instead, these activities are set under the departments related to student management and employment. It is not difficult for us to find through the study of the Fine Arts College of Sichuan Normal University that this problem exists clearly in the management of scientific research projects. It puts the student research activities under the management of the Learning Department which is responsible for the study of the students instead of in the research management department. Although the Academics Department was also established based on the needs, the students and the teachers responsible for this department did not

conduct scientific projects in the past. This gives rise to the situation which is lacking in coordination during the management of student research projects and is bad for the students to do research projects.

3.3 The Level of Academic Advisors for Research Projects Remains to Improve

The undergraduates have severe flaws no matter in terms of knowledge or real operations. So their academic advisors' role cannot be neglected in their research activities. The advisors need to give the students careful and comprehensive guidance during the research so as to assist the students complete their projects. In the real process of research done by the art students, however, the lack or the poor quality of teachers leads to the fact that some advisors fail to play their due roles in students' research activities or cannot give comprehensive and correct guidance in some professional knowledge and concrete operation procedures. These seriously impact the spread of research activities made by the art students and are also easy to result in the failure of the student-conducted research projects, dampen the students' enthusiasm, and further affect the further improvement of students by making their research meaningless. In the Fine Arts College of Sichuan Normal University, 21 teachers are giving guidance to the student research projects. However, only 13 of them are also doing their respective projects at the same time. Some teachers completely do not play any guidance role at all during the research activities. They only sign on the students' reports so as to recognize students' research efforts halfheartedly.

3.4 Shortage of Intensive Study Ability

Besides the problems in both the universities and teachers in China concerning the management of research projects conducted by the university art students, there are also some problems within the students themselves. Many students are unclear of the purpose of a scientific research project. They do not understand the meaning of a scientific study because they neglect the role of a research project on themselves. Therefore, they do the research carelessly in such projects without the spirit of intensive study and cannot complete the research in a good manner. Such attitude is not only unfavorable to the students' development in the future, but also affects the cooperation of the whole research team, causing easily conflicts among the team members and affecting the final research results. A survey on the completion rate of research projects made by the students in the Fine Arts College of Sichuan Normal University demonstrates that some individual projects get delayed or cancelled every year. Such projects waste the teaching resources of both the University and the College, and go against the development of research projects carried on by the students.

4. MEASURES OF STRENGTHENING RESEARCH PROJECTS DONE BY UNIVERSITY ART STUDENTS

There's a positive role to art students for Chinese universities organize them to make research in science projects. So the universities should make constant efforts to improve the management of the art-student-centered research projects and create an excellent environment so that the students are actively encouraged to do the projects. Currently speaking, however, the large amount of shortcomings and inadequacies on project management in Chinese universities makes it hard to achieve the standards mentioned above. It is needed more than before the vast university teaching and management staff to draw upon all useful opinions and make constant explorations in order to formulate a set of management actions suitable to student research projects and to promote the overall improvement of students' integrated quality. Based on the research to the Fine Arts College of Sichuan Normal University, the author will mention some measures to solve the problems in the management of research projects done by the university art students with the combination of the author's own work experience.

4.1 To Set up a Special Management Department for Student Research

If Chinese art universities hope to change the confusion in the management of student-done research projects, the first thing they need to do is to make clear the management department for these projects. An independent department needs to be established in which professional people will do professional work. Special management procedures and system are drawn up so as to make comprehensive management to the research projects and activities conducted by the art students. At the same time, a set of effective incentive system should be formulated to stimulate the students' interest in research. These will be quite beneficial to the development of the research activities made by the art students.

4.2 To Improve the Procedures for a Project Application, Approval and Management

Research projects conducted by university students are not targeted at achieving scientific results. Instead, the purpose is more on cultivating the abilities of the undergraduates and improving their comprehensive quality. Thus, extraordinary attention should be paid to the application, the approval, and the management of the research projects in the process of project management of the art students. The management department needs to make a tight control in reviewing the students' applications, choose the research projects fit to the undergraduates, and play the role of scientific research to the maximum. The high-end

and obscure projects which are hard to tackle should be avoided to be made as the research objects to the greatest extent. At the same time, the management department should be strict in project management in order that the students can smoothly complete their research projects and gain something from the research.

4.3 To Enhance the Professional Quality of Academic Advisors

The management of research projects made by the university art students should intensify improving academic advisors' professional quality since they play a significant role in the students' research activities and have a great impact to the process of the projects. The departments managing the art student research projects should make strict selections to the academic advisors guiding student research activities. They should select the teachers with solid professional knowledge and excellent vocational skills for guidance. The academic advisors should be fully involved throughout the research activities from subject selection to conclusion. With timely correction to the mistakes and makeup the insufficiencies of the students during the research, they will help the students complete their research activities successfully.

4.4 To Train Students' Team Consciousness

Colleges and universities organize student to carry on the scientific research project activities. The purpose not only lies in scientific research project itself, but also cultivates more conscious of college students' team consciousness, which will help improve university students' spirit of collectivism. This is because with the continuous development of society and more and more refined social division of labor, collaboration between people have become more and more important. If students want to survive in modern society, first of all, they need to learn to deal with the relationship between the individual and group. Thus the development of colleges and universities students' scientific research project research activities can strengthen the team consciousness and unity cooperation ability. It effectively laid a solid foundation for the students for their future into the society.

SUMMARY

In the times of knowledge and economy and the rapid development of social information today, it is very important for a person to receive a good education of higher learning. It is good for a person's personal growth and social development. Institutions of higher education as the most important base of scientific knowledge for the students should undertake the responsibility of

cultivating the students' innovative ability and innovation spirit and the task of training of new talent. Students' scientific research project is to realize the students' goal from the classroom teaching to the practice of knowledge application. It is an effective way for the innovation level transformation. To develop students' scientific research project is to improve the students' innovative consciousness. It is the effective way to cultivate the students' scientific research ability. Thus the management of research projects made by the university students plays an important role in the development of university education in China. Therefore the management of the research projects done by the art students should be laid special emphasis in the future student research activities. The deficiencies in the project management should be energetically made up in order to promote the overall progress of university education.

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