

Article

Proposal of Specialized Curriculum for Elementary Arts Teacher Education

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Abstract: Taiwan launched the Twelve-year Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines in 2019 and led the third wave of education reform at all levels. Arts education is included still in schools but faces the challenge of integrated teaching in elementary schools. In order to prepare preservice teachers to adopt the integrated model of arts education, arts teacher education needs a new structure of curriculum in the sense of competency-driven education. Thus, we construct and recommend an arts specialized curriculum for training elementary art teachers.

Keywords: Arts Education, Competency Driven, Teacher Education, Specialized Curriculum

1. Introduction

Taiwan proclaimed the Curriculum Guidelines of Twelve-Year Basic Education-General Guidelines in 2014 and led the Arts Domain Curriculum Guideline in 2018 and implemented it in 2019. The basic concept of 12-year Basic Education is to encourage students to become spontaneous and motivated learners, thereby students are guided to “apply their learned knowledge, experience the meaning of life, develop the willingness to become engaged in the sustainable development of society, nature, and culture, facilitate the attainment of reciprocity and the common good” (MOE, 2014, pp.3). Core competencies are keys to curriculum development according to the goals and ideas of 12-year Basic Education and conceptualized that learned knowledge and ability need to be applied to real-life scenarios and developed holistically through action and self-development (MOE, 2014).

The Arts Domain Curriculum Guideline (MOE, 2018) carries the core competencies of the General Guidelines and develops unique qualities in arts education. While 12-year Basic Education promotes core competencies and stresses school curricula to implement competency-driven instruction and assessment, the Arts Domain not only follows in the steps of General Guidelines but also faces the challenge of integrating three subjects in Arts.

1.1 Challenges of Arts Domain

Arts Domain is a composite of music, visual arts, and performing arts (dance and drama) in Taiwan. Performing arts were included in arts education in 1998 when Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines: General Guidelines (MOE, 1998) were implemented, and arts education in the school system was named Arts and Humanities Learning Area (MOE, 2008). Both music and visual arts had a long history in school education in Taiwan, but it was the first time that performing arts were introduced to students in elementary schools. We are excited to welcome dance and drama to join Arts Education in the elementary school curriculum. On the other hand, we sobbed about the time reduction of Arts Education in the school schedule.

According to the National Curriculum Standards in 1993 which was the 9th edition for the elementary education of the last century, music and visual arts were scheduled 2 class periods per week each, in other words, 4 class periods per week for Arts Education. Based on Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines (MOE, 2003) in 2003, Arts Education was allocated 3 class periods per week, which meant music, visual arts, and performing arts each owned one class period in a week. Apparently, both music and visual arts were taken out of one class period compared to the time of National curriculum Standards.

Under the umbrella of “learning area,” education policymakers promoted the integration of three arts subjects but were not successfully adopted in elementary schools. Scholars criticized school teachers for skimping on an integrated curriculum without philosophy. On the other hand, school teachers defend that curriculum integration was ideal but not practical (Chou and Wang, 2019). School teachers asserted that an integrated curriculum was less professional and obstructed the learning of students (Ou and

Huang, 2007). Those critiques and arguments led to the decline of curriculum integration (Chou, 2003). Looking into the arts textbooks for elementary and secondary schools, we found these three arts subjects were arranged separately in most publications while the curriculum materials were taught by different arts specialized teachers. Arts teacher has difficulty in teaching arts simply because they are not trained in preservice teacher education. Subsequently, the minor revision of Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines in 2008 proclaimed that music, visual arts, and performing arts could be delivered independently. This compromise addressed the difficulty of integrating three arts subjects whereas 12-year Basic Education put forward the same idea again.

Teacher education is the decisive point to reach out a successful integrated arts curriculum for general education. Most teacher education institutions cultivate preservice teachers with specialized professions, namely, music, visual arts, dance, or drama. When those teachers with specialized professions acquire certifications as art teachers, they certainly teach a single art subject with their expertise. In order to implement integrated arts education in elementary schools, we have to change arts teacher education.

1.2 Arts Teacher Education

Teacher education in Taiwan is moving to Standard-Based Teacher Education (SBTE) from Competency-Based Teacher Education (CBTE). However, due to the implementation of 12-year Basic Education, the concept of education switches from competency-based education (CBE) to competency-driven education (CDE). Transforming from CBE in the early days, CDE defines competencies and the learning processes individually (Poth, Searle, Aquilina, Ge, and Elder, 2020). Many studies (Arends, 1971; Field, 1979; Vogler, 1973; Weber, 1970) stated that in the 60s to 70s, teacher education switched its focus from teaching knowledge and concepts to professional teaching performance of preservice teachers in practicum. Field (1979) asserted that CBTE weighted too much on the quantity of curriculum and preset assessment standards, thus the process of teacher education only cared about the knowledge of teaching contents, therefore performance-based teacher education (PBTE) eventually took its place. PBTE and CBTE both focus on learning outcomes yet train preservice teachers to explore teaching materials. As a result, many people believe that they are only different in focus or certificating standards as a curriculum philosophy. Even so, Field (1979) addressed that PBTE relied on the process of training or learning while CBTE emphasizes the measurable teaching behaviors of preservice teachers.

CBTE sets three curriculum standards: a) include knowledge of facts and principles, b) expect preservice teachers to demonstrate appropriate behaviors, and c) preservice teachers could foster their students (Vogler, 1973). Based on the definition of CBTE and its curriculum standards, we conclude the following characteristics and transform them into competency-driven teacher education (CDTE). Characteristics of CDTE include the following. (1) Competencies are defined as comprehensive behaviors in the teacher’s role when preservice teachers demonstrate according to society’s expectancy. Moreover, specific knowledge, skills, and behaviors as aforementioned should be assessed. (2) Assessment rubrics must be consistent and coordinate to particular competencies in the unique teaching situation of preservice teachers. (3) Learning assessment should use teaching performance as major evidence, because what preservice teachers learn must relate to planning, analyzing, explaining, and assessing curriculum according to education goals. (4) Learning pace is decided by the competency of preservice teachers but not “sit time” in teacher education. (5) Instructional program aims to enhance the development and evaluation of specific teaching competencies in certain subjects for preservice teachers.

Perspectives regarding CBE indicate that competency is not ability but vision and is a functional knowledge and ability, as well as an interdisciplinary ability (Lin, 2017). Based on CBE, CBTE develops principles as teachers’ characteristics and behaviors must demonstrate arts competency while teaching, such as concept, technique, and ability, competency of arts teacher education at elementary school level is evidence of preservice training completion, and systematically conduct teacher education curriculum evaluation according to elementary students’ arts education competency. Accordingly, Table 1 compares the differences in arts teacher education curriculum between CDTE and CBTE.

Table 1. Elementary arts teacher education curriculum characters

| Features | CDTE | CBTE |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Definition of competency | Comprehensive behaviors present in real-world that implementation what is learned from arts education | Performance as a qualified arts teacher conform to the program’s experts |
| Rubrics of assessment for courses | Apply assessment strategies for their children in learning arts | The certain competence of a teacher should be in the circumstance of the arts classroom |
| Basis for curriculum evaluation | Plan, develop, and carry out the arts curriculum for an elementary school in the future | Performance of teaching arts at the end of the curriculum. The outcomes should be based on the goal of arts education and lesson plan. |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Considerations of curriculum structure | Cultivate the competencies of teaching arts in its qualities rather than the amounts of credit | The learning outcomes should determine what competency of arts teacher is acquired not the amounts of credit-hour provided. |
| Goals of teaching practice courses | The purposes of arts education curriculum, teaching methods, and practice courses are to strengthen and evaluate competency development | The purposes of the instructional program are to strengthen knowledge and skill of arts and the ability to teach arts. |

To a certain degree, arts teacher education curriculum shares similar ideas of competency in both approaches. However, they hold different visions and results in constructing curriculum structure and perspective of teacher education. Thus, we propose competency-driven teacher education that is rooted in the competency of 12-year Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines, thus constructing a specialized curriculum for preservice arts teachers in the elementary school level.

In Taiwan, arts teacher education comprises preservice teacher education courses and a specialized curriculum. There are 46 credits of preservice teacher education courses for every major subject. In other words, preservice teachers have to complete the educational credits in order to fulfill the requirement whether they are going to be arts or science teachers. Preservice teacher education courses include content knowledge (CK), pedagogical knowledge (PK), and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), nevertheless, they are not specified subjects. In current stipulation, a teaching certificate neither specifies one's specialty in arts nor regulates arts teachers' specialized curriculum in preservice teacher education. Other than preservice teacher education courses, arts teachers receive their arts training from music, visual arts, dance, or drama departments in the university. The problem is that education courses, embedded in the teacher education program, plus arts courses (named as arts professional education or arts-specialized curriculum) do not equal arts education courses.

Departments of music, visual arts, dance, or drama mainly focus on techniques for the goal of arts professional education but seldom pay attention to arts education. CDTE is in need to enhance the competencies of future arts teachers for teaching integrated arts education according to the 12-year Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines. The essence of the problems is the different purpose of curriculum for teacher education from general higher education of arts-related departments.

Teacher education aims to educate future teachers, furthermore, it also means the education that preservice teachers will provide in the future. The goal of educating future teachers means to complete the mission of the latter one, thus the characteristics of education that preservice teachers will provide in the future become the foundation of teacher education. CDTE not only transforms from CBTE but also covers contemporary thoughts. For educating elementary school arts teachers, CDTE emphasizes integrating arts activities to develop arts curriculum for individual-fit learning experiences and growth according to goals and learning characteristics of the arts curriculum and no longer based on learning outcomes of curriculum contents. CDTE stresses preservice teachers' awareness and reflection of self-learning as well as the interaction of Arts Domain, but not whether teaching ability is identical to knowledge in curriculum goal and rubrics of assessment. Therefore, competency-driven arts teacher education emerges according to the 12-year Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines.

2. Methods

The competencies and performance in professional arts teaching of elementary arts teachers are the core issues in this study. Its standpoints fundamentally are taken by teacher education differently from arts professional education curriculum. The foundation of arts teacher education is learning how to acquire and master professional arts competencies and performance. Researchers attempt to solve the aforementioned issues by phenomenology by explaining and analyzing competency-driven education and exploring the proposition and philosophy of teacher education. Researchers focus on holistic and contemporary arts teacher education after analyzing its curriculum, thus we construct the structure of a specialized curriculum of arts teacher education based on the phenomena of future arts education led by competency-driven education (Crowther and Thomson, 2020; Mu, 1996; Nazir, 2016).

Phenomenology allows researchers to handle and solve problems comprehensively without presupposition through constant inquiry and an open attitude. We attempt to construct a specialized curriculum of arts teacher education through induction and description of phenomenology. The researchers try to interpret the essence of arts curriculum by examining elementary arts teacher education in Taiwan and other countries. In the discourses and analyses of this study, researchers propose a possible specialized curriculum for elementary arts teacher education according to the elementary school level of Arts Domain curriculum guidelines. Nevertheless, arts-related departments in universities may not have the capability to offer all the courses listed as specialized curricula. Arts universities usually have music, visual arts, dance, and drama departments while comprehensive universities might only have one to two related departments. To overcome the limitation, the cooperation of universities would be a feasible strategy.

Therefore, we recognize that a field test of curriculum development and evaluation of elementary arts teachers is crucial. However, time-consuming is followed for this proposal. The writing provides a window and path for arts teacher education in two dimensions: curriculum construction and preservice teacher assessment.

3. Results

The Arts Domain in 12-year Basic Education is proposed to be integrated arts education at the elementary school level. Therefore, arts teachers must acquire abilities in other art subjects to integrate arts education, or saying, teaching domain-based education. Even so, teaching individual art subjects is as important as implementing integrated arts education. Bloomfield and Child addressed that arts teachers could instruct separate disciplines or combine two disciplines in one lesson based on students' prior experiences from the main area of learning. Thus, three types of teaching sessions are comprised of the integrated arts model: single-subject sessions, two subjects taught simultaneously with one main focus, and the incorporation of four areas in a teaching cycle to form integrated arts workshops (Bloomfield and Childs, 2000).

We construct Arts Specialized Curriculum based on 12-year Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines as well as reflect the idea of the integrated arts model by Bloomfield and Child. Arts Specialized Curriculum is comprised of core courses, specialty courses, inter-discipline in the Arts Domain, and pedagogical courses in arts. The four-facet curriculum structure includes arts pedagogy knowledge (PK), arts instructional pedagogy knowledge (also PK), Arts Domain content knowledge (CK), arts instructional practice knowledge (PCK), and optional Arts Domain specialized knowledge and its educational practice knowledge (CK/PK). Those cover the required curriculum aspects of preservice education.

Core courses present the common characteristics and contents that arts subjects share, such as cultural context and principles of beauty in arts. History of Arts and Contemporary Aesthetics are representative courses in this category. History of Arts leads students to acknowledge various art forms in the social and cultural evolution in the historical context as well as the interaction and influence of different arts in the same context. Aesthetics has been regarded as a discipline of philosophy of beauty since the eighteenth century. Aesthetics discusses speculative issues as the essence and characteristics of beauty. Typically, contemporary aesthetics also concerns what and how modern and postmodern artworks express their characteristics. Regarding aesthetics, taste is an important word based on Hume's theory. Nowadays, it has changed subjectivity from observing an objective extending to self-reflection. Therefore, beauty has not been enough to cover everything. Kant believes that aesthetics must have no utilitarian purpose while Hegel advocates that artists should stay in the cultural context. The core of arts education is to understand the viewpoints of contemporary aesthetics and explore the meaning of beauty in various cultural contexts.

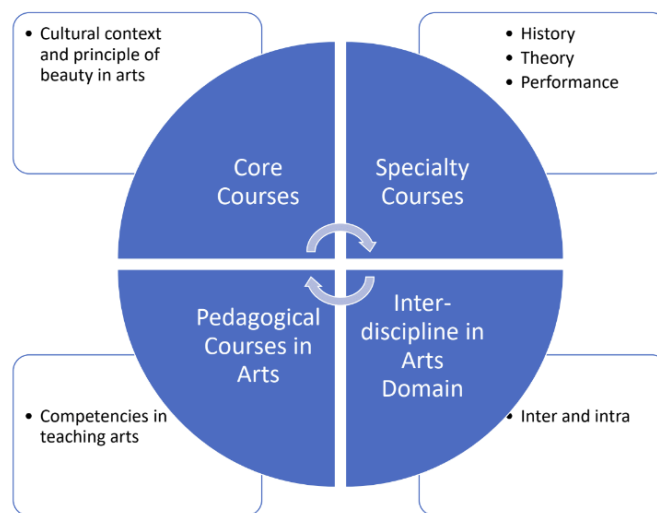


Fig 1. Course structure of arts specialized curriculum.

Specialty courses aim to cultivate knowledge and ability in a single art discipline, thus arts preservice teachers develop pedagogical knowledge and ability from their expertise in music, visual arts, dance, or drama. Specialty courses call for history, theory, and performance courses to foster the competencies of arts preservice teachers. Preservice teachers explore the development of the particular art discipline in the historical and cultural context, realize and master the characteristics from the theory base, and demonstrate beauty by time, or visual, aural, kinesthetic medium.

Courses of inter-discipline in the Arts Domain mean to enhance the competencies of arts preservice teachers in other arts disciplines other than their specialty. Courses share the same idea in the specialty of each category including history, theory, and performance.

All preservice arts teachers must obtain pedagogical competency both in domain and discipline teaching. Focus on domain teaching, Theory and Practice in Integrating Teaching, Arts Curriculum Design and Learning Assessment, Arts Curriculum Evaluation, and Technology Integrated Arts Teaching demonstrate the main competencies in integrated arts teaching. According to

the integrated arts model (Bloomfield and Childs, 2000), preservice teachers need to acquire competencies to teach single-subject sessions as well as two subjects taught simultaneously with one main focus, thus pedagogical competencies for each arts subject are necessary.

Preservice teachers with visual arts specialty must have basic concepts of visual arts to manipulate mediums to express feelings and thoughts, understand principles of interpreting signs, teach arts activity contents, facilitate students to reflect from learning activities, and utilize assessment to develop curriculum. Based on the principle of integrating arts, visual arts teachers guide students to face visual culture text and symbols in their life from the perspective of contemporary aesthetics or postmodern arts.

Music preservice teachers must understand the music learning theory of children, the philosophy of music education, and the psychology of music education, and further put the theory to practice. Moreover, they need to apply theory, music teaching methods, teaching materials, and repertoire to design a music curriculum, thus they can lead students to learn music in an art class. According to the music competencies that elementary students should obtain, music preservice teachers need an ability to play and teach classroom instruments, such as recorders, barred instruments, percussion instruments, and so on. They need to be able to organize music ensembles, choose suitable repertoire, lead rehearsals, and arrange performances. Music preservice teachers must be able to do instrumentation and arrangement as well as accompany students' singing with various musical instruments. Furthermore, they should be able to compose and interpret musical pieces in different styles through various art mediums and forms such as multimedia or iPad.

Preservice teachers in dance and drama must obtain abilities to plan topics and contents of activities in performing arts, teach students to perform modern and traditional children's theatres, and integrate issues into performing arts. Furthermore, preservice teachers must realize the development of performing arts and how to integrate other arts into performance. They must be familiar with performing arts from different ethnic groups, Eastern, and Western, as well as teaching contents of applied drama, applied dance and applied theatres.

In conclusion, arts preservice teachers have knowledge and abilities in other arts disciplines to add to their arts specialty, thus they are equipped to lead students in learning effectively and acquiring competencies in the Arts Domain.

4. Conclusions

The Arts Domain is an important part of 12-year Basic Education, and arts complete STEAM education. Arts teacher education is the key to making arts education successful, and only good arts teachers can foster lifelong learners in arts.

Competency-Driven Arts Education is defined as "knowledge x ability x attitude x value-judging" in the Arts Domain (Cheng, Li, and Chen, 2020). Inspiring students to learn arts competencies depends on arts teachers who teach competencies. Based on the literature, three categories of the curriculum in CDTE are defined as subject content knowledge, the technical content of the subject, and attributes of teachers. This also echoes the basic requirements of teachers addressed by Wu (Wu, 2006). Arts Domain learning in elementary school needs to be integrated according to the Arts Domain Curriculum Guideline. Therefore, arts teachers must be able to teach across subjects and integrate disciplines. Obtaining more than one arts specialty becomes a requirement for arts teachers. Besides education courses and department requirements, arts teacher education of CDTE needs Arts Specialized Curriculum as we propose in this study to foster arts teachers according to Curriculum Guidelines of 12-Year Basic Education. Arts teachers with different training backgrounds might give integrated arts education from various perspectives. It is worth exploring and discussing the teaching practices, teaching effectiveness, or students learning outcomes as empirical studies for future research.

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