Establishing a Place for Music Learning
——Music Course in General Education of Technological University

為音樂找尋更寬闊的天空：探討技職體系中的通識音樂課程

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摘要

本文目的主要表述透過在通識音樂課程教學時，探討音樂的多層面貌及思考其多元價值。針對非音樂系學生所運用的教學方法，其中包括有學生個性特質、先前具有的音樂經驗及現有的音樂能力。然而在台灣技職體系裡的音樂通識課程，多數僅侷限於一學期約十六週的單元時數，如此要學生能充分地縱觀多層風貌的音樂世界，對於教學者實為艱困的任務。因而，教師應於緊湊的授課時數內，審慎設計課程內容，分別以不同層次的多元方式引導學生來介紹音樂的型式。藉著本文的研究，可提供學校在開設通識課程時的一些相關資料，並進一步與相關領域的通識音樂教育與教學中，提供更多值得探討的研究。

關鍵詞：通識音樂課程; 課程設計; 通識教育; 音樂欣賞
ABSTRACT

Evidence provided by existing research suggests that there are many perception and curriculum changes occurring in general music education of technological/vocational education. It is obvious that these changes need monitoring. The purpose of this section is to chronicle and investigate the brief current situation of Taiwan general music education by examining current status in Taiwan higher education policy and direction as well as the changes in general music curriculum and future development by examining some of the political, social, and educational influences related to those changes. In order to assess the effect of teaching the students who enter the course mostly without much formal discipline of music, the researcher has evaluated and searched for some effective approaches, important criteria emerged through many different lenses, each focused on different aspects of the process itself, looking from different perspectives, and receiving different degrees of clarity and resolution.

Keywords: General Music course; Curricular Design; General Education; Music Appreciation

BACKGROUND

An Overview of Reforms in Higher education provided in Taiwan

Education has been of crucial importance in the recent development of Taiwan. A significant feature is the high degree to which the structure of educational expansion, especially in higher education, has been strictly planned by the government (Gindling & Sun, 2002: 153). There is a binary structure within the educational system: traditional university and technological university, which is divided the curriculum into academic and vocational aspects. The functions of traditional universities include teaching, research, service and extension, with an emphasis on research
and teaching, the technological universities emphasize technological education, research, and practical use. Regardless of the different purposes of the development, each of these two categories has its own characteristics and specific functions in educational goals, course design, and student guidance. Most importantly, the education has always been one of the highest priorities of the Taiwan government and separating the academic and vocational fields has been a feature of Taiwan education.

The Function of Technological/vocational Education (TVE)

As stated above, the system of Technological University in the peculiar sociology of the curriculum, vocational knowledge itself is treated in schools and in society at large as low-status knowledge, unlike academic knowledge, which is regarded as high-status knowledge, and which is accordingly privileged. (Lewis, 1998). However, the controversial points of apportioning school knowledge are manifested in the occupational hierarchy of the labor force, and primarily in the class structure of society (p. 284). Furthermore, in Bottoms’ statement, curricular reform strategies in participating schools include “revising vocational programs to reinforce higher order concepts to teach essential concepts from the college preparatory curriculum through an applied process” (1992:26). He sets up the goals to close the achievements gap between students pursuing a vocational major and those completing a college preparatory program of study.

The New Perception of General Education

A number of conditions prompted educators in higher education to probe the theory and practice of General education (GU) as an alternative to traditional forms of liberal education. GU, a term adopted from the American educational system, is a unique approach to the organization of curriculum. The significance of general education has been widely propagated and successfully disseminated amongst the universities lately. The Division of Humanity Education Centre (HEC) at Fooyin University, for instance, provides a well-rounded education and equips the students to have a broad outlook on both liberal arts and technologies which Human values and
welfare should not merely be situated in the accomplishment of one's specialized performance.

It dedicates to the value of student's general capacity and disposition as a result of long-term and regular self-discipline that can advance student's broad viewpoints of thinking. The further dedication of general education curriculum provides students with a varied choice of subject matter, allowing students the freedom to choose their own preferred way and learn at their own place. The effectiveness and result can be assessed and recognized from various published reports and articles.

Broudys (1990) referred the term “General Education” a variety of definitions. It may mean schooling that is not highly specialised or it may mean the sort of schooling designed for all members of the population. Thus, all students are considered to learn to read, write, and represent, but not all are expected to become literate, poet, and artist. Nevertheless, Broudys ideas about the situation of general education becomes less clear because all young students should accomplish a certain amount of liberal education to achieve competence in the humanities, or what has come to be called “cultural literacy.” It needs to result into the relationship among the liberal study (under general education), arts education.

The attitude towards liberal studies includes the role of fine arts, but with some significant refinements, the most important of which is the technical requirement. It results another uncertainty in accordance with what Broudys addressed, the making of art requires a special kind of technical competence, for example, painting or performing an instrument. He furthered indicated, the technical requirement renders the status of art appreciation doubtful as well, for if a high level of technical competence is also required for appreciation, then once more its claim to a place in the general education requirements becomes debatable. The conflicting views need to be discussed more in the main body of my research.

Look the aspect of general education in Taiwan, some attributed the problem to leaving curriculum content decisions to local control. Traditionally, schools in Taiwan have been operated at the MOE, and though it has authority over the schools, the power to determine the content of education---the policy, administrative

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MOE, the Ministry of Education was established in 1928 as the highest authority in national academic, cultural, and educational administrative affairs.
and teaching structure, course arrangement, have usually been delegated to local school boards and committees (see www.edu.tw). It is to say that the recent reforms in the higher education system have centered on "academic self-determination" and "university independence". The universities at nowadays have more authority in determining the rank and qualifications of teachers than in the past. Thus, the whole university education has become more open and liberated.

When General Music Education Meets General Education

Reviewing the literature on general music education, very little published research has examined general music curriculum for non-specialist students. General music, together with the subjects of visual arts, dance, and drama, are all adopted under the field of Humanity Science in the current system of Technological University (Hong, 1996). Hong further stated the status and position of music curriculum that the presence of music in every state of school has obviously been degraded as other "national priorities". Yang (1997) conducted an investigation in the status and teaching of general music curriculum in Traditional and Normal Universities with the aim of understanding the general music education in Taiwan higher education. The most primary objective is to find the major difficulties of the students who do not have much music learning background.

The results revealed that the education in Taiwan is particularly attached great importance in professional training education, but not to be trained for the needs of real life. Even though it has been over 20 years since the general education was promoted among schools, the music curriculum within are field is rarely discussed under the whole general education (Chien, 2004). It would not seem likely to set out a curriculum of the broadest dimension for music and expect it to be applicable into the system of Technological University. Even if the students who attended my music class show positive attitudes over the course of study, it is difficult to ascertain that the course was developing along the right lines. Su indicated that an understanding of

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2 The most typical examination system in Taiwan was called the "University Joint Entrance Examination Program" (UJEET) that was first implemented in 1954. With over 100,000 examinees taking the exam yearly since 1985, it has greatly influenced the entire society (see website in MOE). Among all the examined subjects such as Languages (Chinese Literature, English), Mathematics, and Science (Physics, Chemistry).
students' real needs is demanded while working within this limited framework of music curriculum. What has been revealed is that there should be a demand to accommodate such ideas by re-thinking these aspects such as teaching approaches, or assessable materials. She examined the contributions and perceptions of the constituencies who potentially affect the status of general music, i.e. governance and education sector, or school administrators.

With the presented and published research, there are limitations such as the insufficient staff support, budgets, and implementation which resulted in the lack of ways to inter-communicate between teacher and administrators. Since the position of music curriculum in technological university has always been low compared with the other subjects, how to find ways to implement the curricular settings all of our constituencies support will be extremely important aim to music education (Kung, 2001).

Boardman was concerned with issues regarding general music curriculum that focus on outcomes to be attained by all students, as well as concomitant issues dealing with preparation of teachers. Boardman addressed two main questions of “What research in general music needed?” and “Why is research in general music curriculum needed?” In order to achieve the desired outcomes of a general music curriculum, she began the investigation by conducting a literature search. There are prepared documents lists desired aims in accordance with a report from Toward Civilization (National Endowment for the Arts, 1988)\(^3\), prepared cooperatively by two influential constituencies --- governance and arts(1990).

With so many changes in education reform in recent years as well as changes and developments in the arts and the perspectives of cultural research in society of all students at all levels, it is not surprising that there is much statement relating to the objectives of music education. What am I trying to achieve as teacher of music and specifically of fostering the competency of music appreciation? Is listening to and appreciating music enough in the student’s need? Am I better teacher as a result after all the efforts I have done? Reports provided by existing research revealed that there is not much concerning with the related issues since the subject of music has not been

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\(^3\) This thoughtfully prepared documents desired goals according to the “Four C’s” (p.14-19): Civilization, Creativity, Communication, and Choice.
the "practical profit" within people's life.

The experiences I have received from my over ten-year teaching as a musician and teacher in the classroom is --- knowledge of the factors which affect learning and achievement in music course work of all students at all levels is demanded if we are to clarify individual differences and other variables on their musical learning. It results in developing the teaching approaches to improve the functional musical skills of my class members, including performing/reading, listening/describing, creating and valuing. The following section will have implications for instructions of musical learning in developing a supportive environment that leads students to a lifelong involvement and enjoyment with music.

Curricular Design and Implementation — Developing Effective Teaching Approaches

The "Music and Culture" Course

Listening to music appears to be a common activity and source of enjoyment for people around (Flowers, 1983: 179). A general aim of "Music and culture" course is to provide experience and increase the knowledge associated with music listening, and further objective might be to develop the listener's competence to recognise increasingly subtle changes in music. However, these non-specialist music students frequently declare low confidence in their musicianship. Thus, this course is perhaps the best and possibility the only opportunity for them to receive systematic instruction in music. The course that the non-specialist music students are enrolled in was an elective, 2-credit hour class that meets approximately 18 weeks. The 18-week instructional period consisted of two 50-minute lessons per week for 60 students on group-teaching basis.

In teaching the young adult students how to learn the music, first of all, the factors affecting their learning in order to find an appropriate method need to be emerged. The fundamental music appreciation course is theme-related, including such themes as: survey of the development of music from world music, folk music, western classical music, and traditional music through 20th century music, fulfills part of the subjects
general education requirements under the Humanity and Social Sciences

It is taken by students at all four undergraduate academic levels and a few at continued education who have mostly not much prior musical knowledge. The lecture form of instruction is augmented by recordings of music, videotapes and DVD of music performances, and live performances by instructor when appropriate which is designed with the overriding goals of developing the musicianship of the non-specialist music students' competence in an attainment-appropriate, sequential enhancement and comfort for learning music that can integrate music in an adequate and effective manner.

The following studies have been conducted with the nature of music learning and teaching for non-specialist students with the intent of improving instruction and implementation by the teacher-researcher.

Request Assignments

There were some additional assignments that urged to be completed outside of class. Some of the assignments for students were not compulsory, but encouraged to work on them. One required assignment was for the students to submit the paper drew from one of ten topics (See Appendix 1) which was assigned by the researcher. These topics were to be used as a communicative discourse between the teacher-researcher and the students regarding aspects of the course that the students expected to comment on or question about it.

The teacher-researcher also used electronic-mail records to communicate with students regarding their inquiries and comments in the basis of weekly course. The use of theme-paper and electronic-email record had been found by the teacher-researcher to be valuable for her instructional purposes, as they allow students to ask questions and/or make remarks regarding the course. In addition, the theme-paper and electronic-email record were a mean to collect qualitative data regarding students' reactions to the course for the present study.

Theme-paper Data Collection and Analysis

As an ongoing aspect of the course, the teacher-researcher assigned students to
submit a theme-paper by the end of the semester. There were specific topics relevant to their general music learning that students were to address in their paper discussion. It is customary practice by the teacher-researcher to elicit feedback from students as to how they feel they are doing in the class and what improvements might be made in the class regarding course instruction.

To begin content of the analysis process, the teacher-researcher grouped the topics by one or two students each group and tallied the total number of papers for each week. The teacher-researcher read through all of the students’ papers, her journal (from observation), and course documents. Next, she coded individual papers, as well as her own from each week. Categories and subcategories emerged through constant comparison of student’s papers as grouped by week. These categories were further compared to the categories that emerged from the teacher-researcher’s own journal. As a result, the teacher-researcher could maintain a weekly reflective records regarding her perceptions of the class and other anecdotal information. In the meantime, the students’ reflections and comments were read as the course progressed, as information offered within them was of value to lead the direction of the course throughout the semester.

Using Audio-Visual Superiority Effect

Several lines of research have emanated from varied reports concerning with the development of listening skills with major emphasis on aural and visual stimuli (Smith & Anderson, 1985; Katz, Adoni, & Parness, P. 1977; Geringer, Cassidy, & Byo, 1996). How does the pairing of video with music function in the music classroom? Is it effective to students’ responses to music altered by simultaneous visual presentation? Thus, the teacher-researcher applies the superiority of aural and visual elements into the content of classes which seems even greater in contexts, especially in the styles of musicals, operas, and dancing music (such as Ballet). That is, students tend to see more than they hear when information is presented biresorilry (Geringer, Cassidy, & Byo, 1996). Audio-Visual supplementary equipment support for teaching conveyed aurally can facilitate students’ music learning and foster their memory for
CONCLUSION

This research summarises work undertaken at the request of the Fooyin University to investigate, examine, evaluate, and develop a general music curriculum for use in the system of Technological University. This request will grow out of the efforts of the investigator (the researcher of this report) with students at the "Music and Culture" course at Fooyin University and expect for further development extended to other universities. As learning, teaching, and development are gradual process, the teacher-researcher attempted organising the elements of musical knowledge within a educational and psychological framework which she found out it highly difficult for a music teacher to music teacher to organize his/her work if he/she only knew about different activities toward which they are to be used. This discovery firmly encourages the teacher-researcher to carry out a full project to establish aims and objectives for varied schools to select appropriate musical activities which would allow us to achieve them.

Appendix 1

Q. 1: What is the most effective way to enhance and achieve the best learning outcome of general music curriculum?
Q. 2: Do you think general music curriculum is something worth doing in Universities? Why?
Q. 3: Are you now actively involved in music association or activity of any kind?
Q. 4: Why do you choose this course and what is your expectation?
Q. 5: Why should you spend time on subjects which you are not expert in?
Q. 6: Why should you spend time on study, which does not directly relate to your chosen 'career' path?
Q. 7: What are your learning aims of this kind of course?
Q. 8: How do they relate music to their major studies?
Q. 9: What barriers to musical learning do themselves identify 'non-music major' students?
Q. 10: What motivates students to choose music as an option?

Reference:


Ministry of Education (MOE), see Website in: www.edu.tw

