The Progressive Vision of General Music Curriculum: Current and Future Development for the System of Technological/Vocational Education (TVE)

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Abstract
The ultimate objective of this study is to emphasize the importance of music curriculum in the general education. How muscle curriculum plays an evitable role on the influence of students' developing skills in everyday life. The difficulties and improvements of general music curriculum in technological/vocational education (TVE) would be other major subjects along with this research as well. There are multiple benefits and functions which music curriculum can be provided.
Introduction

It is long past time that we are firmly influenced by the value of traditional society---- technological/vocational education (TVE) has always been regarded as secondary category amongst the whole educational systems in Taiwan. The characteristic of TVE is of a more practical vocational inclination, providing route to training students with more technical competencies (Parry, ed. 1990). For the reason of attaching much importance to technical training, its recognition is usually inferior compared with the academic attainment. Furthermore, the prime mission of TVE is to train students towards future career. In other words, the central purpose of U.T. aims to equip students with practical skills or para-professional knowledge for future employment.

Even though the specialists educated by technological/vocational schools have ineffaceable dedication to promote industrial and economical development, entering technological/vocational systems including vocational high school, junior technical college, and university of technology is solely the second choice for students graduating from traditional high schools or colleges.

The Current Development of General Education in Taiwan

The Ministry of Education has rapidly increased the number of institutes and universities in order to enhance the standard of TVE education, which is of a more practical vocational inclination, providing route to training students with more technical competencies. In other words, the functions of the TVE aim to equip students with practical skills or para-professional knowledge for future employment. A number of conditions prompted educators in higher education to probe the theory and practice of General Education (GE) as an alternative to traditional forms of liberal education. General education, a term adopted from the American educational system, is a unique approach to the organization of curriculum. Tanner and Tanner (1995) stated, it is especially to the treatment of knowledge intended to provide for the common education of youth in a democracy (p.523). Mackenzie and Evans also offer the following definition:

General Education should be viewed as a continuous program of life experiences for all children, youth and adults: life experiences that focus on common needs, common interests, and common problems. (1946:67: emphasis in original).

Numerous researches have supported these findings and disclosed benefits of educational experience related to general education (Wraga, 1999; Miller, 1988;Chang, 2001; Chang & Chien, 1999). Around the two decades, the progressive scholars and educators in Taiwan realised of general education as a common educational experience for all students that knowledge should be integrated and used to the examination and achievable resolution of personal-social problems. To put it simply, the goal of general education curriculum devised by progressive educators is not only basic as common knowledge, but as common vocabulary of specialised experience to communicate and apply effectively with one another. Under such a curriculum context, students with assorted backgrounds, competencies, perspectives, and objectives associate with the settlement of personal-social difficulties that can devote to move beyond the unrealistic phenomenon of the higher education system toward the realisation of a general education curriculum.

Humanity Concern

People need to have in-depth concern and human compassion in addition to competency and dexterous profession as well as the society. Therefore, 'human concern' is an essential component that strongly influences the effectiveness, quality, and value of the professional fields. (Chung & Chien, 1999).

The deficiency of students' professional competency is not generally due to their insufficient abilities, or their inexperienceed. They are unable to properly implement knowledge and technique into realistic world. The purpose of considering, concerning, and caring humanity is to make students' lives nourish flawlessly without separating from realistic world. To be without considering and caring humanity means to be short of decent conditions of converting knowledge into wisdom and technical competency. (Fu, 1999:42). This is what the educators gradually perceive that excessive attention to pursue
professional courses will limit and narrow the boundary of students' knowledge.

Thus, students who are educated by the system can barely become an unimportant role, which they could be only made good use by the 'implements' or 'tools'. Under this circumstance, it makes an argument: how could they generate creative thinking and communicate to a modest degree with the whole society? This direction of education will also be enlarged the distance apart from various professional fields due to exclusive expertise. (ibid). If there are deviations of value or attitude affecting inharmonious relationships amongst people and the people, people and the society, and people and the nature, the professional technique will unexpectedly bring up undesirable results, which we are unpleasant to meet in near future.

The nourishment of humanity is essential to the students in the TVE systems and it ought not to be inferior to the training of professional skill. Consequently, giving more humanity concerning and caring shall be considered while regulating the TVE courses between centuries. It is the objective to lead students graduated from technological/vocational schools that they will have fundamental knowledge and clear sense of morality in mutual understanding and communication, recognition and respect from the aspects of social and historical culture far to the environment of ecology. Thus, we can truly cultivate the devoted specialists who naturally make TVE regarded as the first-rate education. (Chung, 1998:34).

**The Specific Position of General Music Education in the System of Technological/Vocational Education (TVE)**

Judging from the context what I have proposed, we understand that the public in this society highly remain typical concepts for technological/vocational schools. They conclude the schools in TVE system ought to lead towards tendency and direction of profession, thoroughness, and ingenuity amongst the whole educational systems (Chung, 1998;Chung&Chien,1999; Fu, 2001; Shu,2000). The significance of general education has been widely propagated and successfully disseminated in traditional universities lately. It dedicates to the value of student's general capacity and disposition as a result of long and regular self-discipline and advances student's broad viewpoints of thinking. The effectiveness and result can be assessed and recognized from various published reports and articles.

General education, a term adopted from the American educational system, is a unique approach to the organization of curriculum (Wraga, 1999:528). The President of General Education in the Republic of Taiwan (R.O.C.), Dr. Huang Chun-Chieh made clear definition to the purpose of general education. He keenly expects the art and music educators who can clarify the arrangement of course, material, and emphasis of teaching (Young, 1997: 54). The major purpose for setting up general music curriculum at current school is to help non-music major students learn how to appreciate music, to understand music, and to come in contact with music. Through participating musical activities in or off campus, we can raise more inter-school population who loves music.

Kung (2001: 388) mentioned that function of music is not only to train the skills of fundamental singing and performance, but also needs to advance their aesthetic capabilities and spiritual lives. Hence, the important objective of lifelong learning education can be thoroughly put into effect by leading music into daily life.

To aim directly at non-music major students, I will be concerned issue that general music education ought not to be suspended at the stage of basic music knowledge and skill. In fact, music classes from primary to high school are nearly the training of fundamental music capability (ibid). If teaching content and goal of curriculum in higher education cannot be heightened but still stayed at the focus of learning knowledge, it would be merely the repetition sustained from previous education.

As a result, a clear and definite goal of general music curriculum in technological/vocational schools is to give students with the competencies to seek for understanding and comprehension of music. Looking further ahead is to foster the aesthetic experience and moral value, which will lead music towards influential factor for everyday life.
Throughout the discussion, we should consider important issues regarding music courses in TVE settings, as well as issues dealing with professional subjects or other courses for the reason in order to achieve anticipated objective. That is to say that music needs to have equivalent educational aim and expectation as well as other disciplines at schools (Kung, 2002).

**Music Curriculum at the Current Development**

General education in technological/vocational schools is initially categorized into three major fields—Natural Science, Social Science, and Human Science or Humanity and Art. It is later gradually set apart in detail into five fields—Human Course, Natural Course, Life Course, Social Course, and Management Course. At the present technological schools in Taiwan, general music education is usually admitted within the fields of Common Course or Human and Social Course. (Su, 2001). As for the settings of the general music course in different schools, it can be for the reason of achieving anticipated objective simplified into three primary types—General Discussion, Special Topic, and Combined Issues in accordance with the distinction of contexts and arrangements (Su, 2000:43).

Regardless of any type of music course mentioned above, the way of curricular settings is designed via various criterions and layers in order to interpret purity and beauty of music throughout variety of works. To present composer’s unique thought and original work and to reflect cultural and historical aspiration would be short-term goal for the purpose of musical teaching.

In order to strengthen students’ competencies of music appreciation and aesthetic experience, they are expected to be able to convey learnt music from schools into their real lives and future careers. It would be undoubtedly long-term aim for music educators. As a result, bringing music into their lives, and teaching them to realize the connection and application between music and life, is the most important objective to reach desirable outcome in terms of pursuing the quality of life.

**The Difficulties of General Music Curriculum in TVE System**

Because of the major intention for high-school students to enter higher institutions, music course has often fallen into the sacrificial subject under conventional teaching environments. It takes long time to be improved for revising these inadequate concepts and values in the past. In the aspects of concerning about the difficulties and impediments of general music curriculum in technological/vocational schools, it includes:

1. The direction of previous education from primary through high school is mainly leading towards advanced higher school so that affects utilitarianism deep-rooted into the values of people at this present society. Naturally, music, art, and culture are not recognized, as it should be. That is the reason why the desired outcomes and teaching effectiveness of general music education cannot be in-depth concern and put in practice under such educational surroundings and social structures.

2. The lack of implementation and variety of curricular design affects the general music curriculum. The characteristic of practical use is still distinct from the system of technological/vocational schools. For the reason of its passive attitude, it is full of obstacles while regulating general course settings. Looking at the matter from this above viewpoint, music course is also lack of in fluence and flexibility. (Su, 2001: 44).

3. A failure to define the adequate position of general education within the formation or organization at schools leads the problems of disorder and limitation, which are reflected into staffs, budgets, and implementation. The teachers are generally difficult to find out a particular way to consult while they need assistance in teaching.

4. The lack of departments related to humanities or social sciences under TVE system, it is difficult to seek out well-trained teachers, proper materials, and necessary equipments as supportive teaching sources. For music course, with necessary requirements of multi-media and
various musical activities, such as audio-visual aids, it is an inevitable obstacle in terms of future development of general music education. According to the Report for Improving Art and Talented Teaching in Technological Colleges, 1999, even plenty of schools have adapt music into one of aesthetic courses, they are usually taught by non-music major instructor. It seems to be diametrically opposed to the initial goal of general education.

5. The value of developing and offering courses to student who is not talented and interested in musical learning is not adequately recognized. For the reason of every single music course is set up for only one semester that instructor's content of lecture is often difficult to be spread out. In addition, most of the students feel regrettable in contact with classical music for the lack of musical training and learning environment since they are in their early childhood. 'Teacher and student need an alphabet of aesthetic literacy. Music has a finely developed and generally recognised alphabet'— An aesthetic alphabet has to enable the student to recognise and analyze the sensory, formal, technical, and expressive properties of the object' (Broduy, 1990:36). Even music class doesn't have to stress too much in the emphasis of theory, the point at issue without a theoretical basis will not sustain well.

6. Due to the flaw of whole structure proposed above, it influences students taken these sorts of classes regarding general course as only 'embellishment' in comparison with their major subject. Music, as a matter of course, is a subject that has never been adapt into the entrance examination for entering higher schools. The worse situation for the status of music class has fallen into the sub-substitute 'nutritious credit' among the young's concept. Naturally, assessment of the outcomes of music course in general education is inevitably degraded.

The Improvement and Future Development of General Music Curriculum in TVE

1. To foster student's understanding and attitude in terms of aesthetic experience and competence are probably the initial aim to art course. For the majority of students in the technological/vocational schools, what they expect to learn is to emphasize on practicable issue. Consequently, for those subjects related to aesthetic or artistic sensibility, they frequently appeal to 'expected but dreadful' attitudes towards these issues. In this point, they expect that their competences of music appreciation can be heightened through the course.

2. To focus on major objective of practical use in the technological/vocational schools, the well-designed content of general music curriculum with practical benefit should not be disregarded. As for the perspective of practical use, applying presented or published reports, which relates to effectiveness of music will be fairly appropriate for the establishment of perception. For example, the application of 'Mozart Effect' music with body relaxation, and the improvement of music to melancholic (Strascke,1989: Sloboda, 1991). Both of the listed above appeal to the practical use and influence of music. Kung stated that ' the curriculum will affect students' approval to music: the only best method for raising the accountability of music in daily life is to increase their understanding and recognition to music (Wiggins, 1994: 34).

Moreover, adult students usually confront many challenges and pressures comparing with traditional students, such as from the job, family, and the society in their daily life. Therefore, music curriculum can provide the needs of adult students and even enrich their leisure lives (Alston, 1986:8). Taking an example form one of the classes what I have taught, students used to discuss how to make use of music to improve the suffering from insomnia for the huge stress from job and family, or how to help family or friend's emotional difficulty through music. These are many successful instances to firmly put the music teaching into effect.
3. To enrich the teaching equipments, such as audio-visual aids, and to make good use of scientific supplies can create sprightly teaching atmosphere then to promote student's learning interest. Aiming those students who regard music course as 'nutritious credit' or 'elective', lively and flexible teaching approaches usually can attach more their attention. Through the application of various music multimedia, such as DVD, VCD, CD, picture, or projection that is to apply the stimulation of vision to reinforce 'abstract' auditory feeling and to reach more completed effect of music appreciation. In other words, students will intuitively comprehend intuitively through such well-planned and prepared content of course.

The establishment of art center or concert hall will be another aid to promote the quality and variety of artistic and musical activity in campus. Thus, each school can build up the course with its own characteristic and emphasis to fit the student's need and attainment. According to the Report of Improvement and Program for Art Talented Teaching in Vocational Schools, Technological and Vocational Education (TVE), the Ministry of Education, the majority of students who have ever taken general music course responded that the content of class ought to have more varieties and expect to have more opportunities to contact music as well as personally participating, performing, and discussing music. (1999:17).

In response to the goal of music curriculum in higher education, it is crucial to teach music in a more practical way. It is worthy to be noted that aesthetic education not only integrate with other learning subjects at school, but also convey into realistic lives. Taking a wide look at European and American countries, the participation of musical activities has become people's popular leisure lives. Taking another look at Taiwan's performing art programs, most of students show their willingness in participating musical concerts and activities. However, they frequently hesitate or even give up due to heavy pressure and tedious assignments from their academic studies statements (Kung, & Su, 2002: 385).

Moreover, music teachers should try to encourage students to involve extra-curricular music activities after normal school hours under teachers' supervision, and students' participation is on a voluntary basis, i.e. concerts or performances at the National Music Concert Hall or cultural centers (Leung, 2003). That is, try to use out-of-school teaching activities to enhance students' feeling of 'live' performance, participation and self-affirmation from heart whilst listening to music. It definitely cannot be compared with the place of classroom or home. One of the assessment criterion from the course what I teach every semester is marked by student's report for attending off-campus concert. Some students even have never step in concert hall before. This pattern of extracurricular experience is approvable by the majority of the students with positive and passionate responses. It enables their pursuit of interesting and rewarding social and leisure activities.

4. To assess students' competences of music appreciation, it is greatly helpful in terms of understanding their abilities and designing appropriate content of course based on the well-device measurement for different level and major students. The important criterion that I adopt for the assessment of class will depend on student's learning attitude and participation of course. However, most of the schools regarding typical manner of assessment as their favorite preference is still 'question and answer' on examination paper.

Therefore, extending the classifications of evaluation and adopting more elastic approaches to the formation of assessment are able to supplement and balance traditional ways of examination. The application of paper examination is to understand whether students can absorb or realize the teaching content or not, plus the assessment also include their learning attitude and participation of course, group discussion, group report, or even group performance, etc.

Due to the objective of general education course is not for any particular major, all of different major students at school could probably sit in a same classroom. The teachers can classify by groups or colleges so that each group can select a topic to develop and promote their learning.
motivation and interest. This approach distinguishes from traditional musical learning pattern that it can benefit the learners from the pleasure of sharing music with the others.

**Summary and General Discussion**

It has been a great deal of help since the TVE, Ministry of Education regarding the general education curriculum among universities and technological schools as one of the Report for Improving Art and Talented Teaching in Technological Colleges, 1999, which rapidly propagated and moved the development of general education. Nevertheless, students' perceptive for general courses is the meaning of 'nutritious credit' (Su, 2001:44). The administrators and teachers at school should rebuild up some perspectives from students' in-depth thought and ideas in terms of equal importance of general education and professional education course.

The knowledge provided by technological/vocational schools is not only for the profession, but also for the abundance of life, the contribution of society, and sentiment of morality. In other words, it will be the prime and final objective of the completed five educations --- Moral education, Intelligent education, Physical education, Group education, and Aesthetic education.

The education in Taiwan is particularly attached great importance in professional education, yet it is to be treated with indifference in the needs of real life. Even though it has been 18 years since the general education was promoted among schools, the music course within are field is seldom discussed under the whole general education (Young, 1997:57). The participated scholars and instructors all feel keenly considerations about the problems, resolutions, and improvements of teaching content, material, and device of curriculum. The prime concept to aim directly at non-music major students who are supposed to be trained as professional, however, with limited musical training and background is ---everyone does not have to be a musician, but could be an appraiser.

The education is a spiritual task for long-term future so that music general education especially cannot be narrowed as basic or technical knowledge. To focus on the students under the system of technological schools, they are capable of dealing with their learning motivation, self-demanding and comprehensible competence, yet without acquainted and approachable opportunities to the domain of music. The teaching method that has been particularly planned and guided can bring immense impact and effectiveness to students. It will be an enormous encouragement to teachers as well.

Therefore, regardless of judging from the perspective of education or concerning student, the curriculum designed according to the understanding of student's need will be able to achieve both of teaching and learning advantages to teachers and students as well.

**Reference**


注 釋

[1] Technological/Vocational Education has been officially abbreviated as TVE by Ministry of Education, R.O.C.

[2] According to Ed, 2003 (Nr.296); Fwu &Wang, 2002 (Nr.292); Yang, 1998(Nr.282); Gindling & Sun, 2002 (Nr.263), the aim of higher education should be prepare an individual to become an expert and specialised in specific field. Most of the colleges and universities in Taiwan obviously remain greater portion of the required credits in the major study that would represent special training of professional skills. The attention to general education has been degraded and neglected by the authorities and students as a result.

[3] Dr. Huang is a professor who currently teaches History Department at National Taiwan University and entitled as the President of the association General Education, R.O.C.