

The Curriculum Leadership and Planning of Music Talented and Source Classes

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Abstract

Since the establishment of the music talented class in Kaohsiung Municipal Sinyi Elementary School in the 77th year of the Republic Era, 'music' is always on the top priority of the school development. Following the national award to the music talented class, Sinyi Elementary School has further extended the artistic activities of string music and artistic talented class and music coaching in campus one after the other. After the rolling out of the nine-year system, music even becomes the school-based characteristic curriculum of Sinyi Elementary School. It established the first music talented and source class for elementary school in response to special education law in 101th year of the Republic Era, which extends the studying of exceptional students by arrangement for distributed courses until first session of graduate graduating in 104th year of the Republic Era. The study takes eight teachers of the music talented and source class as the object of the research by way of deeply interview and collect data to find out the curriculum leadership and planning content of music talented and source class which is carried out in elementary school, containing five competence indicators of music appreciation, music production, skill learning, beauty feeling, and music performing, and to explain five implemented contents those are the planning of curriculum design, content of material selection and edit, method of multiple teaching and carrying out teaching, and effect of instructional assessment, and to inspect the studying effect of first session of graduates. Major findings is that singing teachers mostly affirm the music talented and source class established on dispersion pattern, which can completely reflect the characteristic course of music learning, and actively help music exceptional students to take it up a notch on music learning.

Keywords: Music talented and source class, curriculum planning, curriculum leadership,

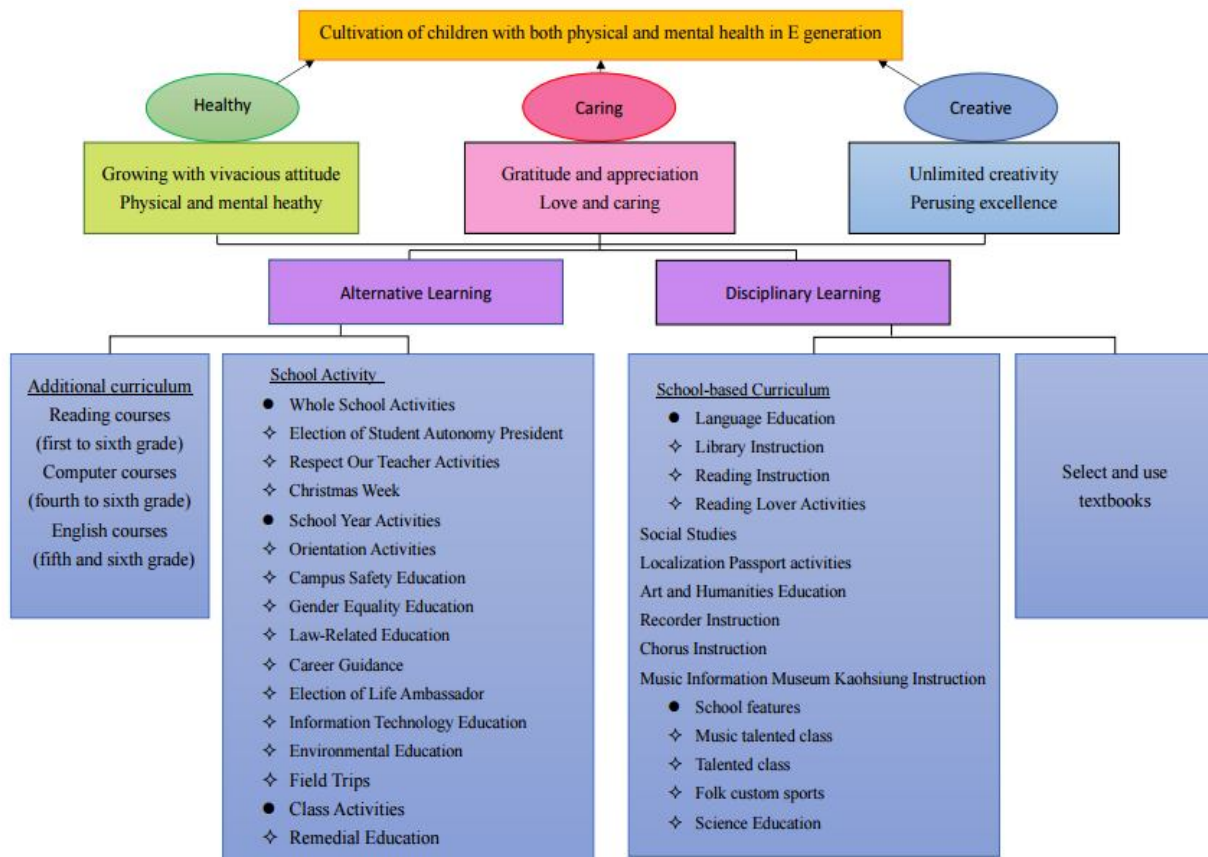
I. Origin of Establishment

The biggest and most recent education reform program in the country is no other than the launch of the “12-year Basic Education”. The “12-year Basic Education” was declared back in 2011, in conjunction with “putting a stop to the “most sought-after high schools” myth, reducing students’ study pressure, and promoting the activation of classroom teaching over the years by the Taiwan Government. 12-year compulsory education was subsequently officially promoted in 2013, and the “General Curriculum Guidelines of the 12-year Basic Education” was promulgated on November 28th, 2014, stipulating the year-by-year implementation of the general curriculum in elementary schools, junior high schools, and senior high schools starting August 2018. The general curriculum has broken the previous top-down centralized curriculum standard model and has changed the phenomenon of a diversified departmental teaching, leading to the direction of curriculum plurality, freedom, and democracy.

Sinyi Elementary School in Kaohsiung City is a medium-large size school located in the center of Kaohsiung City. Since the establishment of the music class in 1988, “music” has been the focus of school’s primary development. After the music class was awarded the second place in the nation, string music classes, music tutoring, and other related arts activities were promoted one after another. Following the implementation of the Grade 1-9 curriculum, “music” took a leap to become Sinyi Elementary School’s curriculum and the school development feature implementation focus. In 2004, the school established the school-based curriculum development team. The members consisted of music class teachers, regular class music teachers, administrators, and teacher representatives from different grades. A meeting was held every week for two hours each time and for 18 weeks consecutively. During that 18 week period, the team visited Kaohsiung Chinese Orchestra and Kaohsiung Symphony Orchestra to seek for the assistance and guidance from the professional music workers.

Through SWOT analysis and based on the existing strengths and opportunities, the school vision, music class resources, and social professional arts resources were integrated. Through the “goal setting”, teaching material editing”, “teachers’ training”, “curriculum implementation”, and other steps, the school-based music curriculum of “arts and humanities-auditory art” was implemented (Sinyi Elementary School, 2004). All the students from Grade 1 through Grade 6 have been included as targets of school-based music curriculum implementations ever since.

In view of the “school-based curriculum development model framework” (Fig. 1) and the “general goal of school-based curriculum auditory arts curriculum program” (Table 1) implemented in Sinyi Elementary School in 2014, the findings show that all the students from Grade 1 through Grade 6 are required to achieve a certain level of learning and progress in music appreciation, creation, affection, skill, and other aspects. The implementation methods include: 1. The curriculum program design must include at least 10 lessons of the school-based music curriculum every semester for every school year; 2. Arrange one to two lessons weekly to impart teaching. Flexible learning periods or time allocations for comprehensive activity learning fields may be utilized. The arts and humanities field, languages, or fitness fields may also be included into the learning to strengthen learning effectiveness; 3. The music skill teaching and practice in the school-based curriculum should be incorporated into arts and humanities music lessons and be implemented to strengthen students’ capability in music instrument performance and music knowledge (Sinyi Elementary School, 2014).



Picture 1: Diagram of Kaohsiung Municipal Sinyi Elementary School School-based Curriculum Development Framework

Table 1: General Objective of School based Auditory Art Curriculum in Kaohsiung Municipal Sinyi Elementary School

Number	Project	Educational purpose
1.	Instrument Performing	Each student can at least play two kinds of musical instruments, and acquire the ability of performing music as ensemble.
2.	Music Appreciation	Cultivate students' appreciation of listening music, of performing music and composing music.
3.	Music Accomplishment	Each student can possess the ability of recognizing different types of musical instruments, of appreciating various styles of music masterpieces, of identifying the titles, the authors, and the genres of music.
4.	Personality Cultivation	Utilize music to purify students' soul, to raise their moral and character level for cultivating their noble sentiment and implementing in daily life.
5.	Composing and Thinking Training	By composing rhythm and songwriting, to arouse and cultivate children's creating and thinking ability.

The above-mentioned school-based music curriculum implemented over the years has familiarized the teachers and students with music, hence their great expectations. At the advent of art talent education reform in elementary schools and junior high schools and in response to regulations, decentralized resource class placement and curriculum arrangements are required throughout the national education stage in order to promote music courses that cater to music gifted students' learning needs. Therefore, through the collaborative efforts of the school administrative leaders, regular class teachers, music class teachers, parents and community, the first elementary school music gifted resource class in Taiwan was approved and established in 2012, from which the first batch of students graduated in 2015.

II. Curriculum Planning and Leadership in Music gifted education resources class

The music gifted education resources class of Sinyi Elementary School is located inside the multi-purpose and well-equipped activity center where exclusive administrative offices, specialty classes, instrument rooms, reading rooms, music appreciation rooms, practice rooms equipped with grand pianos, music data archives, a music hall that can accommodate nearly 500 people, as well as complete software and hardware facilities. This excellent music learning environment not only facilitates music gifted education resources class teachers' teaching and students' performances, but also provides regular class teachers and students a venue for school-based music curriculum exploration and learning, thereby achieving the best win-win situations for all the teachers and students of the school.

The music gifted education resources class adopts distributed teaching placement. That is, upon Grade 3 enrollment, students are distributed to regular classes, each regular class has about 3-5 music gifted students. In addition to attending the music gifted education resources class during music lessons, all the other formal and potential curriculums offered by all other schools involve learning with teachers and classmates from the original class. Since the first batch of music gifted student's enrollment in 2012, the teachers of the music gifted class and all the third-grade regular class teachers have jointly discussed to find out the most appropriate curriculum arrangements, and coordinated to arrange the deepened and broadened music curriculums in the timetable of every music gifted student. Starting 2013, the music gifted class teachers and all the third-grade and fourth-grade regular teachers coordinated the class time of the music curriculum; starting 2014, the influence was extended to all the third-grade, fourth-grade, and fifth-grade regular classes; in 2015, broadly speaking, all the third-year, fourth-year, fifth-year, and sixth-year regular class teachers were incorporated as members of the music gifted education resources class teacher group in order to contribute to music gifted students' learning.

The school principal is the soul of music gifted education resources class curriculum leadership. During summer vacations, the director of the Office of Academic Affairs, the teaching team leader, the counseling director of the Office of Guidance, the special education team leader, and etc. jointly make class arrangements for class timetables allotted for the third grade through the sixth grade. Firstly, initial consensus and planning are reached; then, the special education team leader and teaching team leader jointly discuss with music gifted class teachers and regular class teachers for carrying out curriculum planning and coordination meeting arrangements individually by grade in order to obtain the greatest common divisor of recognition. With the support of regular class teachers, class timetable arrangements can be smoothly conducted in the new academic year.

In terms of music curriculums, experts from the academia, counseling director, special education team leader, music gifted class teachers, parent representatives, and other members led by the principal jointly set up the music gifted education resources class Curriculum Development Team. Through the collective wisdom of all, a set of adaptive and characteristic curriculums is planned for the music gifted education resources class from Grade 3 through Grade 6. The implementation stages and steps are introduced as follows:

1. Goal Setting

1. Set up the Music gifted education resources class Curriculum Development Team.
2. Form a consensus through discussion. The curriculum goal focuses on offering full assistance to music gifted students' music knowledge and performance ability learning and growth, including five aspects, namely, "music appreciation", "music creation", "skills learning", "affection and aesthetics", and "music performances".
3. Seek music related resources from all social circles and actively provide comprehensive assistance to music gifted students.

2. Teaching Material Editing

1. According to the five curriculum goals of "music appreciation", "music creation", "skills learning", "affection and aesthetics", and "music performances", collect relevant music teaching materials and formulate curriculum outlines for music curriculums allotted for different grades, depending on the level differences of music gifted students from third grade through sixth grade.
2. According to the music curriculum outline, edit music teaching materials suitable for music gifted education resources classes for different grades into written data and purchase and edit music video materials. Produce video contents suitable for viewing by music gifted students from all grades in order to ensure curriculum learning continuity and integration for music gifted students from third grade through sixth grade.
3. Develop music teaching plans and worksheets for use by music gifted class teachers during teaching and assessment.

3. Teachers' Training

1. Compile the music curriculum goals, curriculum outlines, teaching plans, worksheets, and video media teaching materials of music gifted education resources classes from third grade through sixth grade during teachers' training time.
2. Recruit experts and scholars to conduct keynote seminars on music teaching imparted to music gifted students.
3. Conduct teaching workshops of music gifted education resources class curriculums and music teaching activity seminars.

4. Curriculum Implementation

1. After school starts, implement music curriculum teaching based on the curriculum goals and outlines of music curriculums allotted for each grade.
2. Set up excellent music teaching situations, purchase music related books, and set up counters for music books.
3. Set up class the music appreciation area to provide relevant music video appreciation.

III. Research Participants and Process

Qualitative research is not about generating hypotheses from theory; instead, it is entering the subjective experiences of research participants and exploring and collecting data from the real world (May, 1991). Semi-structured interviews can carry out organizational exploration on phenomena with clearer scopes and maintain considerable flexibility and depth. In this study, the in-depth interview strategy was adopted as the main approach for data collection. Additionally, documents related to the Sinyi Elementary School music gifted education resources class, award records, media reports, and other data were supplemented. Since the class is the nation's first music gifted education resources class, it is a sample with a high degree of specificity. Hence, the open-ended semi-structured interviews and face-to-face communication with respondents allowed the respondents to provide detailed information and follow-up questions on areas lacking detail could also be asked. Eight music gifted education resources class teachers from the school were adopted as targets for exploration in this study.

During the qualitative research process, the researcher and respondents had close ties, while the research ethics related issues involved had greater importance. Therefore, prior to the interviews, the respondents were notified by phone to obtain their consent and schedule an interview and respect the respondents' willingness to participate in the research. During the interviews, the respondents' consents were obtained using a voice recorder. The respondents were also informed that all the data collected served academic research uses, without disclosing their true identity in accordance with the principle of confidentiality. The data collection period was from April 2015 to May 2015. The contents of data collected include: 1. Interview records: The content of dialogues between the researcher and respondent in verbatim transcription of interview data on tape; 2. Observation notes: The venue, respondent's behavioral reactions, and other matters observed during the interview process; 3. Self-reflection: After the interview, the feelings and reflections towards the interview were recorded by the researcher; 4. Other documents: Documents related to the music gifted education resources class, award records, media reports, the respondents' feedbacks of interview results, and other data.

Analytic induction was adopted throughout the research process. The data analysis procedures are: data reading, encoding, category sorting, topic formation, and induction of research findings. The researcher first translated interview records into transcripts and requested the respondents to check the authenticity of the transcript. Then, in conjunction with the verbal or non-verbal information recorded in the observation notes, self-reflections, and other documents, reading encoding and summary classification were carried out. In addition, triangulation was employed to inspect data and further revise and restructure the theoretical framework. Furthermore, in order to establish consistency between data encoding and category, a music education postgraduate engaged in "qualitative research" was invited to be a co-encoder. After the preliminary communication on the research focus, the contents were encoded and sorted accordingly. Following the first result checking, the inconsistencies were discussed, and after researching a consensus, analyses and sorting were carried out. The data codes are described below: The first code is the code of the eight respondents (i.e. ABCDEFGH), and the succeeding four codes are the interview date.

IV. Implementation Effectiveness of Music gifted education resources class

1. Decentralized Teaching Placement

The music gifted education resources class adopts decentralized teaching placement. In addition to regular curriculums commenced in regular classes, the rest of the music curriculums are commenced in the music gifted education resources class. *The class commencement methods consist of three types: 1. Extra classes: Three additional periods are added every Friday afternoon for middle-grade classes; three additional periods are added every Wednesday afternoon for high-grade classes; 2. Removed classes: Music and flexible classes are removed from the regular class. Every week, period 1-3 are allotted as classes in the music gifted education resources class; 3. Other methods: From 8:00-8:40 every morning, music classes are conducted (B0406).* As for curriculum arrangement, individual classes, group classes, and common classes are allotted from third through sixth grade. For the middle-grade classes, the individual classes include: *one period of major, one period of minor, and one period of major basic practice; for the group classes: one period of syllabic rhythm, one period of dictation, and one period of digital electronic keyboard music are allotted; for the common classes, one period of chorus, one period of music theory, and one period of music appreciation (D0410) are allotted every Friday afternoon, nine periods of music special courses in total. For the high-grade course arrangement, there are also nine periods. In addition to the individual classes that have the same arrangement, the group classes also include one period of syllabic rhythm and one period of dictation, but it has one extra period of chamber music and one period of MIDI digital music creation (C0408); for the common class, there is one period of music theory and one period of music appreciation every Wednesday afternoon.*

2. Group Teaching

Arranged group teaching is regarded as a special curriculum feature of the music gifted education resources class. Based on the regular classes the existing students are placed under, students are divided into different groups before commencing teaching. Take the third-grade music gifted students for example, the students are placed in seven regular classes (i.e. seven groups) (A0405). In other words, the members in the groups are music gifted students from the same regular class. Through group teaching, teachers can adjust class progress depending on students' weaknesses and strengths. Their class commencement approaches are diversified, including one-on-one mentoring classes, group classes consisting of students engaged in joint learning, and common classes consisting of all music gifted education resources class students engaged in joint learning.

The classes are conducive to the enhancement of high-quality interpersonal interactions and knowledge dissemination. For instance, *on Friday afternoons after middle-grade regular class students finished school, the music gifted students stayed behind the whole afternoon in the music gifted education resources class to attend the chorus class, music theory class, and the music appreciation class, in which the students mingled with the regular class students as well as music gifted education resources class students. These classes were positively interactive and considerably contributed to the students' interpersonal relationships (H0412).*

3. Chamber Music

Chamber music is one of the important curriculum features of the music gifted education resources class, because this group of music gifted students each have their own instrument specialty on admission, which means there is no need for the students to change their instrument specialty to tie in with the orchestra. This will in turn increase the depth and breadth of the students' skills and knowledge pertaining to the specialty curriculum. Hence, the chamber music curriculum is considerably suitable for this group of music gifted students to engage in learning. *Among the elementary school English classes in Taiwan, ours is the only one with the capabilities and terms to arrange chamber music learning courses (E0406).* The music course teaching materials for the music gifted education resources class are all self-developed by the music teachers. However, since music gifted students each year vary in level, in order to cater to their individual differences and development needs, the curriculum contents have to be adjusted yearly. *We strive to systemize the curriculum contents, forming a set of complete music teaching materials for the third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, and sixth grade. In the future, through the coordination, planning, and sorting by the Curriculum Committee, the music teaching materials will be great (A0504) !*

4. MIDI Digital Electronic Music Creation

In addition, the MIDI digital electronic creation curriculum is also an exclusive curriculum feature of the music gifted education resources class of Sinyi Elementary School. Starting from the third grade, students will be able to learn the basic course on digital electronic keyboard music. By the fourth grade, students are introduced to movie music, popular music, Miyazaki's music tracks, etc., which will complement their electronic piano learning. By the fifth grade, the students are introduced to the music curriculum of digital creation, and a computer is used for music gifted students to combine computer and electronic piano music and attempt to create music. By the sixth grade, in addition to playing the electronic piano, students will have learned editing and album production. *I find the curriculum planning and arrangement excellent and special in its own way (G0411)! The "Happy Song" program in the first music gifted education resources class graduation concert made me realize that the children applied the MIDI arranging techniques learned to the concert. Through the concert performance, they arranged their own music, did their own postproduction, and performed. These areas are difficult to achieve in centralized music classes, but these children did it and achieved substantial success (F0407)!*

5. Mutual Aid among General Education Teachers and Special Education Teachers

The students in the music gifted education resources class spend most of their time learning in a regular class. If situations or problems arise, most parents choose to communicate with the regular class teacher regarding their children's learning condition and living situation. *On the other hand, our side takes a simple approach, only having to take care of children's music learning, rather than intervening and paying attention to every matter as we did in the centralized music class (B0406).* *Music gifted students who come here to learn music are more focused and serious, because while they are in the music gifted education resources class, they only have to think about music, learn music, practice music, and have fun with music, which make them happy (H0412).* Besides, the regular class teacher is highly supportive of the children's academic performance. *If a music gifted student's subject practice affects the disciplines, we usually work with the regular schoolteacher to find the best way to help the child improve his or her subjects (D0410).* Most music gifted students that have problems will start to adapt and improve by the second semester of the third grade. *They have gradually understood they have to spend time on their homework and spend their free time practicing the piano. When the classmates in the regular class attend the reading class, they must attend the music curriculum in the music gifted education resources class. The students have become quite accustomed now that they are in the fourth grade (C0408).*

6. Resources Support

In terms of the sources of students in the decentralized music gifted education resources class since 2012, the students share the same characteristics (i.e. “high cross-district enrollment rates” and students from middle and low income households accounting for about one sixths). *It can be seen that from the third grade through the sixth grade, 3 to 5 students in the class are from economically deprived families. Without government grants supporting individual curriculum learning, children from middle-low income households will not be able to afford music learning costs (A0405). It is a pity that some of the graduates this year have had to give up music learning in junior high school due to high music learning costs (G0411)* ! It is with high hopes that the government or the social community provides more resource support and grants for the music gifted resources learning class. Although there are music gifted students who come from well-off families, quite a number of students are only able to learn music because of the government’s grant every semester for individual courses in the amount of \$6,120. Additionally, based on the data, *the three-tone cross-district percentage is 90%, the four-tone cross-district percentage is 94%, the five-tone cross-district percentage is 100%, and the six-tone cross-district percentage is 88% (B0406)*, an indication that the music gifted education resources class truly has the ability to recruit outstanding music gifted students.

V. Conclusions

Over the past four years, the music gifted education resources class students of Sinyi Elementary School have achieved excellent performance and have received numerous awards. These little musicians have even gone international for the world to see Taiwan, Kaohsiung, and Sinyi eventually! It is a rarity that the students remain humble without envy. They urge themselves to work hard to reach the top. They care for others and are truly grateful for the chance to take the next step in life.

Unlike the decentralized educational placement of centralized music classes in the past, regular class teachers and music class teachers have had the chance to be acquainted with each other and work hand in hand on the music gifted students’ disciplines and subjects, with amazing results. The group teaching, chamber music, and MIDI digital electronic music creation are the exclusive curriculum characteristics of the music gifted education resources class of Sinyi Elementary School. The class has cultivated little music performers that have creative thinking ability. In addition, if the government or social community can provide more resource support and grants, many outstanding music gifted students will benefit, without having to give up their music dream due to a lack of funds.

In a word, the music gifted education resources class established through the decentralized mode can fully embody music subject learning-centered curriculum characteristics and take the initiative to help music gifted students to achieve new heights in terms of music expertise and performance skills.

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