

# Reflecting on Art Competency-Based Curriculum Integration From Experienced Teachers' Curriculum Ideologies When Interpreting the Curriculum Guidelines

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## Summary

Researchers and organizations advocate for 21st-century learning that emphasizes competencies such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity (Jacobs, 2010; Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2019). Competency refers not only to the acquisition of knowledge and skills, but also to intrinsic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018). Within this educational context, art serves as a unique perspective and mode of understanding. Its diverse forms stimulate interests, which enables individuals to experience a diverse world through artwork and to elucidate the issues that rouse their concern through creative exploration (Greene, 2007).

In line with educational trends, the *Curriculum Guidelines of 12-Year Basic Education* (hereafter, Curriculum Guidelines) of Taiwan includes one of nine core competencies, namely, Artistic Appreciation and Aesthetic Literacy, which emphasizes art as a significant competency for future citizens. The core competencies of the arts in the Curriculum Guidelines also emphasize the life scenarios of learners as a basis for outlining the integration of the learners' artistic learning, life, and culture, which corresponds to the core competencies of the overall guidelines. Artistic Appreciation and Aesthetic Literacy refers to nurturing the competencies of students in artistic perception, creation, and appreciation, such that they can experience the beauty of art and culture. By reflecting on aesthetic life, aesthetic experiences are enriched, which cultivates an attitude and capability to appreciate and construct beauty, and share (Ministry of Education, 2014; J. C.-H. Chen, 2017). The learning performance and content of students in art competencies in

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the Curriculum Guidelines are constructed through three dimensions: expression, appreciation, and practice. The Curriculum Guidelines provide national-level curriculum ideologies, but topics concerning experienced teachers' interpretation of the Curriculum Guidelines and their transformation of the guidelines into integrated curriculum awareness requires further exploration.

One profound factor of curriculum integration that cannot be ignored is the curriculum ideologies of teachers. Curriculum ideologies form a belief system that provides value premises for practical educational issues, which helps teachers determine teaching content and methods. Eisner (1994, p. 48) points out that curriculum ideologies influence aspects that are considered problematic or nonproblematic in teaching practices, which determines which topics of curriculum content are debatable based on the importance of such ideologies. To a certain extent, the existence of the Curriculum Guidelines provides a national-level form of curriculum ideologies. Greene (2007) states that people always desire or pursue certainty in varying levels. Tension always exists between those who rely on an invisible authority to provide answers, and those who learn to tolerate uncertainty and unrealized possibilities. Many stakeholders pose different expectations and imaginations for the Curriculum Guidelines. In planning the National Curriculum and educational visions, the vision of competency-based education pertains to the relationship of concrete and abstract learning performance with the progressive development of core competencies (J. C.-H. Chen, 2017; P.-C. Chen, 2010; Y.-H. Chen, 2018; Wu & Chan, 2018). However, for teachers who implement curriculum practices, teaching experiences and considerations in teaching environments gradually inform their ideologies in curriculum integration. Against this background, this study seeks answers to these questions: What are the curriculum ideologies of experienced teachers in determining the importance of learning content corresponding to learning performance in art competencies in the Curriculum Guidelines? In addition, what ideologies about of curriculum integration do experienced teachers have in correspondence to learning performance in the art competencies in the Curriculum Guidelines?

This study adopted a mixed-method design, which includes the fuzzy Delphi, decision-making trial and evaluation laboratory method, and in-depth interview methods. Experienced teachers were invited to evaluate the weight and interrelationships among the learning content of the Curriculum Guidelines corresponding to learning performance in art competencies, after which in-depth interviews among these art teachers were conducted. The results reveal that when the experienced teachers consider the competencies of art learners, the learning contents of artistic expression presented high value and influence, which exhibited a strong relationship with other learning contents. The learning contents of art appreciation are deeply associated with

artistic expression in which the former considers the content to be influenced by and extended from the latter. The learning contents of art practice present interdisciplinary connections and integration in daily life. The experienced teachers also believe that the integration of the arts curriculum should be diverse and flexible, which harnesses the interdisciplinary characteristics based on disciplinary competencies. However, this integration needs to be based on the strategies of teachers or competencies in curriculum integration. The research also found few extremely low-importance learning contents in all aspects of artistic expression, appreciation, and practice in the teachers' ideologies about curriculum. This finding indicates that the experienced teachers generally value the diversification in the contents of art learning. However, the learning contents of relatively lower significance can still cultivate the art competencies of students. Therefore, the key is making meaningful connections with learners. Reflecting on the curriculum ideologies of experienced teachers, the study posits that art learning of artistic expression, appreciation, and practice should align with meaningful integration through differentiated learning based on the learners' learning stages and needs. The study recommends art integration should transcend disciplinary boundaries and connect art with life, using arts learning to strengthen individual competencies, such as collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity.

This study proposes that the integration of the art curriculum should prioritize the cultivation of competencies across the learning stages of individuals. From the learner-centered perspective, art learning should not only consider motivation, time, and other curriculum factors, but should also deepen learning through meaningful integration. In consideration of the need for further enrichment and expansion, project-based learning strategies and different levels of curriculum mapping are also highlighted. Furthermore, given that contemporary art competencies cover societal issues, including politics, gender, race, and perspectives from various cultures, art teachers not only need to possess subject competencies in artistic expression and appreciation, but also require critical thinking, knowledge of emerging media, and the capability to integrate across disciplines in artistic practice to cultivate the required competencies for the learners of next generation.