

Vocational and Comprehensive High Schools Push the New Curriculum Guidelines

Forward

Students Showcase Interdisciplinary Talent

(Courtesy of Fang-Yu Tu at the Division of Academic and Vocational Senior High Education)



The 12-Year Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines will be implemented in the academic year of 2019. In order to enable the vocational and comprehensive high schools to implement the New Curriculum Guidelines successfully, the Ministry of Education and the K-12 Education Administration have selected a total of 59 schools as the pilot schools to implement the New Curriculum Guidelines for vocational and comprehensive high schools on a trial basis (hereinafter referred to as "vocational and comprehensive pilot high schools"), with a focus on the balance between geographical areas, the 15 study areas, public and private schools, and rare subjects, and entrusted the National Taiwan Normal University to form a pilot school promotion team and plan for training in professional expertise, so as to facilitate successful transition to the New Curriculum Guidelines in the academic year of 2019 at all schools.

The key points of the trial carried out by the vocational and comprehensive pilot high schools in the academic year of 2018/the number of schools and subjects are summarized in the table above. The key tasks: 1. The skills domain shall be integrated into the revised required courses; 2 develop a pilot plan for the implementation of revised electives; 3. develop a pilot plan for adaptive group teaching; 4. develop a pilot plan for flexible learning time. The vocational and comprehensive pilot high schools implemented a pilot plan for professional study areas/revised electives in accordance with the mission and curriculum goals of the New Curriculum Guidelines, to provide students with adaptive electives. In the meantime, the promotion team held monthly meetings for sharing, discussion, as well as conducted on-site visits, so as to assist schools in developing characteristics of their subjects/programs and live up to the spirit of practicality and "nurture by nature" set out in the New Curriculum Guidelines.

The pilot courses of vocational and comprehensive pilot high schools combined local characteristics to develop a variety of interdisciplinary electives. Take Taichung Home Economics and Commercial High School and New Taipei Municipal Yingge Vocational High School for example, Taichung Home Economics and Commercial High School's vision was to "help each child to achieve in all aspects," the diagram of student learning goals was "multiple intelligent and adaptive learning, professional skill and innovative practice, career development and interaction for the common good, and humanistic literacy and global vision," based on which featured courses were developed in line with Taichung's needs for talents of the area and students' career paths and professionalism. In grade 11 and 12, cross-class elective internship courses were arranged, and teachers at the Department of Fashion Trends offered classes together, allowing students to enroll in courses across different study areas in the same school, so that they could take preliminary lessons in the business field to have more marketing and planning inspirations. The New Taipei Municipal Yingge Vocational High School Electives were very distinctive. For example, the Department of Ceramic Engineering offered six major interdisciplinary electives, namely, "Pottery Making," "Cultural and Innovating Products,"

"Glaze Experiments," "Painting Application," "Decoration Technique," and "Life Products," allowing students to develop better understanding and recognition of the local culture through learning traditional ceramics techniques; the Department of Arts and Crafts offered a professional crafts internship elective among other same-subject cross-class electives, enabling students to inherit unique and professional traditional crafts techniques.

Among the five types of revised electives, the most difficult type is cross-school electives. Take National Lo-Tung Commercial Vocational High School for example, the school planned to conduct cross-school electives in the session of flexible learning time in its vocational high school and comprehensive high school programs. The vocational high school program worked with the National Lo-Tung Senior High School, while the comprehensive high school program collaborated with the National Lotung Industrial Vocational High School to enrich curriculum planning of a single school. In addition, the session of flexible learning time focused much on flexibility, autonomy, and exploration. Take the Affiliated Taichung Senior Agricultural Vocational High School of National Chung Hsing University for example, it planned the fulfilling course of "Environmental Control and Cultivation of Bulb Flowers" in the session of flexible learning time, along with the High Scope Program launched by the Ministry of Science and Technology, in which the teachers from the Department of Horticulture, the Department of Bio-industrial Mechatronics, and the Department of Agronomy of the National Chung Hsing University co-developed interdisciplinary courses. In this way, students could not only learn the characteristics of flowers and plants from the courses but also learned how to use solar energy, temperature control, and other energy-efficient facilities, which are the specialties of the Department of Bio-industrial Mechatronics, to control the growth environment of flowers and ensure flowers bloom at the same time.

In order to implement the New Curriculum Guidelines under the existing framework of educational resources and organizations in line with the situations on the ground, the pilot school promotion team, the working groups, the Center for the Study Area, as well as the Vocational Education Quality Team together formed a Vocational and Comprehensive High School Curriculum Implementation Network to share the results and experience of the trials carried out by the pilot schools with non-pilot schools, so that the organizational operations, trials, and promotion of the New Curriculum Guidelines will be more effective.