

Learn in the Real World!
Outdoor Education Incorporated into Curriculum Guidelines
2016-2019 Outdoor Education Sharing Conference

(Courtesy of Yi-Ting Zhong at the Division of Junior High, Elementary School and Preschool Education)



On October 23, 2019, the Ministry of Education held the "2016-2019 Outdoor Education Sharing Conference," which featured the four themes of "mountain, ocean, cities, and the international community" in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), demonstrating the achievements in promoting outdoor education during those four years. At the conference, "Learning in the Real World: Outdoor Education Declaration 2.0" and "Outdoor Education Implementation Reference Manual – Administrative Guidelines" were also released in the hope that the learning of subject matter knowledge would be more in touch with the real world through the promotion of outdoor education, so as to put into practice the spirit of the 2019 new curriculum guidelines.

Wen-Chung Pan, Minister of Education and Fan, Sun-Lu, Political Deputy Minister of Education, jointly attended this sharing conference. In Minister Pan's speech, he expressed his

gratitude toward the school and everyone for their efforts in outdoor education and pointed out that the promotion of outdoor education was not only in line with the curriculum guidelines of 12-Year Basic Education, but also intrinsically interlinked with environmental sustainability. He hoped that the school would expand this area for learning, allowing students to deepen their studies of various subjects and domains in real-life situations while enabling students to improve their abilities in solving problems, planning, and adapting, so as to enhance children's all-round development.

The Outdoor Education Declaration 2.0 emphasizes that the 2019 curriculum guidelines are well aligned with the UN SDGs, which have integrated outdoor education that incorporates history, humanities, subject matter knowledge, and natural ecosystems. This can link learning with the real world and cultivate children's core competencies in preparation for the future world.

The Ministry of Education has established the "Directions Governing Subsidies on Implementation of Outdoor Education" since 2008 to motivate schools to implement outdoor education. In 2014, the "Outdoor Education Declaration" was released to encourage schools and the private sector to participate in the implementation of outdoor education courses. In 2016, the "Plan for Promotion of Implementation of Outdoor Education" has been launched, and the administrative support system, one of the five major support systems, has been activated to help to complete the directions governing the subsidies, and to plan continuous support for funding. The annual subsidies for local government and schools are about NT\$50 million to support students to step out of the classroom and into the outdoor environment to enrich their learning experience.

As for a support system, the Ministry of Education has set up an "Outdoor Education Resource Platform" to collect and recommend various high-quality sites and courses to provide teachers and students with easier access to outdoor learning. Currently, the number of high-quality sites for outdoor education that have been collected stands at 433. Furthermore, schools are motivated to develop high-quality routes for outdoor education in collaboration with local communities. At present, 113 high-quality routes have been selected to enhance the quality of outdoor education courses and provide students with a variety of outdoor education courses.

An outdoor education risk management and emergency response mechanism has also been established in the course safety management system, so that teachers can conduct outdoor education courses with peace of mind. In the teaching guidance and course development system, high-quality

courses and learning effectiveness evaluation tools have been developed, serving to guide schools' outdoor education in assuring high-quality and deepening the core competencies set out in 12-Year Basic Education. In addition, the K-12 Education Administration has published the "Outdoor Education Implementation Reference Manual – Administrative Guidelines," through which schools and teachers have easier access to the information they need to pave the way for outdoor education.

Today's sharing conference was kicked off with a melodious and pure singing voice of students from Yue-Ming Elementary School. The students sang how they cherished the ocean, which showed the school's philosophy in its implementing of outdoor education courses that serve to guide students to get close to and learn more about the ocean and in turn protecting and respecting the ocean. In addition, 11 schools, including Taipei School for the Visually Impaired, Hsinchu Municipal Guang-Wu Junior High School, and Yilan Hushan Elementary School, were invited to share their philosophies and achievements of their outdoor education courses. The Ministry of Education pointed out that the outdoor activities were based on the four themes of "mountain, ocean, cities, and the international community" in line with the UN SDGs and stressed that outdoor education in real-life situations was the key to educating Taiwanese students to achieve the SDGs. It hoped that Taiwanese students could be cultivated with global citizenship to take on future challenges.

Yilan Hushan Elementary School and Hsinchu Municipal Guang-Wu Junior High School motivated their students to reflect on the close relationship between people and nature through ecological exploration courses and mountain climbing and hiking activities. Yue-Ming Elementary in Yilan County inspired their students to overcome dilemmas on their own despite difficulties and obstacles through a variety of marine education courses. Moreover, Micang Elementary School in New Taipei City, Guangfu Experimental Elementary School of Ecology in Tainan City, and Guangrong Elementary School in Kaohsiung City have taken estuaries, lagoons, and marine ecological environment as the starting point and demonstrated how they lead students to know about the local ecological system and learn how to solve problems during the course of outdoor education.

Taipei Municipal Huajiang Elementary School and Taipei Municipal Neihu High School have envisioned Taipei as their classroom to plan a series of urban exploration courses, ranging from ecological environment, humanities and history to social care. In addition, Taipei School for the Visually Impaired has integrated experiencing activities into daily interdisciplinary courses to enable

students to experience and challenge themselves through a series of courses from mountain climbing and hiking, canoeing, to great adventures through the Taipei MRT system, so as to create a new sensory experience for visually impaired children and cultivate their abilities to take on challenge and act independently. The Da-Keng Elementary School in Taichung City and Yunlin County Kouhu Junior High School have guided students to think about how to balance the local industry and environmental changes based on their local industries and characteristics. From local to international issues, students are stepping out of the classroom and going international.

According to the Ministry of Education, the courses promoted by these schools have echoed with "Learning in the Real World! Outdoor Education Incorporated into Curriculum Guidelines," the theme of this sharing conference, encouraging students not only to learn from textbooks but also to know how to get close to the land, enter the social and cultural fields, and explore and understand the world. Through this sharing conference on outdoor education, more teachers were motivated to work together to enrich the learning contents of children's outdoor education, and parents were invited to support their children to learn in the real world.

The K-12 Education Administration said that it would provide more support and funding in the future to encourage schools to plan more diverse outdoor educational courses, which would not only fulfill the core philosophy of "spontaneity, interaction, and the common good" of 12-Year Basic Education but also respond to the international sustainable development consensus; as such, our children would develop their abilities to think, adapt, and solve problems.