

# A Case Study of the Teaching Strategy and Class Management

## Mode from a Gifted Educational Teacher

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**Abstract** This research is major to discuss the teaching strategy and class management mode from a gifted education teacher. For reaching the research purposes above, our case target is an experienced, approved and gifted educational teacher in Southern of Taiwan. We use qualitative case study, and structured observation, semistructured interview and files of students and teachers in the research. It can generalize the features of the teaching strategy and class management mode of the teacher as follow:

### ***Class Management:***

1. Use the resource of parents flexible and build a good interacted communicative environment.
2. Establish an open and democratic learning environment to encourage independent thought of students.
3. Construct online learning club to strengthen self-guidance of students.

### ***Educational Strategy:***

1. List connective and adjustable teach and learn purposes for different requirements.
2. Assist students to present the achievement of learning in proper places, and participate in domestic and off-shore competitions to train their globalize vision.

**Key words:** case study, teaching strategies, gifted education, class management

## **Introduction**

This research aims to investigate teaching strategies and classroom management of an excellent gifted education teacher. To achieve this goal, case study is employed and purposive sampling adopted when choosing teacher Y (pseudonym) as research subject of this study. The data are analyzed and organized by means of observation, in-depth interviews and document collection. It is hoped that the research could depict the concepts of classroom management and instruction designs in Y's teaching.

### ***Research Motive***

Teachers are the executors of teaching. They play a significant role in instruction designs, teaching activities and classroom management. With gifted students' acute desire for extensive and profound knowledge, along with external pressure and parents' relatively more attention (You, 2007), only love and patience could not guarantee successful teaching. Teachers also must make good use of teaching strategies and classroom management. Enhancement of professional competency, firm grip on teaching models, self-adjustment, parents' feelings and communication between and assistance from specialist teachers are the essences of gifted education.

In the course of Teaching Materials and Methods for Gifted Students, my professor recommended me one excellent gifted education teacher as interview subject. During interview, the teacher was highly cooperative and the abundant information she offered really astonished me. According to the teacher, instruction plans and designs were not developed only for one semester or a school year but for long-term transition. Most teachers believe that gifted education is profound and extensive. So continuous education, mastery of various teaching methods and quest for professional assistance are critical to successful gifted education. What criteria does Y rely on when designing long-term instruction plans? And how does she manage her class so that all her students enjoy in it?

The abovementioned questions drove the author to investigate how, in real teaching process, excellent gifted education teachers implement teaching strategies and classroom management to create a successful learning environment for gifted students.

### ***Personal Traits that an Excellent Gifted Education Teacher should Possess***

Guo (2001) suggests that an excellent gifted education teacher should be equipped with emotional stability, professional literacy, love, patience and empathy, accept all students, and provide a free and orderly environment. Teaching all and selecting none, leading students by example, listening actively, praising instead of punishing and life-long learning are also critical to be an excellent gifted education teacher. With students' acute desire for extensive and profound knowledge, along with external pressure and parents' relatively more attention (You, 2007), it is necessary to consider what personal traits teachers have and what their values, self-concepts and training are in order to provide an optimal learning environment. An excellent gifted education teacher's characteristics are discussed in terms of personal traits, professional competency and teaching:

### ***Personal Traits***

It is generally believed that gifted children should only be taught by "gifted" teachers. If only erudite teachers could teach gifted students, then it would not be easy to find appropriate candidates. So, a mature, confident and humorous teacher could be a gifted education teacher (Tsai, 1996). Richard et al. (1996) proposes that if teachers are more capable, the classes they

taught tend to be more open and flexible and students are inclined to reflect upon themselves. Barbara Lark (2007) also mentions that being supportive, sensitive to others, open to new ideas, and flexible and respect and trust for others are the most important personal traits an excellent gifted education teacher should possess.

### ***Professional Competency***

To understand gifted students' needs, cultivate skills to develop self-concept and integrate cognition, affection, perception and intuition are critical to be a gifted education teacher. (Barbara Clark, 2007) Meanwhile, teachers with professional competency are able to adopt different teaching methods under various circumstances, foster interaction with students within creative teaching activities and cooperate with students to enrich educational values (Chen, 1998). In addition, other researches point out that gifted education teachers with better professional competency face less pressure from work. Enhanced professional competency improves the use of coping strategies (Wang, et al, 2004). In addition to studying related research reports and professional books, action research is critical for teachers to acquire professional knowledge and practice theories (Mckeman, J., 1991; Kuo, 2001). Action research employs quantitative or qualitative method to describe problems and students' behaviors encountered during teaching or compare those problems with other documents and research findings. Because of rapid changes and fast accumulation of knowledge and information, teachers should continue to enhance their professional competency (Guo, 2001).

### ***Teaching Characteristics***

With the mindset of open and progressive education, passionate, friendly, sincere and thoughtful gifted education teachers are standing on a vantage point to guide students' learning (Tsai, 1996). Students have potential. If they are given more cultural stimulus such as music, literature, physical fitness, drama or observation when they were young, the potential could be exploited unknowingly. That would alleviate students' learning stress (Xue, 2007).

### ***Teaching Strategies of an Excellent Gifted Education Teacher***

During teaching, teachers and students work together, realizing the idea of "teaching creativity based on creativity, open on openness and humanistic on humanity" (Chen, 1997). To carry out the idea, teachers should be not only the resource persons or knowledge providers, but also "cooperators" and "co-learners" to create knowledge. To enrich resources in the classroom is learners' jobs because everyone is responsible for the success of teaching and learning (Chen, 1997). To achieve best teaching effects, the following sections propose several concepts designing curriculum:

### ***Planning Teaching Objectives***

The goal of gifted curriculum design is to organize learning experiences and arrange proper learning activities for gifted students in accordance with individual needs (Mao, 1995). Curriculum varies with teaching objectives. For that reason, it is necessary to determine teaching objectives before designing curriculum. Wu (1996) indicates that it is of paramount importance to set personality development and environmental adjustment as the goal of gifted education from which instruction and curriculum plans could be derived. According to other literature, most teaching materials adopted by elementary gifted education teacher in Kaohsiung City are compiled by teachers but the sources of teaching materials are scarce. If teachers could pool their thoughts together and exchange ideas, then they could offer students multi-learning and students' potential could be explored (Lin, 2003). Administrative structure dictates the success or failure of gifted program. This reflects whether school's effort increases or decrease gifted students' educational experience and opportunity (Barbara Clark, 2007)

### ***Application of Teaching Models***

Innovation and application of teaching methods are the proof of teachers' professional competency. Learners' multiple mindsets usually come from multidimensional teaching; creative thinking is inspired by creative teaching (Chen, 1998). To stimulate gifted students' multi-thinking and independent appreciation, teachers must grasp all teaching models, understand students' needs and differences, carefully choose and apply teaching strategies so that teaching could exploit students' potential, foster their growth and encourage them to pursue advanced learning. Based on Barbara Clark's 2007 book "Growing up gifted: The international perspectives", the researcher organizes widely accepted curriculum models used to teach gifted students:

- (1) Taxonomy of Educational Objectives
- (2) Cognitive-affective Model
- (3) Structure of Intelligence, SOI
- (4) Enrichment Triad/Revolving Door
- (5) The Grid
- (6) Integrative Education Model, IEM
- (7) Autonomous Learner Model, ALM
- (8) Multiple Intelligences, MI
- (9) Triarchic Componential Model

### ***Establishment of Teaching Situation***

Ranson et al. (1996) suggests that learning helps us move beyond isolation and separation, transcending regionality and familiarity and exploring the unknown world. As a facilitator, coordinator and resource person, the main function of teacher is to create a

positive and open learning environment so that gifted students have the opportunity to interact with peers with same level of intelligence (Wang, 2007). Knowledge acquisition in a single situation, however, tends to be close-ended and easily leads to learning fatigue; successful learning depends on the establishment of good teaching situation. To satisfy gifted students' desire for knowledge, teachers must make good use of what is given to develop creative teaching situation. Free and open learning environment helps learners express themselves, investigate problems, think critically and exchange ideas (Chen 1998). Both teachers and students are responsible for the implementation of curriculum design and learning activities to create a lively atmosphere (Chen, 1998). Therefore, teachers and students should alternate their roles and cooperate with others.

### ***Classroom Management of an Excellent Gifted Education Teacher***

Guo (2001) believes that classroom management effectively manages all affairs in class, maximizes teaching effects and achieves teaching objectives. To most teachers, classroom management is their job and basic competency. Most of them understand the relationship between classroom management and teaching effects. For students, good classroom management not only enhances learning effects but also improves relations with teacher (Zhang, Lin, Liu, 2002). Comparing with traditional society of the past, modern classroom management integrates science, art and philosophy. Only love and patience do not guarantee effective classroom management. Teachers should also enhance their professional competency (Zhang et al., 2002). By implementing creativity and innovation, the invisible culture and atmosphere could be developed.

### ***Interaction with School Administrative System***

Cooperating with faculty members is critical in teaching. With assistance from their peers, teachers could bring their functions into full play. To satisfy gifted students' desire for knowledge, teachers, staff members, parents and the community should pull their weight. Capitalizing on teachers' talents and interests helps gifted students' learning. School's administrators and staff members are valuable because they are familiar with the school administrative system and understand how to run it smoothly (Barbara Clark, 2007).

### ***Interactions with Students***

In addition to physical environment, there are intangible psychological factors in a classroom (Guo, 2001). Gifted students often feel different and isolated from other students because of self-expectation and external pressure. Once a child is labeled as "gifted", s/he has stronger feeling of isolation. Therefore, gifted education teachers must employ warmth- and "love"-oriented counseling, accept and understand gifted students and counsel them. These are beneficial to student's development of cooperative and non-aggressive behaviors (Barbara

Clark, 2007). The goal of education is not only to improve students' academic performances but also to guide their emotional development and assist them in learning with a healthy mind (Chen, 1998). If teachers could be severe with themselves and set examples for students, they could gain students' respect (Zhang et al. 2002).

### ***Parent-Teacher Interactions***

Ginsbry indicates that parents are children's earliest teachers and greatly influence their lives. They are at the frontline to provide values and information and help them develop attitudes (Tsai, 1997). School effectiveness could be greatly enhanced if parents' talents, skills, knowledge and specialties are well exploited (Tony Humphreys, 2000). So parents are involved not only in solving problems but also in ameliorating family education aggressively and creatively. Parents are at the core of the education group and provide necessary information when children are assessed. They also know the best way to educate their kids. Meanwhile, parents could aid teacher in managing class affairs and even could be endorsers of teaching (Barbara Clark, 2007). Events in school and family influence students' behaviors. They also impact on students' school performances and family atmosphere. For that reason, parent-teacher interactions affect children's growth (Zhang et al., 2002).

### ***Community Resources Utilization***

Barbara Clark (2007) points out that community provides abundant resources and manpower to help students understand complicated issues and functions. By capitalizing on community facilities and inviting neighbors to participate in teaching activities, gifted education instruction plans increase available resources (Clark, 1992). Therefore, gifted education and community resources are closely related. Success of education depends on the cooperation between families and society because the implementation of education relies on manpower and resources of society. That is why teaching faculty must have good relationship with local community (Chang, 2002).

## Research Method

### Research Framework

The aim of this research is to investigate an excellent gifted education teacher's teaching strategies and classroom management. The research model is based on research motive, research questions and literature review.

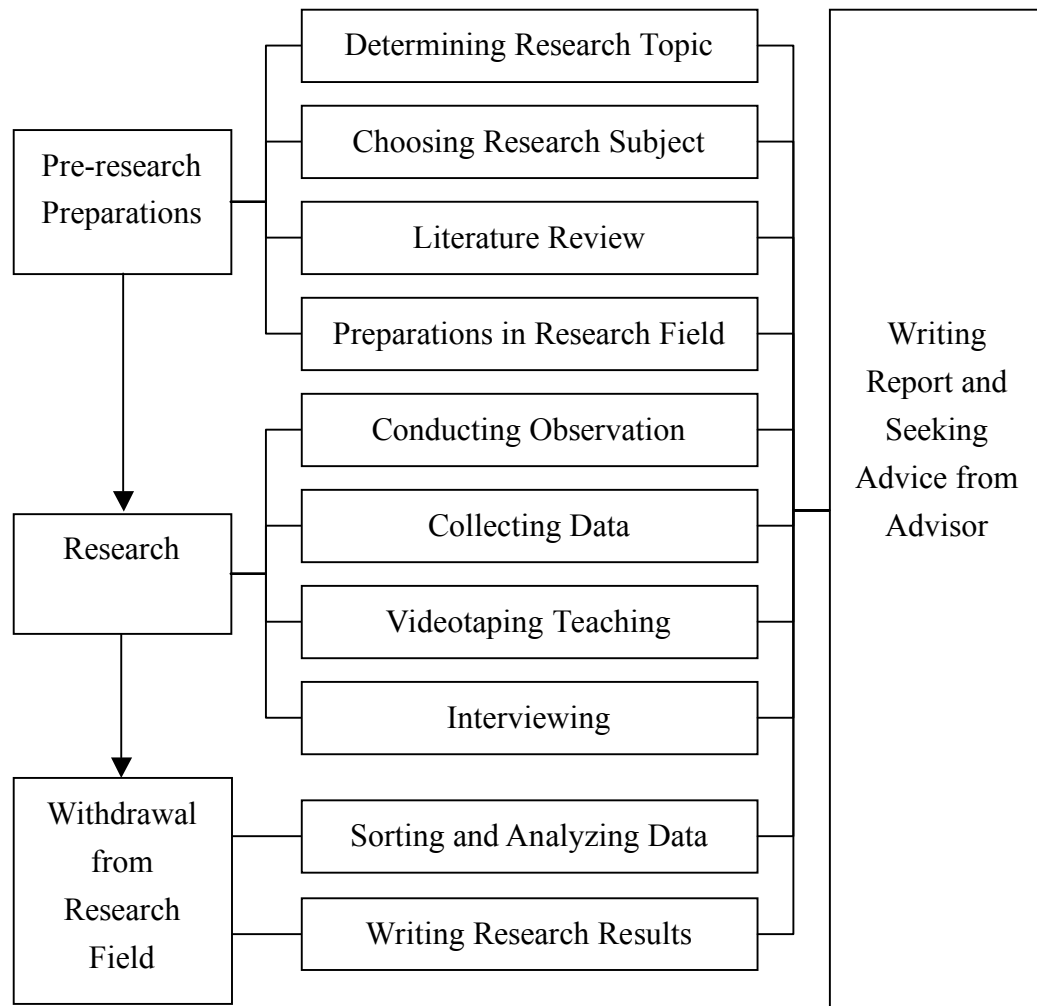


Fig.1 Design of the case study of Teaching Strategy and Class Management of a Gifted Education Teacher

## **Conclusion**

Based on literature review and interview analysis from which research findings and conclusion are derived.

### ***An Excellent Gifted Education Teacher's Personal Traits***

Darling-Hammond & Cobb (1995) believes that knowledge of teaching methods, subject matter, effective teaching competency and attitude, full understanding of human growth and children development, effective communication skills, high ethical standards and ability to pursue continuing education are what constitute an excellent teacher. Tsai (1997) indicates that an excellent teacher's personal traits could be discussed from three perspectives. In terms of personality, an excellent teacher is mentally healthy, mature, confident, humorous and wise. With regard to professional competency, she has profound knowledge and her teaching is vivid and inspiring. When it comes to attitude, she is enthusiastic, friendly, sincere and understands and accepts all students.

In addition to those abovementioned personal traits, an excellent teacher should also be willing to learn new knowledge, face challenges and tolerate different ideas.

Furthermore, an excellent teacher should pursue knowledge actively so as to improve professional competency. She also needs to understand her weakness and seek help from other professions.

Setting herself as an example for students and through participation in school activities to encourage students to take part in daily life, communicating with parents actively to gain trust and help from parents, establishing a collegiate relationship with students so that students are willing to talk to the teacher, understanding students' personal traits to adjust teaching and providing necessary assistance to students while learning are teaching characteristics of an excellent gifted education teacher.

### ***An Excellent Gifted Education Teacher's Perspective on Teaching Strategies ands Ways to***

#### ***Practise them***

Chen (1997) suggests that a teacher should not only be familiar with various teaching strategies but also update knowledge base that copes with complicated teaching problems. Teaching itself is the combination of reflection and exploration. Consequently, the application of teaching strategies is critical to teaching. If teaching strategies are used properly, they could yield twice the result with half the effort. In this study, Y's teaching strategies focus on individual needs i.e. to set transitional and flexible teaching objectives for each student. Y's teaching strategies are the combination of Renzulli's Enrichment Triad Model and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences Theory and serves as a base for curriculum

design. Besides, teaching strategies should be integrated into visions of school-based curriculum so that teachers could combine theory with practice.

Each gifted student could present his learning achievement logically through teacher's guidance, discussion with group members, data collection, questioning and evaluation. After teaching, it is also necessary to provide students with proper field to present results or lead them to participate in international contests to cultivate their global perspective.

Wu (1994) points out that a class has both sociality and psychology and it consisted of more affective elements than interests. A class is made up of consensus, interaction and rules. To run a successful class, therefore, a teacher should start with previous three factors.

Y establishes a free atmosphere and on-line learning community in which students' independent thinking is stimulated. The combination of parent resources, specialist teachers and community resources offers students opportunities to contact various specialists and receive the latest learning resource. During learning, students apply what they have learned in daily life. In addition, it is necessary to establish counseling portfolios for students and conduct follow-up counseling. It is also important to discuss issues with related personnel and take remedial instruction to promote adaptive development.

Tasi (1997) proposes that teaching students in accordance with their aptitude is the foundation of education. This concept also applies to gifted education. Chen et al. (2002) wrote in a book of classroom management that a teacher who attempts to manage a class does not guarantee successful classroom management but the failure rate is greatly lowered. Teachers, however, should not put all their efforts to classroom management or the success of it will be reduced. The way a gifted education teacher integrates school, parent and community resources is critical to support diversified development of gifted education and assist teaching. Therefore, an excellent gifted education teacher should be open to challenges and pursue continuous education to provide quality gifted education.

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