

Abstract

In recent years, art education in Macao has been a target of criticism, claiming that it does not nurture students' creativity and cultural competence. The education reform starting in 1991 triggered the curriculum reform, which involved the total curriculum of preschool, primary and secondary education, art education curriculum being one to be included in the reform and its latest versions were published in 1999.

The local education authority has taken the responsibilities in promoting the production of the curriculum since 1994, the syllabus and the "teaching and learning organization plan" of each discipline have been tried out in the official Luso-Chinese schools since the school year 1995/1996.

The principles for designing the curriculum will surely affect the curriculum design and implementation, the curriculum designing principles in Macao are oriented to student and community, with the principles of teacher empowerment, curriculum development by stages, etc. The design and implementation model is of school-based orientation and using a "bottom-up model".

An exploratory study on the government's art education curriculum was done to all art teachers of private Chinese and English primary schools in Macao, and an interview made to an art teacher and her superiors of a private secondary school. The results show that many primary teachers, art education being one of the subjects to teach, give great importance on students' creativity and deem that art education should be learner based, yet they reject the idea that art education should involve the elements of community. As for the cultural competence, they do not consider art history teaching an important issue. It is showed that the personnel management, resources, and school management do not reflect strong support for art education to be developed in a school-based approach. It is probably difficult once an overall implementation of the art education curriculum be done Special District wide. As for the results of interview, they show that teacher's professional competence, teaching resources, school management and students' conditions bring great influence on the successful implementation of the art education curriculum.

The following are proposed for the improvement of Macao's future art education:

Reconstruction of the total curriculum to increase integration between disciplines;

Increase of teacher training in the field of art education concepts and curriculum development, in order to decrease teacher's dependence on textbook and mass produced teaching material, and to be more competent in developing curriculum for their classes;

For the resources, more art rooms, computers, and supporting teaching material will be needed;

Though difficult, it is worthy of promoting the school-based development of art education, thus a tailor-made art education curriculum may be possibly elaborated for the students;

For the art teacher community, mechanism should be promoted for a better communication between them, therefore the group effect be brought up.

In terms of organization, the Macao SAR Government will implement the small class regime in the preparatory year for primary education this year, this will certainly help raise the quality of art education. It is expected that after a brief period this regime will be implemented in the higher grades in primary and secondary education for a better development of local art education.