

Abstract

Aesthetic education has an exceedingly significant influence on the basic education process; it incorporates with moral, intellectual, physical and social education to comprise various components of comprehensive education. In Macau, the history of aesthetic education could trace back to a very long period, and the Eastern and Western culture interchange created educators with unique opportunities and advantages towards the development of aesthetic education. Aesthetic education had redefined its position in the education system, especially when it was affirmed in a series of Macau S.A.R. educational laws and government policies since the handover, and such emphasis in official documents had created immense opportunities for future development.

Teachers are crucial in implementing educational policies and their roles act as medium in passing educational goals to students in the classroom. The aim of this study is therefore to explore the importance of aesthetic education in basic education from a theoretical perspective, and use the data of questionnaires and interviews to analysis teachers' attitudes towards aesthetics education, aesthetic education laws, policies and curriculum in the Macau S.A.R. The similarities and differences between the principles of aesthetic education, the S.A.R. Government's educational policies and genuine practices were also being analyzed in order to form constructive policy suggestions.

The following preliminary results were concluded from this study:

- Through bibliographical analysis, the study concluded that key Eastern and Western educational thinkers of ancient and modern times alike unanimously agreed that aesthetic education is a key part of comprehensive education. Although Macau had a long history of unique distinctiveness in cultural exchanges, some scholars claimed that educators had failed to fully development students' potential and there are still a lot of rooms for future improvement in the area of aesthetic education;
- Through the analysis of the data of questionnaires and interviews, the study

concluded that teachers in Macau mostly agreed that aesthetic education was a vital part of the educational process. However, their perceptions of the aims, functions and policies of aesthetic education needed to be further enriched.

Considering the above factors, the following recommendations are suggested:

- At the government level, the scope of aesthetic education must be clearly defined, vision and missions established. Dedicated personnel to work in the area of aesthetic education in public educational institutions should be assigned. Furthermore, it is vital to intensify systematic, sustainable and comprehensive aesthetic education (art education) training programs.
- At the school level, schools need to provide comprehensive and quality art education to all students. To their teachers, schools should try to modify existing monistic instructional practices, encourage collaboration among teachers and encourage action research to enhance teaching standards, in order to share and promote successful teaching experiences. Schools should also provide training to future principal teachers and gradually reduce their workload and work-related pressure.
- At the teacher level, schools should organize activities for teachers to experience musical art, plastic art, literature art, theatrical art and living art, so as to reinforce teachers' attitudes in promoting aesthetic education across various subjects.
- At the community level, community resources should be utilized more effectively, and community centers established to promote aesthetic education.