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## **A Comparative Study of Curriculum Policies and Practices in Arts Education in Hong Kong and Taiwan in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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### **Abstract**

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the governments of Hong Kong and Taiwan initiated curriculum reforms, which aimed to expand children's arts experience, develop their generic skills and connect their knowledge in and through the arts. In Taiwan, the arts curriculum adopts an integrated design while in Hong Kong, it adopts an integrative learning approach that connects not only the arts, but also other Key Learning Areas. Working with tertiary institutions, the Taiwanese Government has provided an advisory group and other resources to prepare teachers for an integrated arts curriculum. Although the Hong Kong Government co-organised projects with tertiary institutions and the community, and commissioned a professional development course for primary school teachers, secondary school teachers seemed to be neglected. This paper compares official curriculum frameworks and their implementation, primary textbooks and teacher preparation among the two programmes. Many challenges are identified, and recommendations, such as increased collaboration among stakeholders and research on various integration approaches, are offered. It is hoped that these recommendations will help the successful implementation of the integrative/integrated arts curriculum in both places, as well as other parts of the world.

## **Introduction**

At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many countries began to review and reform their education policies in order to equip children with the necessary breadth and depth of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to meet challenges in the new millennium. The governments of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HK) and Taiwan, Republic of China (Taiwan) also aim to prepare all-round citizens for the new century by reforming the school curriculum, including the arts curriculum by expanding students' arts experience, developing their generic skills and life-long learning attitudes, and connecting knowledge in and through the arts. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, music and visual arts (VA) were the only arts subjects taught in HK and Taiwan schools, and they were taught separately. The new policy in HK advocated an integrative arts curriculum, whereby music and VA have separate curriculum guidelines, and teachers are encouraged to integrate other arts elements into their teaching and to link the arts education key learning area (KLA) with other KLAs of the curriculum. In Taiwan, a truly integrated arts education policy is recommended, which integrates music and VA with other performing arts, i.e., dance and drama. Music and arts teachers are expected to design new curriculum content that assimilates all the arts. Before doing the comparative study, the arts education policies and practices are reviewed.

### ***Review of Arts Education Policies and Practices***

In 2004, a comprehensive survey of selected arts-rich programmes in over 35 countries from around the world was conducted by Bamford (2006). Some findings from her investigation on the impact of the arts in education are significant to this study:

1. The arts appear in the educational policy in almost every country in the world. This is particularly true during the turn of the Century, when many countries started to revise their educational policies and curriculum to prepare students for the fast changing world. To develop all round citizens, many countries have included the art subjects in their core curriculum, e.g., in Australia (AEC, 1994a), USA (MENC, 1994), United Kingdom (DFE, 1992), China (Guo, 2009) and New Zealand (MOE, 1999).
2. “Arts education” is culture- and context-specific, which gives emphasis on the arts as cultural agents, and teachers as facilitators, bringing children to discern and value their own arts. Yang (2003) argued the different values of arts education, from aesthetic, expressive, intellectual to the sustainability of the cultural arts. She emphasised that integrated arts education relates closely to students’ daily encounter and connects well with their whole person development. Hwang (2003) acknowledged the open and multifaceted arts culture in Taiwanese society, and further reinforced the core culture as one’s fundamental value to promote the multifaceted arts curriculum. Through analysis, critical evaluation, construction and recognition of one’s core culture with other cultures, students could connect the arts with their daily life, preserve cultural heritage and interact with other cultures creatively.
3. There is a difference between education in the arts and education through the arts. The former maintains learning in each of the art forms to make improvement, enhance cultural identity and a sense of personal satisfaction. The latter utilises different artistic strategies to teach other curricula in order to enhance the overall achievement, reduce school dissatisfaction and promote positive knowledge transfer in quality arts programmes. Bresler (2005) argued the cognitive advantages of the arts and their

capacities to connect to other areas of human endeavors with evidences from Norway, Greece, Australia, Japan and the United States.

4. Quality arts education is inclined to have a strong partnership between the school, outside artists /arts organisations and the community. Schools were less bound by their physical walls, but had become centres connecting children to a range of arts enhancement venues such as museums, concert halls and the wider community. Almost every quality arts-rich education programme in Bamford's study (2006) highlighted the importance of partnerships and the significance of working closely with the local community. Many schools had extended the classroom boundaries to include art and cultural institutions. About 87% of countries acknowledged that arts education had improved community bonds. In HK, the experience that teachers gained in designing their lessons or co-teaching with the artists in class resulted in considerable professional development for both the artist and the teacher (Bamford, 2006).

### ***Purpose of Study***

Although both HK and Taiwan have similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds, they employ different strategies in promoting arts education. It would be interesting and vital to find out what these policies and curriculum content are and how they are conducted in order to make improvement on curriculum designs and practices. Hence a comparative study of arts education on four foci was conducted: the curriculum policies, teaching and learning practices, classroom materials and teacher preparation. The purpose of using comparative study method was because through careful investigation of the integrative/integrated arts curriculum in HK and Taiwan respectively, the benefits and problems will be revealed and

compared. Moreover, new insights will be elicited, which may be of value and interest to policy makers, educators, researchers and practitioners in both places as well as in other parts of the world. “*Integrative*” arts curriculum is used in HK to maintain a stronger emphasis on one art form while integrating with other art forms, while “*integrated*” arts curriculum is used in Taiwan to integrate music, VA and other arts such as dance and drama.

### ***Review of Comparative Education***

Comparative educational studies have enabled educators and researchers to examine different countries’ educational policies and teaching, learning and assessment practices objectively through an analysis of official documents or different teaching, learning and assessment practices. Noah (1986) identified four dimensions of methodological spectra in comparative educational studies. These included i) *purpose*: whether it was descriptive, analytical or explanatory, ii) *scale*: whether it was of one country, a few countries or many countries, iii) *paradigm*: whether it was formalised or less formalised, and iv) *methods and data*: whether it was quantitative, qualitative or a mixture of both. Although Kemp and Lopherd (1992) argued the lack of theoretical development in comparative music education, Lopherd (1988) adapted Bereday’s comparison methods in his study of music education in the People’s Republic of China. In Bereday’s (1966) comparative method in education, four steps of comparative analysis were employed: i) description: descriptive data presented with the aids of tables and diagrams etc., ii) interpretation: written account with educational facts and interpretation, iii) juxtaposition: setting up differences and similarities, and iv) comparison proper: a simultaneous comparison. Chu and Kennedy (2005) conducted a focused comparative study of 5<sup>th</sup>-grade integrated arts textbooks in Taiwan and the USA. They used

four educators' curricular integration paradigms to investigate the proportion of music versus other disciplines included in the textbooks. Phillips (Alexander et al., 2000) argued that comparativists were capable of constructing an analysis that explained the phenomena in an intricate education context, hence they were able to anticipate and assess the possibilities those phenomena brought about for other settings. If one of the aims of policy makers and teachers is to transform education, then comparative studies, as described above, may offer us diverse models and strategies to transform education.

Alexander (2000) also conducted a large scale international study of primary education in England, France, India, Russia and the United States from 1994-98. It focused on six areas: i) structure and purposes of primary education, ii) nature of teaching and teacher thinking, iii) classroom experience encountered by pupils, iv) classroom language, v) relationship between the classroom and educational and social policy, and vi) impact of culture and history on education. Three institutional communities were compared: the *system*, the *school* and the *classroom*, emphasising the interpretative rather than the regulatory aspect of pedagogy.

Alexander (2000) emphasised the ways teaching and learning practice related to the context of culture, structure, and policy in which it was embedded. Actual teaching and learning practices could only be understood through the complex interplay of policies, structure, cultures, and values. The systematic comparison of universal pedagogical elements across different countries versus those specific to a particular country or culture can allow us to illustrate the possibilities and limitations of different teaching practices and policies.

## **Methodology**

The above literature on comparative study provides the theoretical framework for our investigation of the curriculum policies and practices in arts education in HK and Taiwan.

Several research questions are raised to assist the investigation:

1. What are the aims, objectives and curricular frameworks of arts education in the official documents?
2. How is arts education being conducted?
3. Do the practices match the intended policies?
4. How do the classroom materials such as textbooks help to implement the curriculum?
5. What courses and support do pre- and in-service teachers get in teacher education institutions?
6. What are the problems facing them in implementing the new curriculum?

We referenced Noah's methodological spectra (1986) for investigation: i) official documents on arts policies and curriculum guides stating the rationale of arts education reform were examined and compared in the two places, ii) some exemplars from the "arts-in-education" programme, which involved artists working with school teachers in the formal curriculum, were cited and assessed to illustrate the actual implementation and identify problems of the integrative arts curriculum in HK. Teachers' schedule of work, lesson plan contest, useful websites, workshops and conferences are explored in Taiwan, iii) adapting Alexander's (2000) three levels of *institutional community*, both the *system* and *classroom* were compared, with a third level being the *hardware-software provision*, instead of comparing *school*. For *hardware provision*, primary 4 & 6 music (HK) and arts (Taiwan) textbooks were analysed and compared, which included the rationale and focus of textbooks,

the structure and framework, thematic content, proportion of arts integration and assistance aids for teachers. For *software provision*, both pre- and in-service teachers' professional development was compared, with related research in two teacher education institutions. Similarities, differences and problems of implementing arts education are compared and explained; challenges facing the reforms are discussed with recommendations proposed. We have chosen curricular organizational frameworks, implementation of arts education projects, teacher preparation and textbooks review as areas of comparison

## **Data Analysis**

### ***Overall Aims and Organisational Frameworks of Arts Education***

***Hong Kong.*** At the start of the new millennium, the Education Commission in HK undertook a comprehensive review of education. It declared that children should achieve holistic development in ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics, be capable of life-long learning, adapt to change, and develop the potentials to contribute to the future well-being of the nation and worldwide (EC, 2000, p. 4). The arts education curriculum guide asserts that arts education contributes significantly to children's aesthetic and whole-person development, creative and critical thinking, cultural awareness and effective communication (CDC, 2002, p.3; CDC, 2001, p.18). The music curriculum guide, which follows closely the aims and frameworks of the arts education curriculum guide, was introduced a year later in 2003.

In order to facilitate coherent learning, all subjects are grouped into eight KLAs (CDC, 2002). Strategies for developing the Education Department, the KLAs and teachers in three stages with short-term (2001-2006), medium-term (2006-2011) and long-term goals (beyond

2011) are suggested. The nine-year compulsory education from primary 1 to secondary 3 (grade 1 to 9) is grouped into three key stages (KS): KS1 (primary 1 to 3), KS2 (primary 4 to 6) and KS3 (secondary 1 to 3). Some changes in curriculum planning and implementation are proposed by introducing i) a diversified arts curriculum (CDC, 2002, p. 4), which includes learning other arts (p. 52), life-wide learning refers to learning in real contexts and authentic settings, i.e. attending a live concert instead of listening to a recording of it during a lesson, ii) a range of pedagogical approaches, including integrative learning and life-wide learning in the arts (pp. 5, 52), and iii) connection within the arts education KLA and also with other KLAs.

About 10-15% and 8-10% of the lesson time is recommended for arts education at the primary and junior secondary levels, respectively. A flexible curricular structure is also recommended to accommodate formal, informal, modular, integrative and project learning. Some possible adaptations such as artist-in-school programmes, introducing drama and media arts and adopting integrative learning approaches and life-wide learning are suggested to broaden students' arts learning experience.

Curriculum design across the arts and interdisciplinary learning across KLAs is thought to encourage students to integrate and connect their learning experiences (CDC, 2002, pp. 52-54). The music curriculum guide (MCG) affirms that by learning across the arts, children would understand similar concepts such as contrast and harmony, as evident across different arts. With this approach it is thought likely that students' conceptual understanding of the arts might be widened, their creativity stimulated, and responses towards music elevated (CDC, 2003a, p. 32). Moreover, the MCG states that integrative learning in the arts is a learning approach, not an integrated arts curriculum, which means music can maintain its integrity

while connecting students' learning with other arts. Learning across the KLAs is intended to extend learning experience laterally, enhance students' motivation to learn, equip them with the ability to examine an issue from different angles, connect different learning experiences, thereby strengthening their understanding of the KLAs. Furthermore, music teachers are invited to work with other KLA teachers to organise activities across the KLAs (CDC, 2003a, pp. 2-33, 62).

**Taiwan.** In the new millennium, the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Taiwan made reforming the compulsory education curriculum its top priority. In order to meet the needs of national development and public expectations (MOE, 2001, 2003), the reform entailed three issues: i) de-centralisation of the school curriculum, ii) offering alternatives to the discipline-based education, and iii) advocating education for all (Chen, 1999). General curriculum guidelines for grades 1-9 compulsory education were proposed in 1998. The MOE emphasised education as a learning process to help students explore their potential and adapt to the environment. The goals include developing humanitarian attitudes, enhancing integration abilities, fostering indigenous awareness with a global perspective, and developing lifelong learning (MOE, 2001, 2003, p. 3). Traditional subjects are grouped into seven major *learning areas* (LAs), which refer to the content of learning, not the title of school subject. The new curriculum also covers important societal issues such as gender, environmental education, information technology and human rights (MOE, 1998a, 2001, 2003). The MOE conducted a pilot study (1999-2001), before the new curriculum implementation (MOE, 1998b), which focused on school-based curriculum development and integrated teaching approaches (Lai, 2001).

The Arts and Humanities Learning Area includes three art-disciplines: music, visual art and performing arts (dance and drama). For more than fifty years before 2001, music and art were taught separately while dance and drama are new to the school curriculum. The goals of this learning area are to i) foster students' skills and understandings in arts, ii) encourage active participation in arts related activities, iii) enhance the ability in aesthetic criticism and iv) develop artistic potential and well-rounded character in students. Thus, the arts and humanities curriculum enables students to gain knowledge of, and the skills associated with, exploration and expression, aesthetics and comprehension, experience and application in arts (MOE, 2001, 2003, pp. 19-20).

The arts and humanities curriculum guidelines focus on the development of students' abilities in music, visual art, and performing arts, differentiated by grade levels. Four stages of competence indicators are designed to reflect students' abilities upon completion of grades 2, 4, 6, and 9. Teachers are expected to transform these competence indicators into course content, which are not included in the guidelines. Integration and team-teaching approaches are emphasized, so that music teaching is integrated with visual art, dance and drama, and music specialists are teamed with specialists of other art-disciplines, if necessary. To simplify the curriculum at grades 1 and 2, arts and humanities is combined with social studies, and science and technology to become a new course called life curriculum. This reduced the overall learning areas from seven to five for the lower level grades, which not only helps young children to learn, but also makes it easier for school scheduling.

The total lesson time of each learning area is different and flexible, e.g., 28-31 and 32-34 lessons per week are recommended for grades 3-4 and grades 7-8 respectively. About 10-15% of the curricular total lesson time is recommended for arts and humanities at the

primary and junior secondary levels (MOE, 2001, 2003), which is about 3-4 lessons per week. Each lesson is 40 minutes for grades 1-6 and 45 minutes for grades 7-9. The committee of school curriculum development (CSCD) in each school authorized school-based curriculum and scheduling.

### ***Similarities and Differences in Curriculum Frameworks***

The review of curricula in HK and Taiwan shows both governments were engaged in promoting a new paradigm for learning and teaching through shifting from over-emphasising academic studies to focusing on the overall whole-person development, from compartmentalising subjects to integrating curriculum into KLAs, and from traditional scheduling to an open, integrated and flexible arrangement of learning time. This is a wide-ranging and ambitious reform. In Taiwan, school subjects are integrated into learning areas, where music and art have become part of the arts and humanities learning area with the performing arts. HK has chosen another route to develop its arts education KLA. Separate music and visual arts curriculum guides were developed (CDC, 2003a, 2003b), which are closely mapped to the aims, framework, and the teaching, learning and assessment plans of the central arts education curriculum guide (CDC, 2002).

### ***The Implemented Arts Curriculum***

***The Hong Kong scene.*** Curriculum guides are intended frameworks to be realised through implementation in schools. Until 2003, HK music teachers had been using the 1983 (secondary) and 1987 (primary) music syllabi for curriculum planning. The basic activities were mainly singing, music reading, and listening, while creative sound projects and

movement were considered only supplementary activities. VA and music teachers rarely met to team-teach or develop curriculum. In the new 2002 and 2003 curriculum guides, only a few integrative exemplars are introduced, hence teachers have found it problematic to implement the new integrative arts curriculum through integrating music with other arts to develop students' artistic and generic skills.

***Integrative exemplars.*** The Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB), tertiary institutions and arts organisations recognised the difficulties that teachers faced when implementing the integrative arts curriculum. Joint ventures were organised to encourage teachers to explore innovative and integrative lesson designs and instructional strategies with artists. The “Arts-in-education” (AiE) Programme (2000-2003) involved artists/art organisations working collaboratively with school teachers in the formal curriculum. It aims at i) facilitating partnership between artists and schools to develop an integrative curriculum through the arts, ii) helping students to think and work creatively, and iii) enabling arts and non-arts teachers to collaborate with new and multiple perspectives (HKADC, 2000). The programme consisted of sixteen projects, each with a proactive and a partner school. It was participated by 32 schools, 50 arts organisations, 260 teachers and over 3800 students (HKADC, 2005). The three organisers played different roles: the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) administered the programme, the EMB monitored the projects' progress and the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIED) evaluated each project and the overall Programme. In order to understand how the projects were conducted and the learning outcomes, three AiE projects, namely *The dreamcoat of Mount On Shan* (HKADC, 2005, pp. 128-130), *Using Xiqu to develop students' multiple intelligence* (pp. 166-168) and *The rhythm of nature* (pp. 162-163) are outlined below.

**Table 1. An outline of three AiE projects**

	<i>School X</i>	<i>School Y</i>	<i>School Z</i>
<b>Project Title</b>	The dreamcoat of Mount On Shan	Using Xiqu to develop students' multiple intelligence	The rhythm of nature
<b>New art form</b>	Musical	Cantonese Opera	Dance
<b>No. of subjects included</b>	7, including music, art and design, design and technology, PE	8, including music, art & craft, languages, PE	6, including music, art and design, maths, languages
<b>Student level</b>	S2 (Grade 8)	P4 (Grade 4)	S1, 2 (Grades 7 & 8)
<b>Project objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand how different art forms integrate to produce a musical</li> <li>• Enhance creativity through technology</li> <li>• Utilise technology to facilitate arts making</li> <li>• Develop generic skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience arts through integrating different subjects</li> <li>• Enhance language learning, multiple intelligence and generic skills</li> <li>• Recognise close relationship between arts and daily life, and enjoy joyful learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop students' convergent thinking and ways of interpretation</li> <li>• Multiple ways to develop creative thinking</li> <li>• Breakthrough subject separation, develop subject coherence through integration</li> <li>• Develop multiple intelligence</li> </ul>
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology not only assisted creativity and arts making, it also related to culture and daily life</li> <li>• Expanded students' artistic skills, e.g., part-singing, dance and drama</li> <li>• Developed social and personal skills, e.g., communication, decision making</li> <li>• Explored the feeling side</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-depth understanding of Xiqu through different disciplines</li> <li>• Performed excerpts from Cantonese Opera both in English and Cantonese</li> <li>• Learned moral value from stories</li> <li>• Developed problem-solving, self learning, inter-personal skills</li> <li>• Judged from multiple perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admired nature, created irregular tessellations to express emotions</li> <li>• Used the methods of integration and interpretation to create own poems</li> <li>• Composed music with lyrics</li> <li>• Choreographed their own music</li> <li>• Aroused interest in learning</li> <li>• Teachers gained new experience</li> </ul>
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Song writing</li> <li>• Paper moulds</li> <li>• Digital photo processing</li> <li>• Props and costumes</li> <li>• Managing backstage</li> <li>• Singing, dance and drama</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chinese prose and poetry reciting &amp; writing</li> <li>• Xiqu music and instrument playing</li> <li>• Singing, acting with movement</li> <li>• Painted face masks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tessellation in VA and maths</li> <li>• Creative poems using contrast, irregular line and progression</li> <li>• Song writing with form and rhythm of lyrics</li> <li>• Creative dance</li> </ul>
<b>Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simultaneous workshops to facilitate rehearsals</li> <li>• Virtual art gallery to share creative output &amp; progress with the whole school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Museum cultural visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students expressed views of nature through creative activities</li> </ul>

**Problems identified.** As a result of the project review, we found the following challenges to occur: i) mental preparation: integration normally involves several subjects and parties, teachers and artists need to prepare for new curriculum and instructional designs (Cheung, 2003), ii) close collaboration: parties may not see the importance of joint planning, regular monitoring and reflection, and close teamwork with dedicated time (Cheung, 2005b), iii) school support: this includes not only financial, manpower and parental support, but also arrangements for common scheduling, spacious classrooms, equipment and performance venues, iv) effective communication: appropriate interaction between teachers of different subjects, between teachers and artists, and between artist and students can affect the project outcome (Cheung, 2005a).

**The Taiwan scene.** Before 2001, the music curriculum content was structured into six categories: theory, music reading, singing, appreciation, composition and instrument playing (Lai, 2003). Due to long established practices in separating the music and art curriculum, music and art teachers protested about the integrated arts curriculum and refused to participate in the pilot study. Despite this, the arts and humanities learning area is part of the grade 1-9 curriculum, hence school teachers and administrators had to follow the four-year (2001-2004) implementation schedule.

**Strategies for implementation.** The integrated curriculum is new to school teachers and administrators in Taiwan. In order for teachers to plan their integrated curriculum, many schools reserve a working period for arts and humanities teachers to work together. The purpose for these strategies and projects is to help teachers understand what, why, and how to implement the integrated arts curriculum (Lai, 2006). To implement the arts and humanities curriculum, music and art teachers not only lack integrated arts exemplars as references, but

there is also a shortage of drama and dance teachers to teach performing art content. Many music and art teachers are responsible to teach this content. The committee of school curriculum development (CSCD) in each school, formed by the representatives of each learning area, is responsible for the school curriculum plan. Each year the CSCD is required to submit the school-based curriculum to the county education bureau. The school-based curriculum is an integrated curriculum, which not only connects to the arts and humanities but also relates to other learning areas and school activities. The MOE funded many projects and proposed several implementation strategies to support this new curriculum, e.g., the advisory group, lesson plan contest, related web-site, workshops and conferences:

1. An advisory group employs college professors and experienced arts teachers from elementary (primary) and junior high (secondary) schools as consultants to help review school curriculum, solve teachers' problems concerning integrated arts model, lesson planning and team teaching, and to conduct workshops on designing and implementing the integrated unit plan. The group members travel to schools all over the country for regular consultation and conduct workshops in the National Academy for Educational Research Preparatory Office in Taipei County.
2. A lesson plan contest was held annually by the National Taiwan Arts Education Institute (NTAET) for school teachers, due to the great demand for integrated arts models and lesson plans. Many music teachers were not used to preparing written lesson plans for teaching, and they were overwhelmed by designing integrated arts lesson plans. This contest was held from 2001 to 2007, and the winning lesson plans were compiled and published. Recently they are posted on the website of the NTAET.
3. Websites were set up to help teachers implement the new curriculum, such as

“Literature and arts” (<http://arts.edu.tw>). This website is planned and maintained by a group of arts educators, which provides resources for the teaching of arts and humanities.

4. Workshops and conferences are held frequently, focusing on the integrated curriculum models, team teaching, drama and dance pedagogy, and assessment strategies to help teachers. Conference themes are usually the project findings and the proceedings have become a good resource for teachers.

***Problems identified.*** As a result of reviewing how the integrated arts curriculum is implemented in Taiwan, the following challenges are found:

1. Shortage of drama and dance teachers. There had been no institution that offered drama and dance teaching certificate programmes before, and even now only a few institutions are offering these programmes;
2. Some music teachers are unwilling and lack the skills to implement the integrated arts curriculum;
3. Music teachers are overloaded and lack the interest in teaching other art forms; and
4. Insufficient administrative support for the arts (e.g., manpower, equipment) compared to other learning areas.

### ***Comparing the Implemented Arts Curriculum***

Since there are no systematic guidelines on how to implement arts integration, teachers in both HK and Taiwan employ an open, flexible approach. In HK, only a handful of integrative arts exemplars are provided, besides an illustration of thematic approach with music-related activities across different KLAs (CDC, 2003a). In Taiwan, music teachers encounter a drastic

change in designing and implementing the integrated arts, as they have to transform the competence indicators into course content. The Curriculum Development Council in HK states that integrative learning in the arts is a learning approach more than a curriculum design, implying that music and VA teachers can approach their subjects with a broader exposure to other arts. Most Taiwanese schools have helpfully arranged a free period for arts teachers to plan together. Furthermore, the Taiwan MOE has established an advisory group, while contests are organised with best exemplars being published to a wider education community.

### ***The Classroom Materials***

In order to investigate how classroom materials help teachers implement the integrative/integrated curriculum, the content of two sets of primary school textbooks, P4 (grade 4) & P6 (grade 6), from both HK and Taiwan are analysed and compared. Areas of comparison included the rationale and foci of the textbooks, the structure and layout, thematic content and titles, main items, proportion of other arts and other disciplines with music and various teaching and learning assistance.

In Hong Kong, all primary and secondary school textbooks need to be reviewed and approved by the textbook review committee formed by the EMB. In the chosen textbooks published by the Educational Publishing House (Cham-Lai et al., 2006), the rationale is to develop all-round students with subject and generic skills through a more coherence curriculum, which is related to students' daily life. Each year group consists of two textbooks, which are comprised of eight units with three to four lessons in each unit under a common theme. Themes are usually set culturally and closely related to the children's daily life.

Singing and music reading are no longer emphasised in the upper primary; instead, numerous listening activities are introduced to develop musical and aural awareness. Students are encouraged to respond critically and to freely express their feelings towards the music they hear or the drawings they see. This is a significant shift to develop children to be sensitive listeners, proactively responsive, and to articulate their feelings about music and culture. Self and peer assessment of children's own performances are incorporated with formative and summative assessment.

In Taiwan, the arts and humanities textbooks are reviewed and approved by the National Institute for Compilation and Translation. The chosen textbooks published by *Han-lin* Publishing Company (Liu, et al., 2009) follows the arts and humanities curriculum guideline to provide music, VA and drama content. According to the curriculum guidelines, all art forms are equally important. However the materials of music, visual art and drama/dance are not in equally proportion published in the arts and humanities textbooks. Each textbook contains three to four chosen themes. Each thematic unit entails several lessons (ranging from 3 to 6) integrating music, VA and drama. The content is based on the goals of the curriculum and competence indicators. Themes are often taken from daily life subjects such as family, school, neighbourhood, park, season, story, mask and holiday with a limited number of elements of the arts. About 45% of the *Han-lin* textbook content is devoted to music, and drama has the least materials. Many of the integrated materials are dedicated to music appreciation lessons. Selections from operas and musicals are very popular. Students are encouraged to listen critically and respond to music through movement. Some of the drama lessons connect music and drama, and music is used to create a story or as background music. In order to reinforce the cultural aspect, a large number of Taiwanese folk songs,

music by contemporary Taiwanese composers, and music played by local musicians are adapted for inclusion in the textbook.

### ***Comparing the Classroom Materials***

Some similarities are found in the classroom materials of both contexts: i) a thematic approach is employed with topics closely related to the children's daily life encounters, ii) the content emphasises music appreciation more than singing, music reading or creating, and recorder playing is usually used to enhance performing, iii) in order to help teachers facilitate the curriculum, teaching packages consisting of a guide book, visual and aural teaching aids, charts and software are provided by the publishers. However, some differences are also identified: the textbooks in HK have a stronger emphasis on music, over 80% of their content, supplemented by other arts media while those in Taiwan are more integrated: music only comprises about 45% of their content. There is a progressive development of musical elements and concept running through the HK textbooks, while music is treated only as part of the arts in the Taiwanese textbooks. Although both textbooks seek to develop children's aural and listening skills, the ones in HK lay an emphasis on children's self and peer assessing abilities, while those in Taiwan promote children's expressive movement in response to music. Generic skills such as collaboration, communication and critical thinking are emphasised in the HK textbooks while native folk songs and contemporary songs composed by local musicians are commonly used in the Taiwanese textbooks. Major characteristics are highlighted below.

**Table 2. Comparison of Primary 4 & 6 textbooks in HK and Taiwan**

<b>Primary Text Books (P4 &amp; P6)</b>	<b>Educational Publishing House, Hong Kong</b>	<b>Han-lin Publishing Company, Taiwan</b>
<b>Rationale and focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In line with the curriculum reform, emphasis is laid on four learning targets of developing creativity, skills and process, critical response and learning in context (CDC, 2003)</li> <li>Develop both music and generic skills</li> <li>Relate to students' life experience and interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow the curriculum guideline, music is integrated with visual art, drama and dance</li> <li>Develop arts skills and understanding of arts</li> <li>Develop artistic potential and well-rounded character</li> <li>Encourage active participation in arts related activities</li> <li>Relate to students' life experience</li> </ul>
<b>Structure and layout</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each unit consists of 3 to 4 lessons on a common theme</li> <li>One textbook for each semester, each consists of about four units</li> <li>Develop children's musical knowledge, concepts and skills spirally</li> <li>Integrate with related arts and other disciplines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated arts: music, VA and performing arts. The largest portion of the content is music materials</li> <li>One textbook for each semester, each consists of 3-4 units, each unit is divided into 3-6 lessons</li> <li>A thematic approach is used to integrate the content of each unit</li> </ul>
<b>Thematic content for upper primary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Content relate to local context, extend to neighbouring countries and worldwide to broaden children's perspectives</li> <li>Themes concern daily life, Chinese culture and student interests, e.g., living on earth; the water world; Cantonese Opera as performing arts; stories of HK and creating tomorrow through ICT etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Themes concern daily life, e.g., family, school, neighbourhood, park, season, holiday</li> <li>Thematic content also includes the elements of the arts, e.g., rhythm, line, gesture, colour</li> <li>Content integrates other disciplines, e.g., natural science, social studies, language</li> </ul>
<b>Main items and arts integration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of music activities to other arts and other subjects – P.4 87% music: 9% other arts: 4% other subjects; P.6 92% music: 5% other arts: 3% other subjects.</li> <li>Music emphasises listening, with some creating and performing activities</li> <li>Introduce music elements progressively</li> <li>Develop recorder skills</li> <li>Self &amp; peer assessing with formative and summative assessments</li> <li>Project presentation to develop self learning</li> <li>Integration with other arts includes creative drawing, poem reciting, art appreciation, dance movement, drama and multimedia technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of each art form varies, music has the largest proportion of 45%, partly because the music score takes many pages in the textbook</li> <li>Music is used to connect other arts form, much of the integrated materials is emphasising music appreciation</li> <li>Abandon sequential music learning</li> <li>Develop recorder skills, with diversified tunes</li> <li>Respond to music through movement</li> <li>Emphasis on cultural identity, e.g., local folk songs, contemporary Taiwanese music and local musicians</li> </ul>

**Table 2. Comparison of Primary 4 & 6 textbooks in HK and Taiwan (Continued)**

<b>Primary Text Books (P4 &amp; P6)</b>	<i>Educational Publishing House, Hong Kong</i>	<i>Han-lin Publishing Company, Taiwan</i>
<b>Teaching and learning assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher guide book with schemes of work, lesson plans, teaching strategies for musical production and dance, extended activities, model answers</li> <li>• Information of songs, music, composers and cultural background</li> <li>• Website with resource bank, creating software, useful links and references</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher guide book with lesson plans, teaching approaches, related activities, information of composers and cultural background, list of website, useful links and references.</li> <li>• Music chart of selected songs from textbooks, chart of instruments, recorder fingering</li> <li>• AV aids of songs and music</li> </ul>

### ***Teacher Empowerment and Teacher Education Provision***

*Pre-service, in-service courses and research in Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong.* The Cultural and Creative Arts Department of HKIEd provides the largest numbers of music and VA teachers in HK. Several disciplines and complementary study modules such as “Teaching through Arts Infusion”, “Integrative Arts” and “Pedagogical approaches to music teaching and learning” in the Bachelor of Education (Honours) programmes have been added or revised to address integrative learning in/through the arts, as stipulated in the Music Curriculum Guide (Curriculum Development Council, 2003a, p. 62). Artists and dancers are invited to broaden students’ exposure in other arts. Music students learn various ways to approach integration and to design activities incorporating their teaching subjects with the arts. Non-arts students can also take the integrative arts modules from the complementary study and the General Education domain. Students are encouraged to explore various integrative approaches during their teaching practice in primary and secondary schools. For in-service primary school teachers, two optional modules, amounting to 60 hours, are offered through Government commissioned Profession Development course. They provide opportunities for all teachers to experience dance, drama, music and VA and

explore strategies of integrating in/through the arts. Unfortunately, this course is not commissioned to secondary school teachers and it is not a compulsory course for primary school teachers either, so a lot of teachers do not have the concept and experience about arts integration. The Master in Education (Creative Arts) programme also provides two modules for both music and VA students to explore integrative arts education.

Since integrative learning is a general approach across the curriculum and there are various degrees of integration approaches, the music and VA staff of the Cultural and Creative Arts Department have collaborated in research, exploring different modes and effective approaches of integrative learning (Au, 2005; Cheung, 2005b; Ng, 2005; Yip, 2005; Yuen, 2005). The problems identified in the AiE projects as highlighted on p.13 and findings from other integrative arts projects not only serve to improve teaching and learning in HKIEd, some case studies and lesson plans have also become useful materials for serving teachers (HKADC, 2005; Cheung & Fung, 2008).

*Pre-service, in-service courses and research in National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan.* The National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) was founded in 1946 and its Music Department has become the most prestigious music education institute in Taiwan. Joined by the Art Department, the Music Department has played an important role in promoting the National integrated curriculum. The music faculty has been actively involved in the implementation of, and engagement in many projects, e.g., “Curriculum Design of Arts and Humanities Learning Area”, “Strategies of Assessing Arts Learning”, and “Arts Education Integrated Curricula in the Schools of Important Nations”. Since 2002, the MD has offered “Aesthetics”, “Introduction to General Art”, “Stage Directing and Performance” and “Choreography” required for teacher certification. Twelve credit hours are added to the

music-teaching certificate programs (Chen, 2003, p. 88). Furthermore, interdisciplinary theory, integrated curriculum design, body movement and technology are emphasised in the undergraduate and graduate music education program. Some empowerment courses and workshops are offered to help in-service music specialists to upgrade their teaching techniques in line with the new curriculum. They were required to receive at least 30 hours of training program by 2004 to promote the teaching of the integrated curriculum (Lai, 2003, p. 174; Lai, 2006). Other institutes also offer courses for in-service teachers to meet new teacher regulations. For example, two universities started an “Arts and Humanities” master degree program in 2006, to meet the new teaching trends. A few intensive drama courses were offered to help in-service teachers.

### ***Comparing Teacher Education and Teacher Empowerment***

In our comparative study of the teacher education and teacher empowerment, some similar strategies are found: i) programmes are modified either with added hours (NTNU) or new modules (HKIEd) to empower teachers with new skills and concepts of other arts, ii) research studies are developed on the integrative/integrated curriculum with findings and teaching materials disseminated to schools and the community. However, different approaches are also employed, e.g., in HKIEd, non-arts students can learn the integrative arts through the complementary and General Education modules and artists are invited to conduct workshops to arts and non-arts students. In Taiwan, the Government collaborates with tertiary institutions to set up website and advisory group to assist music and arts teachers. In HK, subsidized in-service professional development is only offered to primary school teachers while in Taiwan, teachers of both sectors have equal opportunities for professional

development.

## Discussion

### *Challenges in Bringing Arts Education Policies into Practices*

We have identified several challenges confronting both HK and Taiwan when implementing the new arts education policies, namely, cultural implications, teacher readiness, pedagogic issues and professional development of teachers.

**Cultural implication.** Valuing all the arts instead of focusing on one to two art forms is not innovative. The arts curriculum reforms in HK and Taiwan have followed the global trend of acknowledging the role, value, and significance of the arts. In the United States (MENC, 1994) and Australia (AEC, 1994a, 1994b), emphasis is placed not only on individual art forms such as music, dance, drama, VA and media (Australia), but also on interdisciplinary approach and connecting the arts to other core subjects. The purpose embedded in most mandated guidelines is to nurture students to become productive citizens in a democratic society (Drake, 2007), and in HK and Taiwan, the nurturing of all-round citizens is the primary goal.

Integrative/integrated arts curricula initiate a radical approach in HK and even a major education reform in Taiwan, which can only be successfully accomplished through a concerted effort by different stakeholders. The Government should take the leadership role in policy-making and dissemination. Dissemination only to the primary school sector and not throughout the secondary level could not implement the policy successfully. In HK, school-based curriculum is encouraged, but it is generally not easy for arts teachers to convince the school management of the importance of the integrative arts curriculum in

developing children's holistic understanding. In Taiwan, integrated curriculum is a national policy, the Ministry of Education works closely with schools in implementing the new curriculum. However, policies and regulations change frequently, which generates pressure for teachers, administrators and students.

*Teacher readiness and pedagogical implication.* In HK, the lack of holistic arts knowledge, skills, confidence, time and resources very often prevents music teachers from exploring the integrative arts curriculum. Some advantages of the integrative arts are recognised in the AiE programme, e.g., “learning of one art form can be enhanced through applying artistic concepts and skills developed in another art form to it, enabling students to make connections between the arts”, and “interdisciplinary learning across key learning areas enables children to investigate and critique culture through the arts, integrate their learning experiences and gain deeper insights into the subjects they are studying” (CDC, 2003a, p. 54).

However, the success of the projects largely depends on concerted efforts by various parties: external funding for individual schools, artist's expert input, school's administrative support and expert advice from experienced practitioners, professors and policy makers (Cheung, 2008). Without these extra resources, it is hard for arts teachers to conduct the integrative arts curricula.

It is beneficial for HK music and VA teachers to collaborate in team preparation, like their Taiwanese counterparts within a given common time. However, they are often occupied with heavy teaching loads, special room administration and extra-curricular activities during formal and informal hours. Moreover, integrative learning is only one of many initiatives with which they are confronting. Other concerns include integrating composing, listening and

performing in the classroom, school-based curriculum development to meet new learning targets and objectives, developing generic skills and values in curriculum planning, incorporating key tasks such as Information Technology for interactive learning, as well as catering for student diversity.

In Taiwan, it is the first time to implement integrated curriculum. Integration is a brand new concept for music teachers as well as for college professors. They still argue about the benefits and effectiveness of the integrated arts curriculum (NAER, 2005). There are degrees of integration, such as multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary (Drakes, 2007) that need exploring and evaluating. However, only a “thematic approach” is adapted in the arts and humanities textbooks. Frequently music materials are used to connect the chosen theme, not to help students understand music concepts of skills. Music content cannot be connected to “themes” unless it is based on musical concepts and processes. Music, like all other arts, has its uniqueness that is best taught through a rigorous, structured curriculum to be grasped fully (Barrett, et al., 1997).

Although the arts teachers in Taiwan will receive supplementary materials in 2011 on curriculum content and teaching strategies (MOE, 2008), music teachers still face with the following challenges at present: i) music is not an independent course, but a part of the arts learning area, ii) music content is not included in the course guidelines; teachers must transform the competence indicators into music content, iii) music content is based on a chosen theme, which is not intended to develop musical concepts, teachers are expected to plan their lessons independently, iv) arts and humanities learning area contains three art forms, teaching time is less than before, consequently students have problems meeting the learning outcomes and v) music teachers are overloaded, because they are frequently

assigned to teach performing arts (Lai, 2001). The shortage of drama and dance teachers remains problematic. Many teachers in Taiwan use Orff or Dalcroze Eurhythmics approaches to teach movement and to cover the drama portion. After conducting the National Assessment of the arts and humanities in Taiwan in March, 2007, assessment has been the most concerning issue for music teachers. How to help students achieve the goals of the integrated arts curriculum and how to improve the concepts and techniques of arts assessment are still the major challenges for teachers (NAER, 2005).

***Professional development implication.*** Drama and dance teachers are new professions for school teachers in Taiwan. The shortage of these teachers is obvious because there were no institutions that offered drama- or dance-teaching certificates before. Besides, only few institutions are offering drama and dance programmes at present. The tradition of placing drama with English and dance with Physical Education is still the practice in HK. Should there be further development of the integrative learning in the arts, implying additional art forms than music and VA, then new resources and structure for tertiary institutions need to be considered before new programmes for pre- and in-service teachers can be developed. Short courses, workshops and seminars, and the sharing of practical experiences are encouraged to allow teachers to be exposed to various degrees of integration in their teaching.

In HK, music and VA teachers in secondary schools lack the opportunity to receive subsidised professional development in the integrative approach. The lack of teaching exemplars, lesson plans and teaching materials mean that the majority of teachers have to rely on trial and error to come to terms with the integrative design and its implementation.

## Conclusion

Through examining the curriculum policies and practices of arts education in HK and Taiwan, it has become clear that both governments value the arts and students' connection of knowledge in and through the arts. Governments aim at preparing all-round citizens through expanding students' exposure of the arts, from music and VA to include dance and drama. To achieve this, HK encourages music and VA teachers to include other arts in their subjects through an integrative approach. Some good cases are found from school practices. Unfortunately, with few exemplars, a lack of administrative, manpower, financial support and monitoring systems, it is difficult to know how frequently and effectively music and VA teachers have implemented the policy. The emphasis on school-based curriculum also gives schools a lot of flexibility on deciding whether to implement the integrative curriculum or not. Taiwan has introduced the more drastic change of an integrated arts curriculum of music, VA and performing arts (dance and drama), which has reduced the music content by nearly half. Although the Taiwanese Government has taken a more proactive role through funding research projects, organising workshops, setting up website and an advisory system, many music teachers are not too convinced of the change, and they still find teaching drama and dance problematic.

Learning from their counterpart, the HK government could be more proactive with collaboration and by facilitating schools and teachers to change through setting up websites, lesson plan sharing and conferences while in Taiwan, the integrated curriculum could be implemented in phases in order to slow down the confusion caused by the sudden curriculum changes. In Taiwan, music teachers face the dilemma of achieving the breadth of the arts while forsaking the depth of music. Besides keeping students' basic music standard, they

need explicit help in arts assessments. As the goal of the curriculum reform is to connect knowledge and to provide an all-round education, situation can only be favourable to teachers through reducing their teaching load and expanding lesson time for music.

Joint research projects concerning various integration approaches such as multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary curricular will allow educators to explore the limitation and benefits of each approach, and to select the most suitable and effective approach for their students in different school contexts.

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