

SPA-207

From Needs Analysis to Curriculum Development: Senior Secondary School Music Curriculum in Macao SAR

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Abstract

Theoretical and contextual background

After Macao's return to Chinese sovereignty in 1999, the then Education and Youth Affairs Bureau [DSEJ], has started to reform the curriculum of schools in Macao. The DSEJ implemented a 15-year free education policy with a condition on the schools to follow the official curriculum framework. Following this education reform, the Music Curriculum for Junior Secondary Schools and the Music Curriculum for Senior Secondary Schools were developed and published. Applying needs analysis research as an approach for curriculum development has been used for developing the curriculum in disciplines other than music. Needs analysis is a strategy for curriculum makers to better cater for students' needs, abilities and interests. At the municipal level, the development of central curriculum is often regarded as a top-down decision. Research on the development of a central school music curriculum of a city is missing in the literature of music education. This study adds knowledge to the literature of music curriculum development.

Aim of this study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the needs and expectations of music teachers and students of senior secondary schools about the direction for developing music curriculum for senior secondary schools.

Methodology

This is a qualitative study. Purposeful sampling was applied. At the first stage, the researcher worked with the DSEJ to discuss the procedures and criteria for recruiting music teachers to join the curriculum development team. At the second stage, the researcher worked with three participating schools to develop some curricular exemplars for senior secondary music classes according to the teachers' preferences. At the third stage, music teachers tried out, evaluated and improved the curriculum exemplars for sharing with other music teachers in Macao. Qualitative research tools, such as individual interviews with teachers and focus group interviews with students and classroom observations were used to collect data. All collected data were analyzed according to the research focus.

Results

Teachers' needs and expectations in the senior secondary music curriculum were content knowledge and pedagogical skills in music curriculum development and implementation. A diversifying range of professional development opportunities is needed to meet the diversifying music and music education background of music teachers. Students' needs and expectations in the senior secondary music curriculum include their preferred content and instructional strategies.

Conclusion and Implications for Music Education

Conducting needs analysis to include the voices of teachers and students in music curriculum development is a meaningful practice. New research direction should explore the application of needs analysis in developing music curriculum at all levels.