

Chapter #18

THE IMPLICATIONS OF ARTS EDUCATION ACTS FOR PROFESSIONAL MUSIC TRAINING PROGRAMS: THE TUT EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Professional music training programs are confronted with major changes in the sociocultural and educational landscape. In response to Taiwan's societal challenges, such as current issues about Music Education Policy, the Ministry of Education, Taiwan, amended the Arts Education Act (AEA) that outlines the curriculum for study in the performing arts in 1997. The AEA of 2015 is a sequel to the Special Education Act of 1984 that was designed to apply relevant theories to curriculum standards for education reform in Taiwan. The Acts are founded on the belief that high expectations and setting goals will result in success for gifted and talented students. The reauthorization mandates that funds, knowledge of art, and art-related courses be incorporated following the model of artists-in-residence projects. The purpose of this case study is to revisit and examine policymaking within the context of professional music training programs by describing and analysing the history of arts education in Taiwan and the current policymaking framework implemented at the Tainan University of Technology (TUT), Taiwan. The conclusion drawn is that education institutions can provide a conceptual framework for understanding the implications of the AEA of 2015 for professional arts education in both the legal macro- and microenvironments.

Keywords: education policy, arts education act.

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of the Arts Education Act (AEA) in Taiwan is a story about Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) opportunities and characterized by an identification procedure viewed as competitive by parents and teachers and standardized tests that have served to limit access to those opportunities (Wu, 1989). Initial reflection on professional music training programs suggest a need for promoting effective educational benefits with respect to music education in policymaking instead of musical works and their dissemination, thinking more diversely about musical practices, and expanding the various contexts for music education. However, music education policy for revising schools' curriculum reveals the pervasive role of youth music culture; the public's ignorance of music educators, researchers, and scholars' voices; and music education as a field of conflicting forces.

In this paper, it is argued that if professional music training programs are to be inclusive in ways that provide access to high-quality, professional artistic and cultural productions for all students, understanding high levels of competence in music policymaking is required. Analysis of the perspectives embodied in the more comprehensive idea of music education in the Taiwan Arts Education Act (AEA) may facilitate an understanding of the implications for new audiences of open art education that go beyond just the potential implications of policy shifts for music education (Wright,

2012) that are focused on the conflicting forces in society and education system and incorporate “potential changes and challenges for music education in the wake of these policy changes” (Christophersen, 2015, p. 365). Christophersen (2015) contends that political commitment to external arts and culture programs aimed at schools, together with the prominent position given to artists and the field of culture in arts education that is directed primarily at improving and challenging music education, undermines the possible implications for conceptualising professional music training programs that value creative expression, attract elite guest artists, and offer students personalized instruction that has pedagogical emphasis on communicating with an audience (Breivik & Christophersen, 2013). It is important that music learning bring about consequential benefits, and music educators have an ethical responsibility to meet the life-long musical needs of all students (Jorgensen, 2007; Regelski, 2012; Rickson & Skewes McFerran, 2014).

After World War II, leading and engaging in advocacy efforts for arts education in Germany and the USA prospered because successful policies made constructive cooperation among relevant institutions and their representatives possible (Jank, 2009; Scheneider, 2009). In the early 1960s, the same tendency became evident for the development of the designated administrative authorities for arts education in Taiwan, which implemented a project for cultivating talent competence that is unique in the world (Ministry of Education, Taiwan, 2017).

Taiwan’s special education has a history of over 100 years that can be roughly divided into five stages. In the foundation stage (before 1962), Taiwan’s special education dates back to 1889, when a school for the visually impaired (later changed to one for the speech and visually impaired) opened in Tainan, enrolling the visually impaired and teaching them to read the Bible in Braille and make crafts. The establishment of schools for the hearing and visually impaired ushered in a new era of special education and paved the way for future developments. Motivated by the suggestions of the National Education Convention in 1962, administrators of two elementary schools in Taipei started an enrichment curriculum for gifted students in 1963 (Tsai & Shih, 1997). In 1971, an elementary school in Taichung City started a special class for gifted students. These students were enriched in mathematics, science and the Chinese language (Shu, 1978). To explore the characteristics of gifted students and develop appropriate, effective forms of education, the Ministry of Education began experimental programs for gifted students in 1973. Over time, these programs have gone through three stages. These stages, which included policies and guidelines, played an important role in the recent development of education for gifted students in Taiwan.

The Experimentation Stage (1962-1983), the first stage of the program, was designed to provide special education for gifted elementary students. This occurred between 1973-1979. The second stage (1979-1984) of the program was designed to extend special education to gifted students at the junior high school level. The programs included talented students in music, art and dance. The third stage of the program occurred from 1982 to 1989. In addition to services that were included in the second stage, the third stage included opportunities to accelerate through the grade-level sequence by skipping school years (Ministry of Education, 1982). In the third stage of the program guidelines and related statute, the school years for each level, including elementary, junior and senior high schools and colleges, can be shortened by up to one year each for each level; gifted students can therefore complete a college education and earn a bachelor’s degree at the age of eighteen. Without acceleration, they would be twenty-two years old before earning a bachelor’s degree (Tsai & Shih, 1997).

In the Legislation Stage (1984-1996), efforts in special education focused on the diagnosis and evaluation of special students, placement of students in the communities they were based, and promotion of research so that both disabled and gifted students had access to education suitable for them. In 1984, the Special Education Act was enacted. The Act established standards that regulate the promotion of special education to safeguard students' rights and interests.

In the Development Stage (1997-2007), pursuant to a White paper, the Special Education Act was amended in 1997, increasing the categories of disabled students to 12, with those for gifted students increased to 6. The Arts Education Act of 1997 was directly related to Taiwan's art education reform (Lau & Li, 2013). In 1997, a new milestone, the Arts Education Act, was enacted, which provided a solid foundation in music education in Taiwan for all students (Ministry of Education, Taiwan, 1997). It stated the following:

The purpose of art education is to cultivate artistic talent, enrich the spiritual life of the citizens, and to raise the level of culture... Arts education is implemented in the following three ways: Professional arts education offered at schools; general arts education offered at schools; arts education offered to the public. (p. 147)

The "TUT experience" began in 2001 and refers to working with the seven-year program from high school directly to a bachelor's degree in vocational education that includes arts, music and dance programs. The "TUT experience" is the nation's first specialized vocational institution for music education. The Music Department takes a maximum of 70 students per year. Currently, the Department comprises divisions such as piano, voice, string, wind, and percussion instruments. Auditions are held in March. With respect to student recruitment, the Department judges recruited students independently based on their diversity and flexibility to avoid becoming rigid and biased. The professional music training programs, which have redefined music as a diverse practice, challenge selected students to deal with music and varied musical practices, a feature that is reinforced through using multiple measurement/assessment tools with respect to performing requirements and establishing partnerships (industry-academia cooperation/collaboration) that promote the development of alternative pedagogies and practice-based strategies that are sufficiently flexible to meet a much wider range of musical needs. Examples of partnership activities are the Working with the Career Development Plan and the development of a partnership model within the "Become a Yamaha Music Education System Teacher."

1.1. Policies for gifted and special needs students

The Arts Education Act (AEA) announced by the Ministry of Education in 1997 states that performing arts are part of arts education. The aim of the AEA is to promote the cultivation of artistic talent, enhance the public's understanding the arts, strengthen the public's sense of aesthetics and creativity, enrich the public's spiritual life, and raise the overall level of culture. The situation today is very different. A *5-Year Plan for the Development of Special Education: 2016-2020* (Ministry of Education, Taiwan, 2016) and an *Action Plan for the White paper on the Education of Gifted Students* (2008) were drawn up, with the Special Education Act amended accordingly, to provide quality educational opportunities, create fine educational environments, and meet students' individual needs (Ministry of Education, Taiwan, 2016). In November 2015, legislator Pi-Han Chen pointed out that often arts curriculum have been replaced with major subjects (for example, Math and English classes) and examinations by schools (United News, 2015). How can schools set up talent classes for students and practice ability-groupings? To open art education to

new audiences requires new approaches in arts education. It is important that the applicable evaluation and mechanisms of rewards and punishments be established to eliminate inadequate education and ascertain with clarity what arts and aesthetic sensibilities are.

The Arts Education Act (AEA) of 2015 is reshaping arts education in Taiwan. The aim of the AEA is to improve the public's understanding of the arts and enhance their sense of aesthetics. According to the art education law, art education falls into one of the following categories: Education at a professional art institution, art education at a regular school, and social art education (Ministry of Education, Taiwan, 2018). In this paper, a professional art institution's arts education policy issues in terms of the diversity of musical practices and the various contexts of music education are approached by first considering the political context for the AEA, then discussing some core views that are implicit in the arts education program in Taiwan, and finally, reflecting on the possible implications and challenges these contexts constitute for professional music training programs.

2. BACKGROUND

A stated goal of the Policy of Art Education (2005) for the population in Taiwan is to experience the inspiration of aesthetic perception and creativity for as long as they are living. One of the seven learning areas in the *1-12 National Basic Education Curriculum Guidelines* (2014) in Taiwan is the Arts and Humanities curriculum, which comprises the visual arts, music, and performing arts. Although the area is allotted relatively few contact hours (3 hours) in school (except for professional music training programs), it is still a compulsory subject during the first 12 years of schooling. The music curriculum is focused on three main areas: Performing music (including singing, dancing, and playing instruments), listening to music (including music history and verbalization), and composing music (including improvisation); it covers a wide range of musical genres and activities. The Seven-Year Coherent College of the Tainan University of Technology's (TUT) music department was established in 1998. A coherent sequence requires that at least 184 credits are completed in the first five-year program of study (junior-high school or junior college level), and at least 96 credits are completed in the final two years advanced level of study (junior and senior undergraduate level) in music training.

The AEA of 2015 is a sequel to the Special Education Act of 1984 that was designed to enact theories relevant to curriculum standards in education reform in Taiwan. Christophersen (2015) noted that scholars in music education such as Gande and Kruse-Weber (2017), Bozalek and Biersteke (2010), and Levin (2010) have called for increased attention on policy studies. Policies can be useful tools for effecting change (Morse & Struyk 2006), but policy analysis, which shapes and informs policy recommendations, has not yet been widely employed by music education scholars who have called for widespread changes to curricular content and pedagogical approaches to understand policy implications for various aspects of arts education theory. Researchers have considered how policies related to the governance of school systems and the learning environments in schools are associated with performance in arts education and equity at the country and school levels (Tsai & Shih, 1997). This case study draws upon such research to describe the Taiwanese political context for the AEA policy.

3. THE MEANINGFUL MUSIC EDUCATION CONTEXT FOR THE POLICYMAKING

Policymaking is not entirely a bureaucratic add-on. Shively (2015) asserted as follows:

Constructivism, as both an epistemological view (Duffy & Jonassen, 1992) and a theory of learning (Fosnot, 2005), provides us with fertile ideas for considering learning and teaching in music classrooms and other music learning settings. It is about how we make meaning of our experiences and come to know the world. (p. 129)

Drawing attention to the importance of integrating learning through an Arts Special Education program is not a new phenomenon. Eisner (1985, as cited in Kieffer, 1996, p. 14) claimed John Dewey (1859-1952) mentioned how curriculum should be “interconnected and interdependent.” As a conceptual framework, it makes sense to use Shively’s (2015) constructivist view of learning and teaching for finding a balance between progressive and traditional views of music education to evaluate the curriculum integration process of the Arts Special Education program in Taiwan. It is anticipated that such a conceptual framework will, if selected and expertly applied, make an important contribution to curriculum integration research for Arts Special Education as well as to the broader field of teaching methods, be a pragmatic approach, and provide a means for accessing feedback about the evaluation of the Arts Special Education program.

4. HISTORY OF ARTS SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY

Art represents humanity’s dreams, traditions, and cultures. Ansalone (2004) asserted, “Education has always held the promise of upward social mobility, economic stability and equality” (p. 37). Art education is a means to enrich and uplift both individuals and the culture of the communities of which artists are part. Art education can deepen the cognitive growth of learners whilst facilitating an understanding of and involvement in interculturality.

Several concerns arise with respect to the policies and practices of Arts Special Education for art, music, and dance students in Taiwan. One issue is “the perceived incompatibility of equality and excellence in a climate of competition for limited financial resources” (Frydenberg & O’Mullane, 2000, p. 78). Ideally, the needs of gifted art, music, and dance students should be accommodated within the usual formal institutional provisions of the school system so that no need to form a separate special program for gifted students exists. Kieffer (1996), for example, specifically advocates an “interconnected and interdependent” system (p. 6), and in a holistic educational learning practice, an interdisciplinary curriculum should be allowed and encouraged (Browning, 1994).

The situation in Taiwan is far from ideal, however. To understand current developments pertaining to Arts Special Education policy in Taiwan and place it in its context, a short historical overview of music education development in Taiwan is necessary. Cheng (1998) noted that Taiwan’s music education development can be divided into five stages.

Stage 1 started in 1624 and lasted some 236 years. Between 1624-1661, the Netherlands and Spain occupied Taiwan. They established churches and schools. Their missionaries used the Christian gospel to teach sacred music to the native peoples. Koxinga (a great Chinese general) defeated the Dutch and claimed Taiwan in 1662. Koxinga had a closed cultural policy that excluded Western arts and music. Thereafter, all contact with Western culture was broken off. During this first stage, Western music as an intentional

channel to enrich Taiwanese civilization was restricted. So, the cultural impact to strike the shores of Formosa from the West came in two waves, the first in the 17th century by way of Holland through Dutch colonizers and missionaries, where the idea of the chorus, or multipart-singing ensembles, was first introduced to Taiwan during the 17th century, and second, when the Dutch made Taiwan a colony. Western music, however, was not widely introduced to the Taiwanese citizens in this first stage. It was only late in the 19th century, that Stage 2 was initiated by predominantly Christian missionaries (Ku, 2012).

In Stage 2, from 1860-1895, after the signing of the Treaties of Tianjin in 1858 by the Chin Dynasty (Cavendish, 2008), Western music was allowed in Taiwan for the second time. The Christian Presbyterian missionaries from England and Canada established Presbyterian churches in Tainan and Danshui and had their own schools. They taught a music curriculum, using music to bridge the language barrier. Music education was developed systematically by means of these schools' music curriculum and through active missionary work. This created a love of Western music in the hearts of Taiwanese citizens.

In Stage 3, from 1895-1945, after signing the Shimonoseki Treaty, China ceded Taiwan to Japan in 1895 (Cheung, 2017). Japan selected an entirely Western education system of elementary and secondary schools. An institute for teachers' education was set up, and a music curriculum established. Japan, as the ruler of China and Taiwan, actively set in action the new music curriculum. This provided a solid basis for Taiwan's future music education.

In Stage 4, from 1945-1987, Taiwan separated from Japan, its colonial ruler. The Kuo-Ming Tang government retreated from mainland China to Taiwan and promoted its former education and school system, establishing a music department in higher education and an enlarged music curriculum in secondary schools. At this stage, there were some changes; for example, music teachers came from various locations in the world, which tended to promote cultural and artistic awareness. During this time, in a normative dimensional sense, a change occurred: Music education became more respectable, even prestigious, and at the same time, more exclusive and even slightly elitist (Lau & Li, 2013).

In Stage 5, 1987 to date, arts education advocates have attempted to integrate a dignity culture into the culture of the public, with an emphasis on diversification (Ministry of Education, Taiwan, 2005). Currently, arts education's form in Taiwan is not only focused on developing students' creativity but also emphasizes artistic cultivation that can be combined with students' life interests and social development phenomena. This form of music education reflects cultural trends and promotes students' environmental sensitivity. The system involves three key elements. The first element is education for curriculum design (Kieffer, 1996), which reflects constructivist type, multiple learning relationships. The second element is education for collaborative performances (Kieffer, 1996), which combines the efforts of different departments, such as music and dance, that were formerly separate and competitive. The third element is education that includes cross training, such as giving dancers better and more in-depth grounding in the basics of music history and classical music theory.

5. CULTURAL POLITICAL CONTEXT FOR PROFESSIONAL MUSIC TRAINING PROGRAMS

Professional music training programs are formal collaborations between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education (Ibata-Arens, 2012). The political backdrop for the Arts Education Act (AEA) of 2015 is therefore both cultural and educational. Since the fields of culture and education share several characteristics and objectives, such cross-political cooperation can be perceived as both natural and logical. For instance, the purpose of arts education is to cultivate artistic talent as well as enhance understanding of

the public about the arts, strengthen their sense of aesthetics and creativity, enrich their spiritual lives, and raise the overall level of culture. The foundation for the program was already laid in the 1997, when the importance of cooperation between the fields of culture and education was emphasized in a series of political documents, including White papers, strategic plans, action plans and the national curriculum. As a result, various local cultural initiatives for students were created. The development culminated with the foundation of the Arts Education Act as a national policy in 2015.

The program is deeply rooted in Taiwanese post-war cultural policy strategies. On the one hand, attempts have been made to ensure democratization of culture by making Arts education accessible to the general population, for example, professional arts education and general arts education are offered at schools, and arts education is offered to the public (Ministry of Education, 2015). On the other hand, local cultural democracy has also been supported (Wu, 1989), leading to an emphasis on cultural diversity, accessibility, and participation (Gande & Kruse-Weber, 2017; Ju, 2013; Wang & Kuo, 2010). These cultural policy ideals of maintaining both fine art and more vernacular cultural expressions and participation are evident in the Arts Education Act. Gande and Kruse-Weber (2017) noted that professional music training programs are confronted with major changes in the sociocultural and educational landscape (Smilde, 2009, 2012, p. 99). Higher music education has had to deal with transferable skills and entrepreneurship, and cross-genre collaborations are becoming more important (Smilde, 2009, p. 1).

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE ARTS EDUCATION ACTS

Knowledge of arts education acts has implications for policy and professional arts education. It is important to realize that teachers are not the only ones who should be familiar with the arts education acts. As Jank (2009) points out, the school administration, principals, and other stakeholders need to possess an awareness of their potential involvement in policies because successful policy makes constructive cooperation among relevant institutions and representatives possible. Moreover, Cole (1990) found the two conceptions of academic achievement inadequate in helping educators to think about learning, concluding that educators need to formulate an alternative conception that integrates divergent views of achievement, carries clear instructional implications, and focuses on long-term educational goals (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003). Individual teachers in the arts education faculty might be used to provide insight into and develop effective and meaningful professional arts education policy. Extending this view to professional music training programs, it is essential that teaching and learning music be structured in a way that both encourages personal, hands-on experience and contextualizes that experience in relation to historical, cultural, and social dimensions. The TUT experience enables learners to construct and act on their own understandings.

One of the most immediate and powerful implications of AEA is the realization that education requires that universities, colleges, junior colleges, and senior high schools for arts education implement a single-track educational system after receiving approval from the designated administrative authority for arts education (AEA, 2015, Article 7). The training program is not about ensuring that students have enough statutory requirements or musical works and support in various contexts; rather, the emphasis is on necessary music education policy as well as encouraging and developing music teachers' abilities to participate in music education policymaking.

7. CONCLUSION/DISCUSSION

Art education curriculum is a continually evolving process that is subject to both historical forces and the needs of the stakeholders involved. The programs include talented students in music, art and dance. Arts education policy has changed over the years in Taiwan to re-envision music education by paying attention to engaged learning as conceptualised within constructivist ways of knowing, and the TUT has endeavoured to accommodate that policy by adopting a constructivist approach that includes the various stakeholders. The TUT has used constructivism as a lens for examining their practices. This examination should lead to continual refinement of teaching practices—teaching practices in which learning and teaching have a symbiotic relationship (Shively, 2015).

It is important to recognize that professional music training programs require a cooperative approach. There is a need for policymakers and administrators to adjust values, aims, content, strategies, and methods to the various contexts and societal functions of music and music education. As Jank (2009) suggests, it is necessary to design a set of activities that will enable successful cooperation for hard policies (such as decisions concerning cultural and education policies) and soft policies (such as university admissions criteria and curricula). This recognition may be facilitated with knowledge on the part of policymakers, teachers, and administrators of arts education about the policy implications for professional music training programs.

While most of the interest groups have agreed with McCool (1995, p. 396, as cited in Cooper, Fusarelli, & Randall, 2004, p. 8) that theories guiding policy should be practical and “directly relevant to applied policy problems,” it is clear that not all Arts Special Education learners are in programs with the same outputs. Part of educators’ responsibilities is to ensure “a system that models good assessment practice as it audits local fitness” (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003, p. 227) and encourage a more constructivist learning environment with the development and implementation of policies.

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