

## Colloquium: The Creative and Expressive Arts in Education, Research and Therapy—Focus on China

### 专栏报告：创造性和表达性艺术：教育、 研究和治疗---专注中国

---

#### Preface 前言

Stephen K. Levine

The European Graduate School, Switzerland

---

With these accounts from a diverse group of Chinese therapists, educators and researchers, we initiate what we expect will become a series of regular reports from different countries and cultures in Asia.

As the reader will see, the arts have always been a valued part of Chinese life. Thus there is a rich tradition to draw on in the formulation of new approaches to education, therapy and research. In addition, Western perspectives on these fields are becoming more well-known in China. The joining together of ancient traditions with modern methods has already produced a great many interesting results.

In particular, the Chinese government has included the arts and art education within the core competencies that are required to reach the highest standard. Thus there is a substantial amount of governmental funding and support for the study and practice of the arts in both mainland China and Hong Kong. As a result, we can only expect greater participation and a higher level of training and practice in the future.

It seems that there are differences between mainland China and Hong Kong in terms of the development of the arts in therapy, research and education. Western influences have penetrated HK to a greater extent, as might be expected from the special status of Hong Kong, its history and geography. Thus, for example in the field of the arts in therapy, there is more use of contemporary Western approaches to art therapy and expressive arts therapy in Hong Kong than on the mainland. On the one hand this is a resource, but on the other hand, in China itself, ancient traditions seem to be closer and more available. For example, the practice of Dao Yin, or “Dynamic Art Therapy” as it is commonly called, draws upon the traditional healing methods and philosophy of Taoism.

I believe there are two opposite dangers sometimes seen in contemporary Chinese cultural development: first the attempt to cling to tradition without modification, and secondly the attempt to import Western concepts and practices without adapting them to local conditions. However these dangers also present us with a great opportunity— to develop new ideas and methods to bring whatever is fruitful from tradition in current conditions together with ways of thinking and acting from other countries that can be usefully modified for the contemporary Chinese world. As we can see from the following reports, scholars and practitioners are well aware of both the dangers and opportunities that they face in China today. We all await the future with great anticipation.

Contributors were asked to respond to the following questions:

What is the current state of the arts in the fields of education, therapy and research in your country today? Are the arts used in a specialized or multidisciplinary way? Do they draw on the traditions of your own country or are they primarily under Western influence? What are the major problems you encounter in using the arts in education or therapy? How do you see the future development of arts-based education, therapy and research in your country or region?

Note: The contribution from Taiwan arrived too late to be considered in this Preface. We look forward to hearing more from scholars in this region.

随着来自众多不同群体的华人治疗师、教育工作者和学者的聚集，我们在CAET期刊发起创立了这一专栏报告。我们期望它将成为定期出版来自亚洲不同国家和文化的系列报告。读者们将会看到艺术一直是中国人生活中极具价值的重要组成部分。因此，它具有丰富的传统来借鉴，进而形成教育、治疗和研究的新途径。

此外，这些领域的西方视角已经被更多地熟知。悠久传统与现代手段的加入已经产生了许多有趣的成果。

特别是政府已经将艺术和艺术教育纳入核心竞争力中，并力图达到最高标准。因此，中国政府大量资助和支持艺术研究和实践。所以，我们期待未来更多的投入以及更高水平的培训和实践。

中国大陆和香港似乎在治疗、研究和教育艺术的发展方面存在差异。西方的影响在更大程度上已经渗透到香港，这可以从香港在其历史和地理的特殊地位上得到预见。因此，在治疗艺术领域，香港比中国大陆更多地利用了西方当代艺术治疗和表达艺术治疗方法。一方面，这是一种资源；另一方面，在中国大陆，古老传统似乎联系更密切、可供使用。例如，导引术，或“动态艺术治疗”，正如它的俗称，借鉴了传统治疗方法和道家理念。

我认为在当代中国文化发展中有时会看到有两种相反的危险：一是企图固守传统不加调整，二是导入西方观念和做法，却不依据当地条件使之适应。然而，这些危险也为我们提供很大的机会：开发新的思路和方法，利用传统中的精华，结合来自各个国家的思维和行为方式，富有成效地调整并适应中国当代社会。正如我们可以从下面来自学者和实践者的报告中看到的，他们对当今中国面临的危机都有清楚的认识。我们对未来充满了期待。

论文提供者被要求对下列问题做出回应：

你们国家或地区当今艺术在教育、治疗和研究领域的现状如何？艺术作为一个专门学科还是跨学科形式得到应用？它们来自你们自己的文化传统，还是主要受西方的影响？你在教育或治疗方面使用艺术手段时遇到的主要问题是什么？你如何看待艺术为基础的教育、治疗和研究在你们国家或地区未来的发展？

注：来自台湾的研究文章因提交太晚未加入到前言中。我们期待将来更多听到该地区学者的声音。

## Dance in China Today: Education, Therapy and Research in Dialogue

Huang Cheng Chuan<sup>1</sup> and Ting Tina Chen<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tong Ji University, China

<sup>2</sup>Tong Ji University, China

---

Within the context of Higher Education in Dance in China, the current interests focus primarily in three areas.

1. The constitution (aims, make up, content) of dance instruction within the Primary and Secondary School Curriculum
2. The interdisciplinary collaboration among dancers with other performance, visual, and new media artists,
3. The exploration of dance and movement from daily physical action, as supported by theories in movement analysis (for instance, Laban Movement Analysis) in order to break away from the standard “formulae” of dance choreographies and traditional command-based teaching methods. Overall, there seems to be a greater awareness in the connections between body and mind. In addition to the more traditional purpose of dance being used for performance and spectacle, there is a greater interest in generating a means of social belonging, improving health and sometimes functioning as social communication. In this sense, a new creative stimulus has been granted to the dance community in China.

It is perhaps fair to recognize that in China, the application of dance as a stimulus for creativity is a fairly recent one. Although limited, it is precisely in this capacity that dance is being used in rather unconventional ways. For example, in accordance with the government’s initiative to emphasize “comprehensive” education, the performing arts (especially music and dance) are now being considered part of the primary and secondary curriculum; music or dance test results are being included in the considerations for advancement from primary to secondary education. In conjunction with the above initiatives, special panels have been developed to devise a dance curriculum that is suitable for general education. This curriculum does not concern itself only with the delivery of physical skills and actions, but also with the connection between movement action and meanings that are relevant to the learners, that invoke thinking of the what, how and why of physical actions, and that promote an overall understanding of the moving body while stimulating creativity. This approach may have been fairly common in more advanced societies, but this pedagogical shift in dance instruction has been a more recent shift in China, beginning within the last decade. Consequently, dance instruction has become more “specialized.”

The multidisciplinary facets of dance has appeared mostly in either large spectacles or experimental art works. China has a tradition of hosting large-scale televised performance spectacles with a mélange of art forms, often in celebration of cultural festivities or national holidays. The trends of the last decade include elaborate interactive multi-media back-drops to enhance a dance performance, as demonstrated in the dance piece “Love of the Peacock” presented in the 2012 Chinese New Year Celebration. Within the realm of visual or performing arts, there have been attempts to cross the boundaries of different art forms. However, perhaps a more “authentic” interpretation of using dance in a multi-disciplinary manner would be to acknowledge the development of education for the special needs population, where dance is used in conjunction with psychology and medicine to provide a platform for recovery and the accumulation of knowledge and skills.

With a country so vast, the degree of outside influence varies drastically in terms of geography. Because the “general philosophy” is so steeped in history and custom, and because the concept of “Chinese tradition” is a highly controversial topic at present, in order for dance to be used effectively under any contexts and for any purposes, it is absolutely necessary to rely on Chinese traditions. The degree of Western influence varies between the different “lines” of Chinese cities. The first line, including cities like Beijing, Shanghai, and Guang Zhou, may be more open, willing and able to embrace and adopt both Western theories and practice, whereas the more inland secondary cities may be starting to display various degrees of recognitions of Western approaches. Furthermore, perhaps not all the outside influences on dance in China can be grouped and described as Western as we have inherited the most recognized professional Western dance – ballet – from the Russia. In addition, basic ballet training has somehow infiltrated its way into most forms of dance training in China (with the exception of perhaps the more vernacular dance such as Hip Hop and street dance), so it would be appropriate to say that the approach we have adopted in mainland China reflects the characteristics of “China Socialism” as put forth by Deng Xiao Ping.

The major problems we encounter are, first, the drastic variation that exists across the country in the understanding and notions of what dance “should be”, which produces a great challenge for educational authorities to devise and put forth a “unified” curriculum of dance. Secondly, to persuade dance educators and practitioners to move away from a focus on physical enhancement and the appearance of dance, to searching for meaning through dance, can be equally challenging.

The government is highly committed to reforming all realms of education, including the arts, especially at the level of higher education. We will no doubt see a great many changes in the next few years. For example, the right to hold vocational entry auditions by comprehensive universities has gradually been taken away during the past few years. Because of this, comprehensive universities that offer performing arts related programs are required to seriously consider and very carefully craft the aims and positioning of their programs, differentiating themselves from vocational institutions. Therefore it is possible that in order to attain sustainable development, comprehensive universities that offer arts-based programs may look to working in a way that is in tune with the govern-

ment's initiative to employ the arts to complement a more comprehensive general education.

Additionally, with the gradual recognition of the influence that the arts may exert on psychology and medicine, there may be further opportunities for multidisciplinary collaborations between the arts, psychology, physiology and medicine.

### **About the authors**

Huang Cheng Chuan 黄琤圈, Ph. D., (Education Psychology), Senior Lecturer at Tong Ji University College of Arts and Media, Supervisor for the Royal Academy of Dance (UK), Taiwanese scholar teaching in China since 2005.

Ting Tina Chen 陈婷, Professor & Head of Dance, Tong Ji University College of Arts and Media, Panel Member of China MoE Higher Education Advisory Committee (Music and Dance Discipline), Chief Representative of Royal Academy of Dance China. Research field: Dance education and training, Ballet in China.

# School Music Education in China: Current Situation, Major Problems and Future Development

Dong Fang  
East China Normal University, China

---

## 1. Current Situation

Since the implementation of the open-door policy and the economic reform in the 1970s, the development of music education has seen a rapid growth, especially in the past two decades. Chinese people have come to appreciate music education more with the huge economic development and promotion of quality education. In general, music education in China ranges from music education in schools to music education in society and from general music education to professional music education.

As an essential vehicle of quality education and aesthetic education, and the most important means of implementing it, music education in the schools has undergone rapid growth. The Ministry of Education in China (MEC) has published a series of guidelines with the purpose of promoting art education in recent years, such as *Guidelines of School Art Education*, *Development and Planning of National School Art Education*, *Guidelines to Enhance and Improve Primary and Middle School Art Education Activities*, *Guidelines to Improve School Art Education*. Also in 2015, the State Department has issued *Guidelines of Comprehensive Enhancement and Promotion of School Aesthetic Education*. These guidelines support and enhance the renovation and development of school music education.

With respect to administration and management, the Department of Physical Education, Health and Arts Education was founded by MEC as the organization of national school art administration management. Music professionals were hired in each city and province to guide music education in each location. These professionals, under the supervision of educational administration departments, enforce the implementation of the national curriculum of music education, organize activities for the exchange of experience in music education, and engage in research on the pedagogy of music education in order to improve the quality of music education in local school districts.

The Music Education Branch of the Chinese Society of Education (CSME), a representative of non-governmental national music education scholars association, plays a significant role in music education with respect to research and teaching, promoting the development of music education as science. As a member of the International Society for Music Education (ISME), CSME successfully hosted the 29<sup>th</sup> International Music Education Conference in Beijing in 2010. This conference was regarded by many as the Olympics of music education and was highly regarded by the international community of music education.

Music education focuses on aesthetic education, cultural heritage and creativity, under the guidance of the *Curriculum Standards of Music Education of Compulsory*



*Education* published by MEC. At present, there are eleven sets of music textbooks approved by MEC and adopted in music education courses according to the *Curriculum Standards of Music Education of Compulsory Education*.

With the reform of courses, some teaching methods from abroad have been introduced gradually in China and applied in Chinese classrooms as well as for extracurricular activities. Such methods include but are not limited to pedagogies represented by Carl Orff, Kodaly Zoltan, and Emile Jacques-Dalcroze. These approaches to teaching music have enriched the ways of teaching music, and helped to improve music teaching quality in general.

As an extension of music teaching outside the classroom, extracurricular activities play a pivotal role in music education in the schools. For example, a number of schools have carried out various extracurricular musical activities---such as choruses, bands (traditional Chinese music and Western music) and dance groups. The Children's Palace also has made a great contribution in cooperating with schools by offering different types of musical activities which supplement the music education offered in schools quite well.

## **2. Major Problems**

Many difficult problems still exist, even though China's music education in schools has seen substantial improvement. For instance, some schools do not comply with the regular pattern of basic music education and lead their music education in the direction of professional music. Gaps between different locations and the disparities between rural and urban areas are huge, creating a lack of resources of teachers and others, as well as unfair opportunities for all students to be entitled to basic music education. Another problem is that there are not enough music classes and music teachers available. The evaluation system in music education is also not yet well-developed. Music education is often separated from education in other subject areas. Moreover, we still have difficulties in applying foreign music education theories and teaching methods in our country.

## **3. Influences from Western Countries and the National Cultural Heritage**

There is no denying that Western music is an integral part of our daily life in China. Similarly, influences from Western music also play a critical role in both Chinese classical and pop music. While learning from great Western musical culture, the transmission of national music culture has become more and more important, such as having a balanced proportion of national and Western music in textbooks, as well as the addition of the contents of traditional opera into music classes. Although we are emphasizing the inheritance of national culture, a diverse music culture is also considered crucial. International music is used widely in music textbooks in China.

## **4. The Development of Music Education in the Future**

With the coming of the fourth industrial revolution and the era of "big data," cultivating the high quality talents desperately needed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and tackling the challenges and questions around the world have been in the spotlight of many countries. The core

competence system recently developed by international institutions, e.g. UNESCO, DECD and the EU, has included art competence as one of the items. The core competencies are also the pinpoint of research in China with the *White Book of Development of Core Competences for Chinese Students*. We can foresee that the core competencies of art education and the developing criteria of course design, curriculum innovation and textbook creation under the theme of core competencies will become the focus for future research in this field. The guidelines of the national education research program plan have included the *Research of Comprehensive Art Education Reform* in 2016. This indicates that art education is becoming one of the crucial parts of comprehensive educational reform in China. At this point, we urgently need to analyze the goal as well as the strategy and pathway of this reform. Based on the experience gained from international art educational reform, we can explore new ways and provide suggestions to build up the evaluation system of comprehensive art educational reform in China. The integration of music education with technology, educational equity, cultural diversity, creativity development and music therapy will stay on the national agenda as the main research direction of this field.

### **About the author**

Dong Fang 董放, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Art Education, Faculty of Education, East China Normal University. Research field: Art and music education. Email: heidandanmm@126.com



## Chinese Dance Research

Jiang Dong  
China Academy of Art, China

---

China has a long history of dance. The first relic found of Chinese dance dates back to around 3,500 years ago in the Qinghai area. Compared with the history of ancient dance, academic research on the culture of Chinese dance is quite short.

In the early days after the set-up of the new China, dance research received the assistance and support of the government, along with other careers in the society. Until then, there had been no professional dance researchers in China, unlike the situation in music, painting or drama. By 1956, a small group was formed in the Chinese Association of Dancers in order to study the ancient history of Chinese dance, and four persons were selected to become the first Chinese dance historians in contemporary times, Sun Jing-shen, Peng Song, Dong Xi-jiu and Wang Ke-fen, most of whom were dancers themselves. This group studied the Chinese history of dance, with help from the areas of music and traditional opera, and before long, produced excellent results on Chinese dance history. We can regard this as the first academic research attempt in the dance field. Their books were published and their efforts gained more understanding and respect in academia for the field of dance research.

At the end of The Great Cultural Revolution in the seventies, a dance institute was established in the Chinese National Academy of Arts. The Academy had already covered several other artistic disciplines, such as music, drama, etc. Dance was now added to the Academy as a new field of research.

The Dance Research Institute in the CNAA was the only institute in the nation dedicated to dance research on the national level. There were three sub-branches within the institute, Historical Research, Theory, and Foreign Dance Studies. At its peak, there were close to 40 researchers in the institute, many of them nationally acclaimed. The fruits of their research over a period of many years were recognized and celebrated in the dance world in China. Topics like the History of Chinese Dance, Chinese Dance Theory, etc., were developed. We can say that the first generation of Chinese dance researchers set a good foundation and standard for the academic study of Chinese dance.

In 1985, the first group of five graduates from the CNAA received their Masters degrees in dance study, something never seen before in this country. The Academy thus became the first academic institute in China to offer an MA in dance study. Since then, many dance researchers have been trained and have graduated here, and are working now as teachers, scholars or administrative managers all over the country. Even the Chairman of the Chinese Dancers Association (CDA) is one of those five graduates, as is the Director of the Dance Institute. In 2000, the Academy started to offer Ph.D. degrees, and more than 30 graduates have received their doctorates there so far. It is still the only Chinese academic institution to offer Ph.D. degrees in the field of dance studies. There are now many universities and colleges in China offering MA and MFA degrees

in dance in China, but I believe that CNAA still enjoys the highest reputation in the training of dance researchers.

At this time, there are about ten dance scholars working in the Dance Research Institute of the CNAA. Their academic interests lie in different areas in the study of dance, such as Chinese History of Dance, Dance Aesthetics, Dance Biology, Body Language, Foreign Dance, Dance Anthropology, Chinese Folk Dance, New Media of Dance. A number of books have been published as the result of their research which have made a great contribution to the Chinese dance profession.

Apart from the CNAA, another fruitful organization is the Beijing Dance Academy. BDA is a dance school established in 1954, which reached the college-level of higher education in dance in 1980. After four years of training, the first group of BA degree holders graduated. Now, many of them hold important positions inside and outside of the school. There is a Department of Dance Studies at the BDA, where many teachers received their Ph.D. degrees from the CNAA. Their primary task is to train BA level students, though recently MA students have also been added to their educational program. Many teachers in this department spend their time in research, which turned BDA's reputation from one based on the pure practice of dance into a parallel field of practice and theory, thereby raising the Academy's profile to a great extent.

Subsequently, an increasing number of universities and colleges in the nation have started their own programs in dance research, and many young talented scholars have emerged. With encouragement from the Ministry of Culture, research work in the culture of dance has been developing greatly. At this time, the Ministry is organizing a yearly roll, naming some national projects, which encourages many scholars to join its call. We can say that a career in dance research in China today is facing its best time ever in our history.

Nowadays, apart from our traditional disciplines of dance history and aesthetics, some new areas are also projected, including dance therapy and dance criticism, which altogether forms a more flexible and complete system of dance research. More Chinese dance scholars also have developed personal relationships with foreign colleagues, making international exchanges in the field happen more frequently, thereby enhancing the quality of Chinese dance researchers.

To sum up, although Chinese dance research is still a young field, it has already achieved a great deal in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

### **About the author**

Jiang Dong 江东, Deputy Director and Research Fellow of Dance Research Institute of CNAA. Research field: Contemporary Chinese Dance, Int'l Ethnic Dances, ICH Convention. Email: 632312930@qq.com

## Educational and Therapeutic Drama in China

Ma Liwen<sup>1</sup> and Peng Yongwen<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Beijing Normal University, China

<sup>2</sup> Shanghai Theatre Academy, China

---

In the 1920s to 1930s, Xiong Foxi and Yan Chuyang, who had recently returned to China after their studies abroad in America, adopted drama as an educational method in the popular education movement. Xiong Foxi became the founder of the Chinese educational drama tradition, and gained huge success in educational drama activities, shared with peasants in Ding County, in Hebei Province. Xiong's case can be regarded as the earliest instance of using applied drama with ordinary people in Chinese modern history.

With the development of China's society, people began more and more to appreciate educational and therapeutic dramas. These dramas are based on the principle of being human, on methods of experience and interaction, and are appealing to an increasing number of scholars and practitioners involved in this rising research area. There are two sources for the theory and practice of educational and therapeutic drama.

The first source is Applied Drama. Campus Drama and Textbook Plays were two forms of educational drama in mainland drama education practice in the 1980s. Drama-in-Education, Psychodrama, Playback Theater and the Theater of the Oppressed are various forms of applied drama. They appeared in Taiwan and Hong Kong in the 1980s, as well as in big cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou in the middle of the 1990s. Some universities, training organizations, and non-governmental organizations invited scholars and professionals from Hong Kong, Taiwan and foreign countries to give lectures. Gradually these groups helped develop local groups to continue discussions and practice in this field. Thus, the application of Educational Drama, Psychodrama and Playback Theater received promotion and advancement in our country. For instance, Drama in Education was adopted in kindergarten, primary school and middle school additionally, Psychodrama began to be used in group counseling. Moreover, practitioners applied Playback Theater and Theater of the Oppressed, including Forum Theater, in community development.

The second source of influence is Performance Studies. In the late 1990s, Professor Sun Huizhu of Shanghai Theater Academy (STA) brought Performance Studies to China and founded Social Performance Studies which has been regarded as the branch of Performance Studies in China. This combined drama, sociology and management, the value of sociality and practicability, and a focus on research and practice of social performance of ordinary people in daily life and in their social roles, especially in their professional roles. The STA's Social Performance Studies team has done a lot of research and practice projects in the departments of government, business, and education. Social Performance Studies is becoming more well-known globally. STA hosted the 20<sup>th</sup> Performance Studies International Conference (PSi 20) on July 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 2014, with themes of the Avant-guard, Tradition and Community, with over 600 scholars and artists from

more than 40 countries participating. The conference held 130 scholarly activities, and it was the first time for the Performance Studies International Conference to be held in China, which is the biggest one to date.

## 1. Educational Drama in China

In some kindergartens, primary and middle schools, educational drama is carried out in cooperative programs with universities and research institutions. For example, there have been cross-collaborations occurring in the: 11th five-year National Education Science Program, Unique Function of School Drama Education Helping Structure of Harmony in Schools, Policy of Implementation in 2007, Research of the Applied Drama Improves Teachers' Professional Development and Student Mental Health in 2008 and the Research of the Key Program of Philosophy and Social Science of National Art Education in 2009. All of these were early programs in China. Since 2010, Beijing Normal University has started the Research of Educational Drama Practice and Theory in Higher Education, Research of Drama-in-Education (Theatre-in-Education) promoting Juveniles' Moral and Civil development, Research on the application of Educational Drama in Masters Degree Courses, etc. These research initiatives explore the construction of the educational drama curriculum in higher education. In 2015, the course *Application of Drama-in-Education in primary school and middle school* was initiated for graduate students. The course represents how educational drama is now employed in the graduate curriculum as part of standard education in China.

In 2014, the Board of Education in Beijing introduced the policy that universities and society should take part in physical and aesthetic education in primary school. Some teachers and students came from Central Academy of Drama, Beijing Normal University, and some artists from social art institutes like Beijing Children's Art Theatre. These artists played an important role in educational drama in primary schools.

Some trained NGO social workers also helped educational drama in different groups to benefit society at large.

In the past decade, there have been some specific social and educational institutes in economically and educationally developed cities running educational drama programs. Among these were the practice of introducing English or Australian educational drama and courses for children. Most of these were extra-curricular, but they also adopted ways of cooperating with kindergarten schools, bringing the courses into the extra-curricular activities of the kindergarten. However, not all of these were very popular.

There are three kinds of Educational Drama:

### 1.1. Drama Pedagogies Integrated in Different Subjects and Thematic Education

Drama pedagogy integrated in different subjects and other educational methods is an approach that is still weak at present. In 2008, there was an experimental study program called *Applied Drama Promotes Teacher's Professional Development and Students*

*Mental Health*. It was hosted by the Beijing Normal University and started to explore ways to employ educational drama as part of moral education, Chinese education, foreign language classes and science classes at the Experimental Primary School of Beijing Normal University.

In 2014, the Board of Education of Haidian District in Beijing founded over 30 primary and middle educational drama experimental schools, as a means of exploring models of educational drama. Two years later in 2016, the Applied Drama and Expressive Arts Education Research Center in Beijing Normal University undertook the educational drama program, which runs art education in primary schools and cooperates with Beijing Normal University, on the invitation of the Board of Education of Beijing. Experimental schools with programs guided by the Center are exploring the ways in which the employment of drama can be integrated in curriculums, class meetings, parent meetings, and thematic educational activities.

### **1.2. Drama integrated in Aesthetic Education**

Some primary and middle schools have started to reform their curriculum and build up their aesthetics courses. For example, Tsinghua Primary School invited artists from a professional drama team to come and give classes for pupils, and Beijing National Day School founded drama courses that combined drama, music and visual arts. This in particular is one of their most integrated course reforms.

The Shanghai Theater Academy (STA) founded the Integrated Arts Education and Teaching Research Center under the Shanghai Educational Committee in 2013. The Research Center, in conjunction with the team at STA, has conducted many research projects, explorations and practices, such as creating an educational model for drama, like *Les Misérables*, and *The Old Man and the Sea*, which have toured and been promoted in schools for decades in Beijing and Shanghai. Meanwhile, they are also exploring an integrated art course in short film for high school students.

With respect to integrated arts education, Chinese artists and scholars of performance are combining methods of music and traditional Chinese opera to open a method of art education with Chinese characteristics. For example, they have adapted Chinese traditional stories as material for educational drama, and can see elements of Chinese traditional drama having been adapted into well-known foreign classical dramas.

### **1.3. Drama in Club Activities**

It is common to see students playing drama games in club activities from primary to high schools. Since 2013, Beijing has brought in universities and social resources to support the development of diversification and unique features of primary and secondary schools, exploring multiple models of art education. For instance, the Fengtai District introduced professional drama education institutions and founded a practice base in a few schools; the Dongcheng District cooperated with famous theaters, and the Haidian District founded master studios, in addition to inviting more professional teams on campus. In Shanghai, there are 17 high schools which want to develop drama courses for their students, such as those affiliated with Fudan University and Gezhi High School.

All these promote the integration of education, drama and film education at the compulsory level of education. This puts into practice the text, *Suggestions to enhance aesthetics education in schools*, published in September, 2015 by the General Office of the State Council.

## 2. Therapeutic Drama

Drama therapy appeared in China in the early therapy research of chronic mental disorders in 2000. In 2006, the first paper related to the concept and practice of national drama psychology appeared, raising awareness of the benefit of using national drama psychology in school mental health education. This resulted in the development of the program, *The 10<sup>th</sup> Five-year Plan of National Science of Education*, which created a new stage form that combined traditional psychodrama (J.L. Moreno) with a variety of traditional Chinese dramas, creating a unique model that had drama and psychological counseling for students in middle school and university.

Beijing Normal University brought Playback Theater, Forum Theater and Psychodrama into school counseling and mental health educational courses of graduate students, improving students' self development and professional development as well.

In 2014, the Psychodrama Group was formed under the Division of Group Counseling and Group Therapy, the China Association for Mental Health (DGCGT, CAMH). With this representation, China now has its own local professional body in the psychodrama field.

## 3. The Problems and Future of Educational and Therapeutic Drama in China

At present, the main objectives in educational and therapeutic drama are:

### 3.1. To support people with ability in applied drama and to found a professional team

Drama has existed as a separate profession in traditional higher education and basic education for a long time, but it has had little opportunity to integrate with other forms of education and therapy. In the past 10 years, however, drama has gradually been integrated into other applied professions and into traditional art education, and it has started to break down boundaries and to be open to the world.

In 2005, the Opera Department in the Shanghai Theatre Academy (STA) was founded, and now nearly one hundred students have graduated in the past five years. In 2009, the Beijing Normal University introduced applied drama as a subject and pedagogical approach in the graduate courses of school mental health and counseling. In 2015, the *Application of Drama-in-Education in primary school and middle school* was adopted in graduate professional elective courses, and an Applied Drama and Expressive Art Research Center was founded. This Research Center was the first specialized organization with researchers in Chinese universities, and there were 11 graduate theses. In



2016, the Central Academy of Drama set up the department of drama education to recruit students.

The concept of Drama Education is expanding to include not only artistic drama education, but also applied drama education.

### **3.2. To establish an applied drama curriculum in universities, primary and middle schools**

In general, the practice of applied drama in education and therapy goes much farther than the research indicates at present. There are currently teachers in universities, kindergartens, primary schools and middle schools, as well as NGO workers involved in practice. Research areas cover different subject areas, concerning the personal and social development of children and teenagers, and social topics of gender identification, environmental issues, socioeconomic inequality and family violence. We still need more researchers to join in and pay attention to applied drama, especially to the issues of local practice and formation of theories.

### **3.3. To establish more cross-border cooperation**

As the government puts more attention on aesthetic education, people are coming to appreciate drama education and therapy more. There are a growing number of officials, researchers, teachers and parent communities that have started to be interested in these fields. Consequently, different organizations are hosting discussion meetings mainly focused on spreading and practicing these approaches.

All these applications require cooperation across borders between performance artists, educators and psychologists engaged in counseling and therapy, in nourishing people with talents and abilities, as well as engaging in theoretical research and practice relevant to Chinese cultural and social background.

### **3.4. A huge space for development**

Educational and therapeutic dramas have good opportunities for growth. China is a developing country with a booming economy, and the Chinese have come to appreciate more and more the principles of drama education and therapy. Applied drama enhances self-development and promotes teenagers' personality and individual social development, such as creativity and cooperation. This meets the needs of Chinese development and the search for nourishing people with talents and abilities in current society. The development of Applied Drama in China also shows that Chinese culture possesses good possibilities for accepting and integrating theories of Western drama education and therapy. Applied drama emphasizes the ideas of participation, experience, cooperation, and transformation, which are consistent with Chinese Taoist culture that also emphasizes wholeness, contradictory coexistence and transformation. Therefore educational and therapeutic drama has great future prospects in China.



**About the authors**

Ma Liwen 马利文, Ph. D., Associate Professor, Institute of Educational Psychology and School Counseling; Director, Applied Drama and Expressive Arts Education Research Center, Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University. Research field: Applied Drama and Expressive Arts Education; Personality and social development. ORCID: 0000-0002-5689-351, Email: liwenma@126.com

PENG Yongwen 彭勇文, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Shanghai Theatre Academy, Shanghai Research Center for Integrated Arts Education. ORCID: 0000-0002-4087-1471, Email: pengyongwen@126.com

## **Art Sights into the Local Creative Arts Developmental Process in Hong Kong**

Lai Ka Kit

Kunst Expressive Arts Therapy Training and Consulting, China

---

Creative arts therapy was introduced to Hong Kong more than ten years ago when different organizations began to invite therapists and educators to hold workshops locally. In the beginning, creative arts was regarded as one big genre before people began to understand and learn about the uniqueness of the individual modalities, including visual art therapy, music therapy, drama therapy, movement and dance therapy and expressive arts therapy. Nowadays, the field is full of vitality and is moving towards maturity. For one thing, there has been an exponential growth in the number of trained and registered creative arts therapists. For example, there are around 20 registered art therapists and more than 50 registered music therapists in Hong Kong (despite the fact that we have only a handful of registered expressive arts therapists/dance therapists/drama therapists). As a result, professional associations have been formed to connect these therapists and to promote their professions. In addition, there are increasingly frequent collaborations between therapists from different modalities, usually motivated by funded projects (e.g. S.K.YEE Foundation - Kwai Chung Hospital Arts Therapy Project for MI outpatients; Swire Trust Seeds in Education Fund - Dance Therapy Group for special schools) or the personal friendship of the therapists (e.g. Expressive Arts therapy for secondary school students with Special Education Needs). This paves the way for future collaborative works on the level of creative arts professional associations. Last but not least, we may say that the embrace of the creative arts by the general public has made the existing practice of arts therapists as well as collaborative projects possible.

Among the pioneering organizations, the Centre for Community Cultural Development (CCCD) has been holding different kinds of yearly conferences, bringing therapists around the world to Hong Kong. For example, the 2016 “Moving Circle” Dance & Movement Therapy Conference; 2015 Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore Creative Arts Therapy Exchange: Symposium and Talks towards Health in Body, Mind and Spirit; 2014 creative arts therapy for children, parents and care-givers: international symposium and workshops; 2013 Symposium and workshops on the use of expressive arts therapy in mental health service; 2010 Drama therapy in psychiatric services: workshop and symposium; 2008 “Open the Heart in Arts” Project: promoting youth mental health.

These have been supported not only by the general public, but also by the keen interest of health professionals, including social workers, educators and psychologists. Furthermore, artists who are involved in local community arts have become aware of the integration between arts and therapy. Many of them participated in the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA) Conference 2015 (organized by Arts in Hospital H.K.) in Hong Kong.

Consequently, there has developed a need for creative arts therapy education. In the past few years, there have already been responses to this, including the following new ventures: a person-centered expressive arts therapy professional training course, a local masters program in expressive arts therapy at the university and a European masters program in expressive arts therapy offered through a local module provider. The diversities in the nature of the training, the length of the program and the emphasis on different theories/approaches in the curriculums suit the need of different students. In addition, psychodrama training, dance and movement training and a degree program in music therapy (a joint-offer between local and overseas universities) have been offered. These professional trainings are preparing future practitioners to localize and contextualize the creative arts therapy profession, as well as equipping them to fulfill the educational requirement for professional registration internationally. Thus far, we do not have any local authorization body for therapists' registration. We may expect that the field will be different in many ways in five to ten years compared to now, when currently almost all practitioners are trained abroad or by teachers from other countries. Indeed, the students are helping to shape local language and action in the field of creative arts therapy.

Collaboration is also already happening on the students' level (e.g. School Tour - Expressive arts for primary students under the Territory-wide System Assessment's pressure) when students from different schools co-work on projects. Furthermore, with those projects in which workers in the setting and the students cooperate or sometimes even "supervise" the work, training the trainer becomes necessary. The Education University of Hong Kong is planning to offer a semester course for the SEN teachers on the subject of using creative arts in the SEN classroom. The motivation behind this level of educational training is to prepare social workers and teachers so that they understand creative arts first-hand and will be able to apply it in their own setting with the co-operation and facilitation of creative arts therapists.

There has been some concern about the saturation of the market through all these trainings, leading to the question of whether there will be enough employment for students. However, we need practitioners who are properly trained and familiar with the local context if we want to engage in the work of advocacy, i.e. negotiate with governmental bodies to recognize creative arts therapy and to incorporate it into the local health care system. Further, there is a need to expand the levels of application of creative arts therapy, e.g. into education, consulting, coaching, social change, conflict transformation and peace building, global health, etc. It is also difficult not to consider the needs of China, of which Hong Kong is a part. Some of these applications of creative arts "therapy" may be appropriate in China before therapy through the arts has been completely accepted as valid. We foresee a strong future for the creative arts in both education and therapy in China as well as Hong Kong.

### **About the author**

Lai Ka Kit 黎家傑, Ph.D. Candidate, MSS, MA, DVATI, RCAT, REAT, Founding Director, Kunst Expressive Arts Therapy Training and Consulting HK; Visiting Fellow, European Graduate School Switzerland. Research field: Expressive Arts Therapy and Chinese Taoism. ORCID:0000-0002-0535-0611, Email: kklai@exahk.hk

## East Side Story: Expressive Arts in Hong Kong

Fiona Chang

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

---

As in the West, expressive arts therapy in Hong Kong is a newcomer to the creative arts therapy field. Music therapy and art therapy were introduced in the mid 1980s and early 1990s respectively. Therapists in these fields received their training and professional credentialing in the West. To establish and maintain a professional standard, local professional bodies such as The Hong Kong Association of Art Therapists, The Hong Kong Association of Music Therapists, and The Hong Kong Association of Drama Therapists were formed. The Expressive Arts Therapy Association of Hong Kong (EATA HK) was set up in 2012, aiming at promoting the use of expressive arts, providing continuing education, facilitating peer learning, and establishing an indemnity insurance scheme for professional registration with the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association (IEATA).

When expressive arts practice, with its basis in the integration of all the arts, was introduced in the mid-90s, many practitioners appreciated having the choice of different art modalities and each of their unique ways of expression. Expressive arts therapy is thus becoming more and more popular in Hong Kong. Actually, its integrated conception of the arts is in line with the Chinese definition of art. The Chinese language does not indicate singulars and plurals. “Art” in Chinese includes painting, music, dance, calligraphy, poetry and the appreciation of beauty. From ancient times, artistic practice in China has been used for deeper understanding, the settlement of thought, soulful awakening, sacred space for concentration, and for experiencing the beauty of emptiness and an aesthetic integration with nature (Gao, & Li, 2006). Through expressive arts practice, people can thus get back the healing power of the arts and reclaim the roots of our culture.

In response to an increasing demand for local training, different levels of educational programs have been established in both the academy and the wider community. The author founded the first structured program, the three-year Training Program in Expressive Arts Therapy: The Person-centered Approach, in 2011. Up to now, there have been established two Masters programs in expressive arts therapy, one offered by the Centre on Behavioral Health of the University of Hong Kong and the other by the European Graduate School. With the support of social service providers, more employment opportunities for expressive arts therapists are now to be found in oncology care, special education, mental health, elderly services and the child and youth sectors. There are some local studies exploring the clinical outcomes of arts-led practice in the health-care and social work fields (Chang, 2012a; Chang, & Ho, 2000; Ho, 2005; Ho, Lo, & Luk, 2015). In frontline work, arts practitioners usually focus on their practice and direct contact with service users. In the academy, scholars and writers are shaping their theories but with less practice in the therapy room. In the research field, researchers are investigating the objectivity of expressive arts therapy for publications. For a compre-

hensive development, an integral paradigm of theory-practice-research should be advocated. A combined effort of art-based research, practice and training in creative arts therapy is vital (Moon, 2012). More systematic investigation and extensive studies on the application of this field with a variety of populations is needed to be able to receive funding for the expansion of services. This kind of research can facilitate knowledge building as well as policy change. In-depth studies on the methodology of practice, and on the use of arts-based research to study the results of the work, need to be developed to formulate theories and modes of practice suitable for the local conditions of Hong Kong. Such research will also advance expressive arts education and professional development in the field.

In collaboration with expressive arts practitioners around the world, the author initiated an international campaign appealing to the Professional Committee of IEATA since 2011 to adapt their requirements to suit local cultures. As a result, the required practicum hours for becoming a Registered Expressive Arts Therapist (REAT) were reduced to the level of 1,000, a number more suitable for practice in present conditions. In order to have equal footing with other helping professionals, advocacy for a statutory registration system for creative and expressive arts therapists in Hong Kong should be the next step.

Hong Kong was a British colony before 1997. Our local culture has thus been influenced by the West as well. As an international city that bridges Western and Eastern worlds, Hong Kong has a unique position in re-shaping and re-constructing expressive arts therapy in Asia. The 11th International Conference of IEATA in 2015 held in Hong Kong was an inspiring platform for facilitating East-West conversations. Over four hundred participants from twenty-eight countries gathered to share their theoretical frameworks and practice-based wisdom from local, regional, and global perspectives. We need to become more aware of our own culture and also open to different cultures in clinical practice. In formulating the design of expressive arts practice in the local context, Chinese philosophy, local cultures, beliefs, art forms and metaphors, together with the healing potential of expressive arts therapy (Chang, 2012b), can be brought together to foster East-West integration.

In the post-modern world in which different voices are honored, expressive arts can provide a flowing, open and deep platform for constructive conversations to craft our field in response to the needs of our own people and our own society.

### **About the author**

Man-Yan Fiona Chang 張文茵, R.E.A.T., R.S.W., Ph.D Candidate and Part-time Lecturer, Social Work Department, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Executive Co-chair of the International Expressive Arts Therapy Association. Research field: expressive arts, couple group and oncology psychosocial care.

ORCID: 0000-0002-7140-0656, Email: mychang@swk.cuhk.edu.hk.

## References

- Chang, F. (2012a). Regaining femininity from breast cancer with expressive arts. In C. Malchiodi, (Ed.), *Art therapy and health care* (pp. 146-161). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Chang, F. (2012b). Integrating person-centered expressive arts with Chinese metaphors. In M. Chan, D. Kalmanowitz, & J. Potash. (eds.), *Art therapy in Asia* (pp. 253-266). Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley.
- Chang, F., & Ho, S. (2000). From expression to empowerment: Using creative arts as self-healing media for cancer patients. In R. Fielding & C. L. W. Chan (Eds). *Psychosocial oncology and palliative care in Hong Kong: The first decade* (pp. 189-208). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Gao, X. H. 高星海, & Li, Z李尊. (2006). Chan Zong spirit in Chinese art 中国艺术的禅宗精神 - Chan sect spirit in Chinese art. *Journal of Anshan University of Science and Technology* 鞍山科技大学学报, 29(4), 409-413.
- Ho, R. T. H. (2005). Effects of dance movement therapy on Chinese cancer patients: A pilot study in Hong Kong, *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 32, 337-345.
- Ho, R. T., Lo, P. H., & Luk, M. Y. (2015). A Good Time to Dance? A Mixed-Methods Approach of the Effects of Dance Movement Therapy for Breast Cancer Patients During and After Radiotherapy. *Cancer Nursing*.
- Moon, B. L. (2012). Mentoring and other challenges in art-based enquiry: You will figure it out. *Journal of Applied Arts & Health*, 3(1), 31-38.

## Arts in Asia Today: Education, Therapy and Research in Hong Kong

Samuel Leong

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, China

---

These are very big questions, but I will attempt to describe the situation in Hong Kong. As a cosmopolitan city that meshes East and West, HK is a thriving arts and cultural hub, boasting a rich variety of local and international arts and cultural events, including the HK Arts Festival, World Cultures Festival, the Chinese Opera Festival and International Arts Carnival. The creative and expressive arts – including drama or theatre, music, film, creative writing, graphic design, photography and visual arts – are alive and well in HK. Undergraduate and postgraduate studies (up to the doctoral level) in these fields are available at nine higher education institutions; eight funded by the HK Government. These vary from those that focus more on theoretical-philosophical aspects to those that are more skill-based and industry-based. Creative arts education including early childhood education and special education are emphasized at the Education University of Hong Kong, while training for the performing and technical arts is provided at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, and the Academy of Visual Arts is located at the Hong Kong Baptist University. Competitive grants are available to support the work of university researchers (see <http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/fund/fund.htm>). An example of research related to the creative arts and education is *Creative Arts in Education and Culture: Perspectives from Greater China* (edited by Leong and Leung, Springer, 2013). In the public school system that provides 12 years of free education, Arts Education – comprising music and visual arts – is one of the eight Key Learning Areas in the curriculum (see <http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/kla/arts-edu/index.html>). Generally speaking, the approaches to education, expressive arts and research, embrace both Western and Eastern (particularly Chinese) traditions. The trend is towards using the arts in multidisciplinary ways.

I would like to say more about two exciting areas of development: arts in therapy and arts in the community. The ‘arts in therapy’ has become a growing phenomenon in healthcare, education and community settings. There is an increased interest in the arts for health and wellness, with dance, painting, drama, music, and poetry being applied for purposes related to healing, contemplation, communication, relaxation and expression. Some hospitals and non-government organizations provide free therapy sessions to the community. Regular programs and activities are organized by groups such as the HK Music Therapy Association, Association for Art Therapists, Expressive Arts Therapy Association of HK, and Arts with the Disabled Association of Hong Kong. Available study programs include the Master of Expressive Arts Therapy (HKU), Professional Diploma in Arts Therapy (Open University of HK), Postgraduate Diploma in Music Therapy (HKU Space), and there is even a course featuring the arts in psychotherapy at the HK Polytechnic University. Two examples of recently completed masters’ research



projects are: “Effectiveness of expressive arts therapy for elderly with depression and anxiety” (2015) and “The growth of an expressive arts therapy student through a life review practicum case of a cancer patient” (2015).

The arts are also increasingly valued in projects focusing on community development. ‘Art in Hospital’ is a community art project that has been ongoing since 1994, facilitating the creation of over 100 mural paintings in nearly 40 hospitals in Hong Kong. Other activities include art workshops, storytelling programs and hospital galleries. Arts-based therapy for underprivileged children in Hong Kong is initiated by the Sovereign Art Foundation, which addresses anxiety issues from kindergarten children to teenagers, who mostly live in caged homes and are recent migrants. The Music Children Foundation provides arts-based education for the community, reaching out to poorer families who cannot afford music tuition for children aged below 12. Besides individual music lessons, children also participate in ensemble work or choir, rehearsing and performing publicly, as well as workshops and a parent-child integration music camp that include grandparents. The arts have also penetrated public spaces around HK, with the Mass Transit Railway Corporation sponsoring regular art showcases and live performances at subway stations. The Hong Kong International Airport also sponsors performances and exhibitions by local artists at public spaces of the airport. Since 2014, HK has had its own international street art and graffiti festival; an evidence of the rising creative production of street art at the local level, which is giving opportunities for artists to leave their designs on surfaces with the permission of building owners.

I have not encountered major problems when using the arts in education or therapy. There has been a more accepting attitude and recognition of the arts in non-traditional endeavors from across all segments of society. Hence I see a very bright future for the development of arts-based education, therapy and research in HK and mainland China.

### **About the author**

Samuel Leong 梁信慕, Ph. D., Deputy Director (Academic Programmes & Educational Innovation), The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

## Arts in Asia Today: Education, Therapy and Research in Taiwan

Shuang-Ching Lee<sup>1</sup> and Chyi-Chang Li<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Taiwan University of Arts, Taiwan

<sup>2</sup> National Taiwan University of Arts, Taiwan

---

In 2008, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan, announced a 1-9 grade curriculum guide. In this guideline, there is a specified Arts and Humanities Learning Area. The core value is that in order to prepare students for the twenty-first century, it is important to cultivate their understanding and capability in the arts. This guideline divided the arts into three areas: music, visual arts, and performing arts education. However, in grade 1-2, there is no specified arts education curriculum. There is a “life curriculum” for students of these grades. Arts education is integrated into the curriculum. The goal is to cultivate students’ expressive abilities, skilled habits, and sensory experiences. Themes such as flowers, plants, water, and friendship are included. Students are provided with hands-on opportunities to explore their everyday life through these multidisciplinary curricula through which the arts are included.

From grades 3-9, the three arts disciplines indicated above can be taught separately as a specialized field or taught in a multidisciplinary form integrating various arts fields. Given the amount of freedom educators have been granted in exploring the potential of teaching in the arts our aspects of arts education are emphasized through the guideline: artistic expression, fundamental conception, history and culture and life.

Arts and Humanities textbooks for grades 3-6 are written in units. In each unit, the contents of music, visual arts and performing arts are all included. For instance, in grade 5, students are introduced to the theme of puppets. In the introduction section, different types of puppets such as shadow puppets and glove puppets that are common in Eastern culture are introduced. How artists use various materials and skills to form the different body parts, such as head and hands of the puppets, is explained in detail. The making and the social meaning of different types of headwear and dress are also explained in relation to specific cultural and historical backgrounds. In addition to puppets that are common in Eastern culture, students also learn about string puppets (marionettes) that are more prevalent in Western culture.

In terms of music education in this unit, different types of Eastern traditional music instruments are introduced. Teachers are also asked to pick a Western song for students to listen to. Through these experiences, it is hoped that students will learn to appreciate music styles in different cultures.

Elements of performing arts education are integrated through this unit. Several traditional characters and stories of glove puppets are told to students in class. Students are also encouraged by teachers to use modern technology to search for related information or videos. After gathering the information needed, students are guided to come up with an imaginative story to perform at their own puppet show. Students take part in creating

the characters, practicing the hand movements to manipulate the puppets, playing music instruments and designing the stage. Through this hands-on experience of producing a puppet show at the end of this unit, students have the opportunity to weave what they have learned in visual arts, music, and performing arts into a cohesive multidisciplinary understanding of this traditional art form.

As described above, the arts and humanities textbooks written for grades 3-6 are organized in units. Each unit includes certain aspects of music, visual arts and performing arts education. Arts textbooks for grades 7-9 still emphasize the concept of arts and humanities learning. However, the format of the textbook organization is different from that of grades 3-6. Using the arts and humanities textbook written for 7<sup>th</sup> grade as an example, lessons one through three are devoted to visual arts, lessons four through six to music, lessons seven through nine to performing arts. In other words, each art form is now presented as a specialized discipline. Each art discipline is taught by artist-teachers specialized in the specific art discipline.

The high school arts curriculum is even more discipline specific. Visual arts, music and performing arts education each have their own textbook. Performing arts combines drama and dance. It is then divided into traditional performing arts and Western performing arts. In addition to the puppet show introduced above, Taiwanese opera, Peking Opera, traditional Chinese dance and native Taiwanese dance are also included in the curriculum. Topics such as Creative Drama, Creative Dance, Drama in Education, Modern Dance and Theatre in Education are discussed in depth.

According to the grades 1-12 curriculum guideline announced in 2014 by the National Academy for Educational Research in Taiwan, various disciplines in the arts, including music, visual arts and performing arts education, are to be taught each as a specialized field. However, at the same time, the curriculum guideline encourages educators to initiate professional groups that delve into the issues of multidisciplinary curriculum development and to find ways to implement multidisciplinary curricula in schools. Artist educators in Taiwan are currently exploring various possibilities of art teaching in our school systems. School subjects are divided into content specific areas and taught at specific segments one at a time. However, students' everyday life experiences happen in a flow, rather than being segmented. In order to provide students a more holistic learning experience that is more close to everyday experiences, a multidisciplinary curriculum is thus encouraged. It is more common to find multidisciplinary teaching at the elementary school level.

Many schools made efforts to integrate various school subjects, such as language, history, science, music, visual arts and performing arts in a lesson plan. For schools that see the educational benefit and potential of multidisciplinary curriculum, they often emphasize teacher development and curriculum research projects. There are also practical issues, such as students' learning progress, evaluation standards and time management that are quite challenging for schools and educators who implement multidisciplinary teaching. Such phenomena are particularly obvious at the high school level. Therefore, the government proposed various plans to encourage artist educators at the high school level to cross the boundaries of their own disciplines. For instance, there is government funding for high school art teachers who experiment with combin-

ing visual art and technology in their lesson plans. Through these government initiatives, more teachers are now experimenting with a multidisciplinary approach. However, it is still important to emphasize that specialized art teaching continues to take a critical role in education. Only when the specialized art teaching content is well developed, can multidisciplinary teaching expand students' vision and understanding of their learning in the arts and beyond the arts.

### **About the authors**

Lee Shuang-Ching 李霜青, Assistant Professor, The Graduate School of Arts and Humanities Instruction, National Taiwan University of Arts. Research field: Visual arts education; museum education. ORCID: 0000-0001-8231-0966, Email: tiffanie@ntua.edu.tw

Li Chyichang 李其昌, Assistant Professor, The Graduate School of Arts and Humanities Instruction, National Taiwan University of Arts. Research field: directing & drama education. ORCID: 0000-0001-6279-9645, Email: lialan@ntua.edu.tw